

LEO-POL MORIN AND *PAPIERS DE MUSIQUE*

LEO-POL MORIN AND *PAPIERS DE MUSIQUE*:
A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION AND ENGLISH TRANSLATION

By

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ABSTRACT

Although little known and often overlooked in anglophone music circles, Léo-Pol Morin (1892-1941) was one of the most lucid and penetrating music critics in Canada of our time. His audacious, yet distinctly realistic musical perspectives were disseminated in all regions of Quebec through weekly chronicles in key francophone daily newspapers, including *La Patrie*, *La Presse* and *Le Canada*. An innate critical sense, anchored by a solid knowledge base, unique cultural commitment and literary facility assured success and distinction in his critical endeavour.

Morin's principal literary publication, *Papiers de musique* (Montreal, 1930), represents a selection of texts drawn and revised from nearly three hundred commentaries previously submitted to these newspapers. Notwithstanding the insularity and conservatism of Canadian culture at this time, *Papiers* is notably defined by its broad repertoire of seldom-addressed issues: nationalism in music; Canadian composers (Claude Champagne, Rodolphe Mathieu et al); education; folklore; jazz; and the critic's *métier* itself. *Papiers* was recognized by contemporaneous scholars as the first even-handed and well-documented critical account of Canadian music in the early twentieth century.

However, the French *Papiers de musique* is symptomatic of a special and perennial problem of criticism in Canada: that of linguistic diversity and translation. This thesis thus comprises an English translation of *Papiers*, with original supporting commentary and notes to guide the

reader. Part One, the author's critical introduction to *Papiers*, investigates pertinent issues of context, primary themes, treatment and style arising from Morin's discourse. Part Two affords an unabridged and faithful transcript of *Papiers de musique* in the English language: a vehicle through which the singular musical outlook of Léo-Pol Morin may be disclosed to and appreciated by anglophone readers in Canada.

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INTRODUCTION

The first half of the twentieth century was a period of increased prosperity and cultural expansion in Canada. Music criticism, in particular, not only documented Canadian musical life under the immediate impact of events, but also promoted the recognition of Canadian achievement in music and examined vital period issues of local, regional and, ultimately, national import. Such an intriguing and remarkable course of development was guided by the seminal critical writings of Léo-Pol Morin (1892-1941). Although little known and often overlooked in anglophone music circles, Morin was one of the most lucid and penetrating music writers in Canada of the twentieth century. Parallel activities as concert pianist, educator and composer balanced and completed his unique and innovative musical perspectives.

The ensuing introductory remarks and commentary will establish the credentials of Léo-Pol Morin as a writer and critic of musical issues in the Canadian interest. Through innate gifts and an extensive, diversified educational and professional background, Morin appears ahead of his time within the profession of criticism with respect to his convictions and their expression. Using a biographical framework, Morin will be placed within the milieu in which his primary oeuvre, *Papiers de musique*, was conceived. The special traits which serve to distinguish him as man and critic will be identified as a basis for understanding the content and treatment of the writings contained therein.

Born in Cap St.-Ignace, near Quebec City, into a family with a long-standing musical background, Léo-Pol Morin was initiated at the piano at an early age. His natural facility with the instrument led him to undertake his first formal music training in Quebec City at the age of seven, studying piano, solfège and dictation with Gustave Gagnon and organ with son Henri Gagnon. Through the former, in particular, the world of Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Schumann and Franck was revealed to him:¹ he would later credit Gustave Gagnon with providing not only specialized pianistic training, but also guidance of a more general, all-encompassing and musical nature. This initial education in music was later continued and perfected with Arthur Letondal (piano) and Guillaume Couture (harmony).

However, it was Morin's exposure to the refined social, artistic and intellectual milieu of Paris which truly defined his musical formation, reaffirmed his profoundly French-Canadian heritage and catalyzed his lifelong mission as a critic in Quebec. Through his performing victory at the provincial *Prix d'Europe* competition in 1912, he was permitted to discover the French capital and all that this city held in its time: a vibrant and well-respected musical culture, contact with eminent composers and influential personalities in the arts community, and the opportunity to attend major premieres, including that of Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps*.²

His scholarship study over this two year period was highlighted with the piano tutelage of Raoul Pugno, who deepened Morin's knowledge of the Classical and Romantic repertoire of Mozart, Chopin and Franck.³ After much deliberation following Pugno's death, he significantly turned

to the virtuoso Ricardo Viñes, a pianist renowned for his interpretations of French contemporary music, and specifically of Debussy and Ravel. Viñes had developed the special technique necessary for implementing the nuances, subtleties and half-shades of such works. As a result of this direct contact with the contemporaneous musical trends of the twentieth century, Morin learned to understand, love and interpret the fathers of this new generation in French music—Debussy, Ravel and others—in his own right.

Armed with his Parisian revelations and intrigued by the European interest in "national music" as a source of identity and strong appreciation of folklore, Morin became determined to combat the reigning apathy within a limited and inflexible Quebecois cultural state. His return to Canada in August of 1914, coinciding with the onset of World War One, marked the commencement of a professional career devoted to the defense and promotion of the modern music of his day and the need for a Canadian compositional school. As a concert artist of such repertoire, he gave many Canadian premieres of "contemporary" masterworks. His best performances date from this early phase of his professional life:

Suddenly in the ears of frightened high society ladies, who in order not to faint remained under their silk umbrellas, not only resounded, but vibrated the chords of these "dadaists", these "exalted", these "revolutionaries" Debussy and Ravel. Léo-Pol Morin had made his debut in the Canadian musical scene.⁴

By 1918, Morin had come into a group of young revolutionary intellectuals which included the writers Robert de Roquebrune and Marcel Dugas, architect Fernand Préfontaine and painter Adrien Hébert. With one goal in mind—"...to attempt a meeting of cultivated minds and to

disseminate artistic ideas freed of ignorance and nonsense"⁵—*Le Nigog* was founded, with Morin as its director. The arts journal, although shortlived, was noted for its exceptional literary quality and efforts to end cultural isolationism in Quebec. Morin himself, serving for the first time in a critical capacity, demonstrated an acute consciousness of the role he played in society if he was to call himself "critic":

It is time that criticism be a serious general education and not an indulgent blessing of puerile and inept works.... An effective review is not necessarily of a fighting spirit, but in a country such as ours where art is kept in indifference and even in suspicion by a large number, a journal such as *Le Nigog* will inevitably have disagreeable things to say.⁶

Even from his earliest literary efforts it is clear that Morin fundamentally considered the craft of criticism his vocation, and the role of critical writer paramount in his life. In a sense, this defines the man himself: curiosity was his motivating force and discipline the rule of his life. His primary goal and desire was to sensitize and educate his readers and colleagues alike to the necessity of manifesting a new attitude towards music. Imbued with French culture after his studies in Paris, the *Le Nigog* vehicle enabled him to introduce into a stagnant arts climate the names of Ravel, Dukas, Stravinsky, Falla, Scriabin, Bartók and Debussy for the first time. The advanced, even radical views of *Le Nigog* arrived too early to attain wide acceptance from an essentially conservative public, but the polemics it raised highlighted the need for change in Quebecois cultural endeavour.

As a result of the armistice in World War One and the demise of *Le Nigog* in the following year, Morin chose to return to Paris to deepen his knowledge of contemporary trends in the arts and to revive and

reacquaint himself with the vibrant rhythm of Parisian society and its prolific cultural activity. Over a period spanning 1919 to 1925, he lived and worked in the capital, participating in the city's musical life alongside Viñes, Ravel and Alexis Roland-Manuel. His name soon came to be associated with a number of leading groups dedicated to the promulgation of contemporary works, this time including those by Canadian composers such as Rodolphe Mathieu, Claude Champagne and Georges-Emile Tanguay. At the Salle Pleyel in 1921, for example, he played Mathieu's *Trois Préludes*—a work dedicated to him—and gave the Parisian premiere of Alban Berg's *Sonata, op. 1*.¹ Two years later he toured England, Belgium and Holland with Ravel.

After one such recital, in which Morin had performed recent compositions of Bartók, Debussy, Ravel, Roussel and Scriabin, Paul LeFlem, critic for the Parisian publication *Comoedia*, declared:

Much praise is due the initiative of this intelligent musician who in a single evening was able to present so effectively music of such diversity. Evinced the subtlest grasp of idiom, this artist passed easily from one composer's music to another's, finding the appropriate expression and the right emphasis for each one's thought. He brought to bear brilliant technical accomplishment as well, yet only to demonstrate how a vibrant touch and a sure instinct for sonority could remain submissive to the control of the spirit of the music.¹

Morin returned to Canada periodically to give concerts in this time; however, it was not until the Fall of 1925 that he fully re-established residence in Montreal. His stature in Quebec and Paris was secured in appointments as Secretary of the Pro-Musica Society, Montreal chapter, and member of the Comité d'honneur of the Conservatoire international de Paris among the ranks of Dukas, Ravel, Honegger, Falla, Villa-Lobos and

Arthur Rubinstein.⁹ For Morin, this period of recognition and progress (1925-31) was characterized by the writing of most of the articles that would culminate in the publication of *Papiers de musique* in 1930.

Through his concert touring in these years, he proved to be a key instigator and leader of movements devoted to the dissemination of both Canadian and modern European compositional efforts, including his own works penned under the James Callihou pseudonym.

To be sure, the ultimate dissolution of *Le Nigog* some six years earlier had not dissuaded Morin from attempting to instill a love for true art and to promote a cultural elite in his native province. Resolved to continue in this pursuit of educating the public and conscious of the potential role of the press in this respect, he turned to the newspaper medium and, in particular, *La Patrie* (1926-29) and *La Presse* (1929-31). Throughout their existence, the respective editorial boards of these Montreal periodicals prided themselves on their conservative, family-oriented ideology. As of 1926 both had attained high stature among French-language newspapers in North America, a fact attributed to their diversification, originality, judiciousness and instructional nature.¹⁰

It is within this atmosphere, one of commitment to being the most complete and informative papers in French-speaking Canada, that Morin began his career as a columnist and full-fledged music critic. His fears, goals and concerns at this undertaking are highlighted in his inaugural *La Patrie* feature of 6 March 1926, in which he defines his critical task as follows:

My goal is, at once, to awaken the curiosity of music amateurs, to develop a taste for fine works and to help in the formation of certain modest talents. Purely

negative criticism has no *raison d'être*. Less still here than elsewhere. Neither should benevolence and indulgence be the sole object of criticism. A question of tone..."¹¹

The presence of a matured and more judicious Morin is apparent in these comments. His revolutionary days as a writer of *Le Nigog* behind him, and notwithstanding the expectations and large responsibility entailed by his self-imposed task, Morin's innate critical sense, anchored by a solid music knowledge base, cultural understanding and facility for literary expression yielded his overwhelming success in this capacity.

If *Le Nigog* had permitted him contact with a portion of the Montreal population, *La Patrie* and *La Presse* made his astute observations and views regarding music heard in all regions of the province. This broadened range of dissemination afforded him the possibility of not only critiquing principal concerts given in Montreal under the weight of current events, but also of addressing all subjects which he judged to be of primary importance to the musical development and cultural growth of his readers. Moreover, he was enabled to further the cause of contemporary music and of an indigenous Canadian compositional school. His audacious, yet distinctly realistic critical commentaries, appearing prominently in weekly columns entitled "La Musique" and later "Chronique de musique", presented the sources and symptoms of cultural malaise and heightened the collective Quebecois consciousness to the precarious situation. Through the same forum, he ultimately offered the integral tools for the initiation of recovery and diversification in the artistic community and the musical life of its public, tools which would only be taken up and realized posthumously after his tragic death in 1941, at the age of forty-eight, in a car accident outside his beloved Montreal.

It is telling that many in Morin's lifetime considered him "Parisian" due to his *joie de vivre*, harmonious language and literary skill. To this impression, colleague and longtime Morin confidant, Robert de Roquebrune, once retorted:

But cannot a man be spiritual, speak and write in his mother tongue correctly and be, at the same time, authentically French-Canadian?... Léo-Pol Morin was profoundly civilized and profoundly French-Canadian.¹²

A love for the arts, painting and literature as well as music, a refined temperament, an intelligence and wit that was amusing, never banal and always fresh: these were the characteristics which defined the personality of Léo-Pol Morin, man and critic. He liked and could have chosen to remain in the more amenable milieu of France, to be sure; however, he preferred to stay in direct contact with his native culture while performing, educating and writing. Polite, yet firm in his convictions, criticism became for him a true personal quest for information and, at the same time, a literary genre. In this capacity he evolved in a most human manner, wanting to know and understand the diverse manifestations of contemporary music and in turn to share his ideas and experiences with his readers. From a criticism more or less empirical in nature followed a highly competent and professional era of music criticism in Canada, ushered in by Léo-Pol Morin:

Both his writings and concerts showed Morin to be ahead of his time. A caustic spirit, an original, a personality compounded of intelligence and sensibility, he influenced two generations of musicians in Quebec.¹³

Of primary importance to the critical career of Léo-Pol Morin was the publication of his book, *Papiers de musique*, in August of 1930 at Montreal. While clearly representative of Morin's gift as an informer and

educator of his readership and of the remarkable clarity and logic of his prose, this volume also serves as an example of the deepened critical tone and treatment of larger issues afforded by Canadian music criticism of his day. In that a full education is to be found within its covers, *Papiers de musique* indeed stands as a landmark, if not a turning point, in a lengthy and diverse history of the profession of music criticism in Canada.

Papiers de musique represents a selection of twenty-nine texts which Morin appropriated and revised from a pool of approximately three hundred previous submissions to *La Patrie* and *La Presse* (1926-30), a number which includes reprints of the newspaper columns that appeared in selected Canadian and Parisian music journals such as *Le Monde nouveau* and *La Revue musicale*. Of the prolific nature of Morin's journalistic output and the task with which he was confronted in his capacity as author, Claire Villeneuve notes that "one finds oneself before an imposing ensemble of articles: quantitatively and especially qualitatively by the variety of subjects and by their manner of treatment."¹⁴

It may be seen, in fact, that the selections chosen by Morin for his *Papiers de musique* volume were derived exclusively from his weekly critical commentaries, detailed "think pieces" dealing with broad concerns and issues related both to the international and Canadian music forums. None of the articles ultimately published in *Papiers de musique* is a concert review; however, their common basis is indeed the current events of Morin's Montreal. Many names and occurrences cited therein were the result of performances critiqued or people seen in the days between appearances of his weekend columns.

Given the customary insularity and conservatism of Canadian culture in Morin's lifetime, it is extraordinary that his book itself may be defined by its sweeping repertoire of seldom-addressed issues, grouped in broad, self-contained sections as follows:

* *"Tour of Europe in Seventeen Minutes, Return Through the United States"*, comprised of two articles entitled "To Find National Meaning" and "In America", serves as an opening group in which Morin grapples with the definition and parameters of music nationalism as applied to emerging and established nationalist currents in European and American music.

* The second section, *"In Search of a Canadian Music"*, contains five articles: "In Search of Genius", "Music, Useless Art", "The Poor Relation", "The Great Pity of Canadian Music" and "Hopes". Here, Morin examines the state of Canadian music, circa 1930, in its diverse manifestations of compositional practice and standards, cultural climate, and education, advocating an awareness of current conditions and measures to effect change therein.

* *"Canadian Composers"* functions as the central focus of Morin's *Papiers de musique*. Within an inventory of key French- and English-Canadian composers of the early twentieth century, Morin assesses their respective education, craft and style, principal works and overall significance in the articles, "Gauging the Temperature", "Those of Yesterday", "Guillaume Couture", "Achille Fortier", "Rodolphe Mathieu", "Claude Champagne", "Georges-Emile Tanguay", "Henri Gagnon", "James Callihou" and "Among the English".

* In the brief penultimate grouping of *"Canadian Folklore"*, structured around the articles "Canadian Folklore" and "Eskimo Folklore", Morin explores the origins of the Canadian folkloric tradition and its increasing presence and application in Canadian compositional practices. In doing so, he identifies and evaluates eminent personalities and institutions devoted to the promotion of folklore and Canadian music in his day.

* Aptly labelled *"Shots in the Dark"*, Morin's last collection of texts comprises a potpourri of issues which clearly demonstrate his broad knowledge base and cultural understanding. The first three of these, "Music Criticism Fifty Years Ago", "The Duties of the Critic" and "Where is Criticism Going?", may be viewed as his personal statement of critical purpose. He looks inwardly at his own profession, identifying its current strengths and shortcomings, and projects his vision of criticism's future course. The subsequent articles "Defense of the Public", "The Canadian Student", "Solfège" and "The *Prix d'Europe*" are exposés of the problems within the Canadian music educational system of his time, in which he reveals his plan for achieving reform in all sectors of education, affecting the general public, students, teachers and musicians alike. In "In Favour of Jazz" and "Of Music Boxes and Their Dangers", the final selections of *Papiers de musique*, he defends jazz as a serious musical idiom and source of inspiration and investigates the role of music professionals, and music criticism in particular, in the leading recording and radio technologies of the early twentieth century.

Although suggested by the balance of coverage as presented

above, it was not Morin's goal to write a complete national music assessment per se; rather, he intended to offer an ensemble of texts with Canadian music as a common denominator. Many had contemplated a national compositional school for Canada, some spoke of it, but few were stirred into action. Morin was thus the first among critics to uphold music nationalism and the desire for a distinctive Canadian music as the key motivators underlying the themes and tone of *Papiers de musique*. The piquant turns of phrase and humorous and often adroitly satirical prose contained within its covers reveal an outstanding ease, charm and authority over this difficult subject matter. At the same time, his refined thought and expression are the marked product of his immersion in European culture.¹⁵

To capitalize on the expanded, more flexible presentation afforded by the book medium, it will be seen that Morin undertook substantial alterations and revision of his initial newspaper submissions in compiling *Papiers de musique* for publication. These are reflected not so much in terms of permutations or even reversals of opinion in the content. With the notable exception of later articles published in the book ("Shots in the Dark"), any editorial changes assumed by Morin entail, in each instance, a piecing together of wholesale paragraphs from as many as five discrete newspaper column sources into a single, comprehensive anthology article.¹⁶ Many of the texts to be found in the volume were quoted verbatim from such paragraphs, with only minor variations in wording (substitutions, additions and omissions) or restructuring of introductions and/or conclusions to ensure the flow of content throughout the book.

Nevertheless, it is of some interest that Morin warns of a natural evolution of thought in the course of *Papiers de musique*,¹⁷ a progression of thinking occurring not only in the transformation from newspaper column to book article, but also within the book itself. Perhaps his professed concern over the "disjointed appearance" of the volume's content and seeming contradictions of opinion expressed therein might be viewed as his self-conscious shield from personal criticism and criticism of his oeuvre. He evidently positioned the *Papiers de musique* texts, relatively speaking, in chronological order. Those which appear early in the book were originally written in a period of approximately three years, spanning 1926-28, affording a considerable amount of time in which he undoubtedly re-thought his positions and undertook editorial revision. Later articles, some literally assembled under the title, "Shots in the Dark", were conceived much closer to the date of publication. These would have had to go into the book with much less modification, if any.

Morin need not have questioned the value of his efforts or worried that perceived shortcomings would leave him open to disfavour: the reader of his *Papiers de musique* will find the sequencing of its subjects and issues to be logical and informed. Moreover, a vast culture, integrity, revelation of spirit and, most importantly, a concern for public education emanate from the constituent writings. In its emphasis on a return to inspirational folklore and education and the development of a sense of Canadian identity, *Papiers de musique* was recognized by contemporaneous scholars as the first even-handed, well-documented source of information on varied aspects of musical life in Canada, exemplified in the comments of critic Eugène Lapierre:

Until now, one must admit that our music has not often been promoted by publications of this kind. The poor initiators and organizers of our musical movement have sought in vain to excavate the past in order to find precepts. We have not had a documentary and archival sense about the past and treatises such as this are extremely precious.¹

Manifold reasons may be put forward to justify the importance of Léo-Pol Morin's *Papiers de musique*. However, one need only survey the representative "Canadian Composers" collection within the volume to grasp its relevance in the present day. Even though originally published for a time-specific newspaper medium, these colourful pages of critical documents regarding the Canadian musical condition—public, composers, educators and critics alike—hold a particularly timeless interest and, indeed, form an unparalleled and invaluable historical and educational resource as an insightful account of this formative era in the history of Canadian music.

NOTES

- 1 Claire Villeneuve. "Léo-Pol Morin, musicographe". *Canadian Association of University Schools of Music Journal* 4 (1974), p. 85.
- 2 See "Morin: The Paris Years", pp. 17-24.
- 3 Villeneuve, p. 85.
- 4 "Soudain aux oreilles effarouchées des dames de la bonne société, qui pour ne pas défaillir se retiennent à leurs ombrelles de soie, non pas retentissent, mais vibrent les accords de ces "dadaïstes", de ces "exaltés", de ces "révolutionnaires" que sont Debussy et Ravel. Léo-Pol Morin vient de faire son entrée dans la vie

musicale canadienne." Jean Ethier-Blais. "Léo-Pol Morin". *Journal des Jeunesses Musicales Canadiennes* (1963), p. 13.

- 5 Léo-Pol Morin. "Signification". *Le Nigog* 1 (1918), p. 3.
- 6 "Il est temps que la critique soit un sérieux enseignement general et non plus un complaisant benissage d'oeuvres pueriles et inhabiles.... Une revue d'action n'est pas necessairement combative, mais, en un pays comme le nôtre où l'art est tenu en indifférence et même en suspicion par un grande nombre, une telle revue que *Le Nigog* aura inevitablement des choses désagréables à dire." Morin, "Signification", pp. 2-3.
- 7 With Berg's *Sonata*, Morin performed works by Schoenberg, Debussy, Ravel, Roland-Manuel, Roussel, Satie, Honegger and Poulenc. See Andrée Desautels. "Léo-Pol Morin", in *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*. ed. Helmut Kallmann, Gilles Potvin, Kenneth Winters. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981. Second edition, 1992, pp. 887.
- 8 Paul LeFlem, in Desautels, *EMC*, p. 887.
- 9 Desautels, *EMC*, p. 887.
- 10 Villeneuve, p. 88.
- 11 "Mon but est tout à la fois d'éveiller la curiosité des amateurs de musique, de développer le goût des belles oeuvres et d'aider, le cas échéant, certains talents encore timides à se préciser. Une critique seulement négative n'a nulle part de raison d'être. Moins encore ici qu'ailleurs. Mais la bienveillance, l'indulgence ne doivent pas être non plus l'unique objet du critique. Question de nuances..." Morin. "Orientation". *La Patrie*, 6 March 1926, p. 73.
- 12 "Mais ne peut-on être spirituel, parler correctement sa langue maternelle, l'écrire et, en même temps, être authentiquement canadien-français?... Léo-Pol Morin était profondément civilisé et il était profondément canadien-français." Robert de Roquebrune, in Léo-Pol Morin. *Musique*. Montréal: Beauchemin, 1944, p. 21.
- 13 Desautels, *EMC*, p. 888.
- 14 Villeneuve, p. 92.
- 15 See, in particular, "Of Music Boxes and Their Dangers", p. 299.
- 16 See the original sources for "Canadian Folklore", p. 238, as an example.
- 17 See "Overture", p. 106.

- 18 "Jusqu'ici il faut avouer que notre musique n'a pas été favorisée souvent de publications de genre. Les pauvres initiateurs et organisateurs du mouvement musical chez nous ont cherché en vain à fouiller le passé pour y trouver des directives. Nous n'avons pas eu dans le passé le sens documentaire et archivistique et les ouvrages comme celui que nous présentons sont extrêmement précieux." Eugène Lapierre. "Livres et autres publications". *La Presse*, 22 November 1930, p. 67.

MORIN: THE PARIS YEARS

Described by American *littérateur* Gertrude Stein as "the natural background for the twentieth century",¹ Paris of the 1910s was at once the thoroughfare and sojourn of the world's people and, in a narrow sense, a fiercely nationalistic city. Firmly steeped in centuries of tradition, yet ever adapting to keep pace with modern standards and fashion, it became a brilliant melting pot of and refuge for the intellectual, spiritual and artistic leaders of the day, a civilized metropolis bursting with excitement, renewal and life. This, as Stein asserts, made Paris more than ever the quintessential nucleus of the old and new in the arts:

Their tradition kept them from changing and yet they naturally saw things as they were, and accepted life as it is, and mixed things up without any reason at the same time. Foreigners were not romantic to them, they were just facts, nothing was sentimental they were just there, and strangely enough it did not make them the art of the twentieth century but it made them be the inevitable backdrop for it.¹

Such a vast and rich culture, where convention assimilated innovation, was most clearly embodied by music. The years immediately preceding the outbreak of war in 1914 were a period of overwhelming splendour in Parisian musical endeavour. Music stood as a Romantic art form which cultivated extreme refinement and subtlety of expression through a diverse complement of composers (Fauré, Debussy, Ravel et al) and works (*Pénélope*, *Jeux*, *Daphnis et Chloé*). At the same time, however, the restless tides of change that were to revolutionize twentieth-century music swept into the French capital with the Ballets russes phenomenon and the sheer brutal and physical impact of Stravinsky's *Sacre du*

printemps premiere. Many non-French musicians congregated in Paris, taking their aesthetic lead from concepts in vogue there, while many more, living elsewhere, looked to the city for a measure of guidance. As was the case in fashion, Paris was regarded to be the cutting edge of musical development throughout the world.³

Léo-Pol Morin's life and work were profoundly defined by his contact with this vital and liberally-minded Parisian milieu, like so many others of his time. After a childhood immersed in Quebecois culture and a society whose gaze inevitably focussed on its ancestral heritage, Morin's journeys to Paris (1912-14, 1919-25) quickened his perceptions and transformed his thinking to the potential of modern music as both a national and international medium of expression. The Canadian poet and Morin confidant, Marcel Dugas (1883-1947), vividly outlines the sensations and captivating power of their introduction to this city by the Seine:

We wanted to see and hear it all, and in this single moment of the age which, we thought, would never be troubled by civil or foreign war, it was easy to assuage our thirst and our appetites. It was a time in French life, full of sweet pleasures and wonders of every kind. It was intoxicating to breathe, to open one's eyes, to let one's heart beat... France was this Hesperides garden in which we walked and it sufficed to stretch out one's arm to pick a beautiful fruit from it.⁴

It is our misfortune that the young Morin himself did not attempt to document this vast array of sights, impressions and eminent personages abundantly experienced while in Paris. In the absence of such archival evidence, Dugas' 1942 Parisian memoir, *Approches*, offers tantalizing glimpses of their shared activities and encounters as they moved through the distinguished artistic circles of the day. A

contemporary of Morin, Dugas had attended the 1912 *Prix d'Europe* recipient's first piano recital in Paris, held in the salon of Mme. Charles de Pomairols. Morin performed keyboard works ranging from Franck's *Prélude, Choral et Fugue* to the latest of the Ravelian oeuvre on this occasion.⁵ Their chance meeting days later at Paris' Hotel Jacob sealed an immediate camaraderie and friendship that would carry them through a "world of living" in the subsequent eighteen months.

Referring to the year 1913 as "the year of miracles",⁶ Dugas mentions a variety of *soirées* and salons frequented by himself and Morin and, more specifically, enumerates the emergence of the Ballets russes during their stay in Paris: "It held enchantment, stylized gesture, a fountain spray rising to the stars, a severing of the laws of gravity. In short, an incomparable feast for the eyes."⁷ That he carefully details the roles of principal dancer, Nijinsky, in *Spectre de la rose*, *Petrushka*, and *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, and this in the context of his *Approches* tribute to Morin, suggests that he and Morin were frequent visitors to the Ballet's Théâtre du Châtelet and in fact attended the Paris performances of these important works.

However, it was Morin's well-documented presence at the Parisian musical event of the century, the Ballet's premiere of *Sacre du printemps*, that truly defined his pre-war tour of Paris and shaped his sensibilities as a performer and fledgling writer. Dugas effectively captures the electricity and emotion of the night in which Paris was "turned upside-down":

We had gone to the Casino de Paris with passion, a compelling faith, capable of removing all obstacles, of overcoming all opposition. The critics of the mu-

sical world were scattered throughout the audience. In a loge, Camille Saint-Saëns prepared to boil with rage.... The first [hearing] had provoked a scandal; the second would not in any way yield to the first, but the victory this time had to be won by the partisans of Stravinsky.⁹

It was no accident that Morin was among the earliest critics to discern the magnitude of the revolutionary *Sacre du printemps* in his *Le Nigog* writings (1918). He became a firm adherent of Stravinsky and the "new music" through his witness of this 1913 *Sacre* debut and ensuing melee. For an inexperienced and impressionable young man, the ballet served as a firsthand demonstration of the power of one musical work to move an international community of observers to extreme reactions, while projecting an essentially national and individualistic impression. Nor could it have hurt that Morin's newly-acquired ally, Maurice Ravel,⁹ resoundingly declared of *Sacre*: "I think this will be as important an event as the premiere of *Pelléas*."¹⁰ At this historical moment in the course of music's evolution, he fully understood the limitations of his native Quebecois culture and resolved to set about the defense and promotion such contemporary music through a dual career in music criticism and performance.

An equally significant consideration facilitating his Parisian revelations were his instructors, acquaintances and an intricate network of direct and indirect associations procured during his term in Paris. The interrelationship and correlation of noteworthy French-born "modern (national) music" proponents who crossed his path within this exact time frame furnishes a remarkable context for the majority of names later cited in his *Papiers de musique* article, "To Find National Meaning", and

corresponding works chosen for his performing repertoire (see Table 1 for a selective listing).

Reference has been made above to his crucial study with the Spanish virtuoso, Ricardo Viñes, a pianist celebrated for his readings of contemporaneous French music.¹¹ Viñes was concurrently tutoring Poulenc who, aside from his friendship with Manuel de Falla, also attended the controversial *Sacre* performance and played one of the pianos at the *Les Noces* premiere.¹² Similarly, Ravel was among Viñes' most trusted friends and a colleague of the *Club des Apaches*: the possibility of a Morin-Ravel introduction has been discussed elsewhere.¹³ Ravel himself moved in select and distinguished artistic circles, frequently encountering Jean Cocteau, André Gide, Florent Schmitt, Darius Milhaud, pupils Maurice Délage and Roland-Manuel, Alfredo Casella (with professional connections to Malipiero, Pizzetti, Respighi and Castelnuovo-Tedesco), Falla and Stravinsky.¹⁴

In light of the weight placed upon Morin's pianistic training with Viñes and Raoul Pugno as a source of his "modern" and "national" music sympathies,¹⁵ his concomitant study of harmony, counterpoint and fugue with Paris Conservatoire professor Jules Mouquet rarely receives significant consideration. However, such ties to the Conservatoire, an internationally renowned institution for the teaching of music, afforded Morin a further range of valued contacts hitherto overlooked in the search for his critical and performing roots. Available evidence would suggest that he was well acquainted with Gabriel Fauré, the reform-minded Conservatoire Director during the course of his scholarship study and a former mentor to Ravel, Schmitt and Casella.¹⁶ Given the

opportunity, Morin sought the elder Frenchman's advice regarding the performance of his works, a number of which appeared on Morin's subsequent recital programmes. The administrative documentation required to authorize and maintain his "foreign auditor" status at the school nevertheless brought him to Fauré's notice months before his actual arrival in the capital.

Furthermore, Vincent d'Indy and Paul Dukas were recent additions to the Conservatoire faculty as professors of composition and ensembles (1912 and 1913, respectively), while Arthur Honegger, Georges Auric, Albert Roussel and Jacques Ibert, representatives of a new generation in French music, were among the full-time registrants of its 1912 school year. That Morin secured any direct connection to these men is not readily ascertained, although he assuredly knew of them and heard their most recent compositions performed in conjunction with the Conservatoire's regular concert series. At a time in which he was just beginning to examine and formulate his own views about the potential of this vital contemporary music and a national vein of musical expression in the static Quebecois cultural life, his exposure to the Conservatoire personnel, together with associations garnered through Viñes and Ravel, represented a potent influence on his subsequent critical insights in *Papiers de musique*.

Through his revealing experiences of Paris' vital and progressive social, intellectual and artistic environment, Léo-Pol Morin entered into a Parisian aesthetic which coloured his music, his writing—indeed, his life. Yet as attractive as this level of creative stimulation in Paris might have been to the young man, it is significant to the development of Canadian

music that he ultimately chose to return to Canada and fight for the survival of his own music culture. His advanced, if not radical thoughts and musical language—the unmistakable fruit of two prolonged Parisian sojourns¹⁷—were inevitably misunderstood by a conservative and traditional Quebecois public. Nevertheless, his perseverance in this mission stands as Canada's enduring legacy:

It took a young force like Léo-Pol Morin to attempt to create a musical movement among us which, in its novelty, was going to impose itself upon a host of minds eager to open out, and disturb a certain inertia which paid an overly exclusive homage to the past, without bothering to prepare the future. The opposition he encountered only aroused the desire in him to communicate to others the faith with which he was animated.¹⁸

NOTES

- 1 Gertrude Stein. *Paris France*. New York: Liveright, 1970, p. 24.
- 2 Stein, p. 17.
- 3 Marc Vignal, ed. "Paris", in *Dictionnaire de la musique*. Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1987, p. 610.
- 4 "Nous voulions tout voir et tout entendre, et dans ce moment unique du siècle qui, pensions-nous, ne serait jamais troublé par la guerre civile ou étrangère, il était facile d'assouvir notre soif et nos appétits. C'était une époque dans la vie française, plein de douceurs et d'émerveillements de toutes sortes. Il était enivrant de respirer, d'ouvrir les yeux, de laissez battre son cœur.... La France était ce jardin de Hespérides dans lequel nous nous promenions et il suffisait de tendre le bras pour y cueillir un beau fruit." Marcel Dugas. "Léo-Pol Morin", in *Approches*. Québec: Editions du chien d'or, 1942, pp. 11-12.
- 5 Desautels, *EMC*, p. 887.

- 6 "l'année des miracles". Dugas, p. 21.
- 7 "Cela tenait de la féerie, du mouvement stylisé, du jet d'eau montant vers les astres, d'une rupture des lois de la pesanteur. Bref, une incomparable fête pour les yeux." Dugas, p. 21.
- 8 "On s'était porté au Casino de Paris avec un élan, une foi irrésistible, capable d'enlever tous les obstacles, de renverser toute opposition. Les critiques du monde musical étaient disséminés dans l'auditoire. Camille Saint-Saëns, dans une loge, s'apprêtait à écumer de rage.... La première [audition] avait suscité un scandale; la deuxième ne le céderait en rien à la première, mais la victoire, cette fois, allait être remportée par les partisans de Stravinsky." Dugas, pp. 17-18.
- 9 See "*Papiers de musique* and *The Ravelian Voice*", pp. 27-34.
- 10 Rollo H. Myers. *Ravel: Life and Works*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1960, p. 47.
- 11 See "Introduction", p. 3.
- 12 David Mason Greene. *Greene's Biographical Encyclopedia of Composers*. New York: Doubleday, 1985, p. 1134.
- 13 See "*Papiers de musique* and *The Ravelian Voice*", p. 28.
- 14 Myers, p. 31.
- 15 See, for example, Villeneuve, p. 70.
- 16 Greene, p. 770.
- 17 Morin's second journey to Paris (1919-25) is not investigated in this context due to inadequate primary and secondary source documentation. Dugas' *Approches*, an invaluable reference for the 1912-14 term, does not address Morin's activities of the 1920s. Moreover, by the time in which Morin returned to the French capital, many of the contacts cited herein were already firmly established and thus do not merit further elaboration.
- 18 "Il fallait une jeune force comme Léo-Pol Morin pour essayer de susciter chez nous un mouvement musical qui, par sa nouveauté, allait s'imposer à une foule d'esprits impatients de s'ouvrir, troubler certaines somnolences qui rendait au passé un trop exclusif hommage, sans s'inquiéter de préparer l'avenir. L'opposition qu'il rencontra ne fit qu'exciter chez lui le désir de communiquer aux autres la foi dont il était animé." Dugas, p. 29.

Table 1

Selected Performance Repertoire of Léo-Pol Morin

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| CANADIAN | |
| James Callihou | <i>Trois canadiennes, Aquarium, Three Eskimos</i> |
| Claude Champagne | <i>Prélude et filigrane</i> |
| Henri Gagnon | <i>Mazurka</i> |
| Rodolphe Mathieu | <i>Sonate, Trois préludes</i> |
| G.-E. Tanguay | <i>Air de ballet, Pavane, Deux préludes</i> |
| FRENCH | |
| Frédéric Chopin | <i>Waltzes, Etudes, Nocturnes, Polonaises, Mazurkas</i> |
| Claude Debussy | <i>Sonata for violon and piano, Suite Bergamasque, Estampes, Images, Preludes, Minstrels</i> |
| Gabriel Fauré | <i>Barcarolles, Romances, Nocturnes, Thème et Variations</i> |
| César Franck | <i>Prelude, Aria and Finale; Prelude, Chorale and Fugue</i> |
| Arthur Honegger | <i>Hommage à Ravel</i> |
| Darius Milhaud | <i>Saudades do Brazil</i> |
| Francis Poulenc | <i>Concert champêtre, Mouvements perpétuels, Suite for piano</i> |
| Maurice Ravel | <i>Jeux d'eau, Sonatine, Le Tombeau de Couperin, Ma Mère l'Oye, Gaspard de la nuit</i> |
| Albert Roussel | <i>Sonatine, op. 16</i> |
| Erik Satie | <i>Véritables préludes flasques pour un chien</i> |
| GERMAN | |
| Robert Schumann | <i>Carnaval, op. 26, Concerto in A Minor, Nocturnes, Romances, Novelettes</i> |

AUSTRIAN.....

Alban Berg *Sonata, op. 1*

Arnold Schoenberg *Six Little Pieces for Piano, op. 19*

SPANISH.....

Isaac Albéniz *Iberia*

Enrique Granados *Danses espagnoles,
Plaintes de la maja et le rossignol*

HUNGARIAN.....

Béla Bartók *Allegro barbaro, Suite op. 14*

RUSSIAN.....

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov *Piano Concerto*

Alexander Scriabin *Scherzo, op. 46; Désir, op. 57*

PAPIERS DE MUSIQUE AND THE RAVELIAN VOICE

In his capacity as critic, educator and performer over a period of twenty years, Léo-Pol Morin garnered widespread note both in Montreal and Paris as an ardent proponent of modern currents in musical composition. Prior to his journalistic career, he was a leading member of various Parisian groups and ensembles whose chief preoccupation lay in the dissemination of new music by contemporaries such as Honegger, Milhaud and Poulenc, among others. However, his greatest personal sympathies rested more closely with the fathers of this fledgling generation in French music: Gabriel Fauré, Claude Debussy and, in particular, Maurice Ravel (1875-1937).¹

The first performer and critic to bring such modern compositions into Canada, Morin conscientiously cultivated an unusually large and diverse selection of the Ravelian oeuvre in his concert repertoire, works which included *Jeux d'eau*, *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, *Ma Mère l'Oye* and *Gaspard de la nuit*.² Similarly, his concert reviews and features frequently referred to the nature and progress of the elder Frenchman's craft, and opportunities for the public to hear his compositions in Montreal. It may be said with little hesitation that Morin was, in fact, Ravel's most faithful promoter in Montreal, if not throughout the province of Quebec.

Yet Ravel's significance for Morin was not merely that of a favourite cause. The two men shared a strong professional association of mutual trust, respect and interests, and the seeds of a friendship spanning over ten years and two continents. That Ravel's voice seems to

pervade the very fabric of *Papiers de musique*, most notably in the section entitled "Tour of Europe in Seventeen Minutes, Return Through the United States" and in the article "In Favour of Jazz", testifies to the deep and powerful impact of this contact upon the thoughts and critical expression of its author. Many of Morin's citations in these expositions on music nationalism and jazz may be readily attributed to Ravel, serving as a unifying contextual thread for the opinions expressed therein.

The precise moment at which Morin and Ravel first met cannot be definitively established; however, their earliest encounters most certainly took place during Morin's first trip to Paris as the winner of the Canadian *Prix d'Europe* competition, a scholarship study undertaken between 1912 and the onset of the First World War. It is of some note that Morin's second Parisian teacher, Viñes, numbered Ravel among his closest friends at this time, rendering the possibility of an introduction by Viñes quite plausible.³

Nevertheless, evidence of another such occasion in the course of Morin's Parisian residence, presented by Marcel Dugas, merits equal consideration. Dugas' *Approches* reflects upon their youthful experiences as companions in the French capital at that time: the exuberance and seductive charms of Paris, places and events attended and the names that shaped their sensibilities. Of the frequent *soirées* of Mme. Valentine de Saint-Point, the great-granddaughter of Lamartine, he remembers one occasion frequented by Morin and himself with particular pleasure, an evening in which Mme. Valentine invited Indian dancers, Jean Cocteau and Maurice Ravel:⁴

The frivolous prince, Merlin the Magician, known as Cocteau, increased his jokes, the fire of his conversational art. He shone, bedazzled, intoxicated.... Maurice Ravel did not hide his joy. Moreover, he was greatly amused in listening to Cocteau, who had won all points of the conversation.⁵

Once again, Morin had every opportunity to solicit an introduction to Ravel at this event, if not to seize upon his own initiative and strike up a conversation, a more likely scenario at any rate for the brazen young man.

Certainly, by the time at which Maurice Ravel undertook his North American tour, from 4 January to 21 April 1928,⁶ Morin's professional alliance with him had crystallized. The first great French composer to appear in person in Canada under the auspices of the Pro-Musica Society,⁷ Ravel's itinerary took him to Vancouver, Toronto and, ultimately, to Montreal and Morin, where he played his own works for piano as well as accompanying enlisted singers in his *mélodies*.

Morin undoubtedly followed the progress of the Ravelian tour with great interest, not only to garner news of the Frenchman's reception in other regions of Canada, but also to prepare for his own role in the upcoming Montreal engagement. One interview in particular, conducted with Ravel by Augustus Bridle of the *Toronto Daily Star* (19 March 1928), serves as a compelling indicator of the range of the composer's views with which Morin would have been familiar, both through their personal and professional correspondence and in the print media. Similarities between the Ravelian sentiments and those which come to light in Morin's own *Papiers de musique* are unmistakable.⁸ Ravel states in the Bridle interview, "All composers are influenced by one another. There are

certain tricks that we all share in common—with minute differences."⁹ As Morin himself would later explain in the article "To Find National Meaning", music may be viewed as universal on the basis of a shared musical vocabulary; however, such music is typically infused with the character and spirit of its nation and people, therefore rendering it essentially national.¹⁰

The first indication of their concurrence of opinion on the role of jazz in art music may also be derived from the *Daily Star* feature, published on the occasion of Ravel's tour engagement in Toronto, in which he concisely asserts, "Jazz is universal. We are all affected by it; all schools, all composers, Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Falla—all of us. My own sonata [violin and piano, 1927-28] I made to represent the workaday world—wheels and things."¹¹ In his *Papiers de musique*, it may be seen that Morin echoes this very thought process:

When the influence that this art has exercised on musicians as varied as *Stravinsky, Ravel, Messager, Milhaud, Auric, Wiéner or Délage, Hindemith, Butting or Gruenberg* is considered, it cannot be doubted that this joy of rhythm *has already played a considerable role...It is not beyond the realm of possibility that something as distinct might come out of it which expresses our mechanical need to live and its frenzy.* [italics mine]¹²

An event which took place on the New York leg of Ravel's tour, immediately prior to his engagement in Montreal, is of considerable significance to Morin as he prepared to greet his colleague and friend on his own soil. March 7 marked Ravel's fifty-third birthday as well as that of his good friend and New York resident, the Canadian singer Eva Gauthier. Such an important occasion did not pass unnoticed: Ravel was treated to an extravagant gathering at Gauthier's apartment in his

honour. Among the invited guests was George Gershwin, who was urged to play for those assembled after dinner.¹³ Gilles Potvin appropriately captures Ravel's reaction to the impromptu performance:

Maurice Ravel was totally charmed by the music of his young American colleague. It appears that Gershwin then sought the favour of obtaining lessons from Ravel. According to Eva Gauthier, Ravel is said to have replied: "You are now a first-rate Gershwin. If you study with me, you will become a second-rate Ravel."¹⁴

Judging by this instant and unqualified embrace of Gershwin, it is unlikely that Ravel's profound enthusiasm resulting from the encounter would have in any significant way dampened when, some twelve days later, he arrived in Montreal. Based on the uncanny timing involved, it does not seem unreasonable to extrapolate that, when given the opportunity to speak with Morin in person once again, the experience was eagerly recounted. That Morin was inclined to accept Ravel's word at face value, as demonstrated above, provides a clear context for his support of Gershwin as "the most striking thought in American music" in the article "In America".¹⁵ Morin himself had no occasion to meet the great Gershwin, nor to hear any of the American's works in concert.

A comparable example of the power of Ravel over Morin's views on jazz emerges in an interview with the French composer, undertaken by an unnamed *La Presse* critic on 19 April 1928, minutes after Ravel's arrival in Montreal. A rather striking remark made by Ravel during the dialogue serves not only as the title of the feature, but also as further proof of Morin's patterning of Ravel's tastes and opinion. Under the headline, "Le Jazz n'est pas destiné à mourir, il survivra, au contraire, et c'est par lui que commencera la musique américaine", the critic writes,

Mr. Ravel—and he makes no secret of it—is an enthusiast of American music. It is very likely that he will write a composition for the orchestra of Paul Whiteman. "Jazz", he says, "exerts a great influence on the world and composers today. It is a music which is destined to survive and which will be the point of departure of American music.... It is the strength of its rhythm which makes up its popularity today."¹⁶

The final concert of Ravel's extensive North American tour took place at the Théâtre Saint-Denis in Montreal on 19 April 1928. Billed as "an artistic event which is out of the ordinary",¹⁷ the key to the farewell performance was the first and only presentation of *Ma Mère l'Oye* on the tour, a set of five pieces for four-hand piano performed at the end of the programme by Ravel and Morin. Morin had singlehandedly made the chamber and piano works of Ravel known in Montreal prior to this reunion on stage, whereas Ravel, having met many of the figures spoken of by Morin (including Schmitt, Milhaud, Roland-Manuel, Casella and Stravinsky), ultimately guided and shaped his vision of music and certain enthusiasms expressed in *Papiers de musique*. It is thus a fitting tribute to their complementary personal and professional relationship that the two men should share the stage on this, their last rendezvous, as expressed by Morin in his review "En marge du concert de Maurice Ravel":

But it matters little, dear Ravel, that you be a first-, second- or third-rate virtuoso. That is not the issue.... Our admiration has more noble and eternal motives. What we love in you is the creator of lively images, of pages as perfectly beautiful as those of the *Trio*, *Daphnis*, *Jeux d'eau*, *Le Gibet*, *La Valse*, *Chansons madécasses*, *Sonatas*...¹⁸

NOTES

- 1 Desautels, *EMC*, p. 887.
- 2 See "Table 1: Performance Repertoire of Léo-Pol Morin", pp. 25-26.
- 3 Myers, p. 31.
- 4 Dugas, p. 12.
- 5 "Le prince frivole, Merlin l'Enchanteur dit Cocteau, multipliait ses plaisanteries, les feux de son art de la conversation. Il brillait, éblouissait, enivrait... Maurice Ravel ne cachait pas sa joie. Il s'était, d'ailleurs, beaucoup amusé en écoutant Jean Cocteau, qui avait gagné tous les points de la conversation." Dugas, p. 14.
- 6 Gilles Potvin. "Maurice Ravel au Canada", in *Musical Canada: Words and Music Honouring Helmut Kallmann*. John Beckwith and Frederick A. Hall, eds. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988, p. 149.
- 7 Originally the Franco-American Musical Society (1920), the Pro-Musica Society was founded in 1923 to facilitate exchanges, particularly of composers, on an international level. Casella, Kodaly, Bartók and Nadia Boulanger also came to America under the auspices of this organization. See Potvin, p. 150.
- 8 A comparison of their basic premises on the subject of nationalism, that music must be national as a product of cultural disparities, has already been undertaken in "*Tour of Europe in Seventeen Minutes, Return Through the United States*", p. 42.
- 9 Maurice Ravel, in Augustus Bridle. "Maurice Ravel Declares That All Life is Music". *Toronto Daily Star*, 19 March 1928, p. 8.
- 10 See p. 107.
- 11 Ravel, in Bridle, p. 8.
- 12 "In Favour of Jazz", p. 294.
- 13 Potvin, p. 159.
- 14 "Maurice Ravel fut totalement séduit par la musique de son jeune collègue américain. Il appert que Gershwin sollicita alors de Ravel la faveur d'obtenir des leçons de lui. Selon Eva Gauthier, Ravel aurait répliqué: 'Vous êtes maintenant un Gershwin de première qualité. Si vous étudiez avec moi, vous deviendrez un Ravel de deuxième qualité.'" Potvin, p. 159.

- 15 See p. 128.
- 16 "M. Ravel—et il ne s'en cache pas—est un enthousiaste de la musique américaine. Il est très probable qu'il écrive une composition pour l'orchestre de Paul Whiteman. 'Le jazz,' dit-il, 'exerce aujourd'hui une très grande influence sur le monde et les compositeurs. C'est une musique qui est destinée à survivre et qui sera le point de départ de la musique américaine.... Ce qui fait aujourd'hui sa popularité, c'est la force de son rythme.'" Potvin, pp. 159-60.
- 17 "un événement artistique qui sort de l'ordinaire" Potvin, p. 160.
- 18 "Mais peu importe, cher Ravel, que vous soyez un virtuose de première, deuxième ou troisième dimension. Là n'est pas la question.... Notre admiration a de plus hauts mobiles et de plus éternels. Ce que nous aimons en vous, c'est la créateur d'images vivants, de pages aussi parfaitement belles que celles du *Trio*, de *Daphnis*, des *Jeux d'eau*, du *Gibet*, de *La Valse*, des *Chansons madécasses*, des *Sonates...*" Morin, "En marge du concert de Maurice Ravel". *La Patrie*, 21 April 1928, p. 38. Morin's feature based on his experiences with Ravel, entitled "Sources d'inspiration pour une musique canadienne" (*La Patrie*, 30 June 1928, p. 34), appeared two months after the present review.

COMMENTARY

"OVERTURE"

In his prefatory article "Overture", and illustrated throughout the course of *Papiers de musique*, Léo-Pol Morin repeatedly emphasizes his vision of a predominantly didactic function in his critical work. He does not see himself solely as a journalist, conveying a series of facts to a submissive readership; rather, he compels his public to absorb these raw data and opinion, and in turn to seriously evaluate their own views and values in the face of his chosen subject matter. Because this educational role is stated as a purpose from the outset and confirmed in a dedication to his readers, it serves to define his approaches taken not only in daily reviewing, but also in the expository features which comprise the bulk of *Papiers de musique*.

The article "Eskimo Folklore" is a case in point. Focused almost exclusively on the "here and now" of the Montreal musical establishment of the late 1920s, the insular readership addressed by Morin would neither have been aware of the existence of an Inuit music heritage nor have contemplated the ramifications of this culture on their own. Accordingly, he assumes a teacher's mantle and offers a thorough cultural survey of "the treasures that this latest creation of our musical literature holds":¹ the nature of its rich melodies and rhythms and the problems of translating such a distinctive source of inspiration into the foreign, Western-based musical culture of Canada. In doing so, he fosters an

awareness of the potential for a broader spectrum in Canadian music while promoting ethnomusicological concerns as an alternative to the customary scholarly fare of post-World War I Montreal.

Nevertheless, defining Morin's vision of himself as critic and author remains a problematic task at best. A large part of this ambiguity is reflected in a pointed statement made in "Overture": "It stems from what I consider the double role of the *musicographe*: he is both the informant and teacher of the public."² The word *musicographe* appears not to have a satisfactory English-language equivalent, and it is indeed this word which lies at the heart of Morin's critical functioning.³ That *musicographe* appears in numerous French-language dictionaries confirms its acceptance in francophone parlance, but offers the translator little guidance. As a term that cannot be effectively conveyed by the English language, it may be variously interpreted as "music writer", "music historian", an archaic word for "musicologist" or any combination thereof. The nuances are too fine to be certain. Perhaps, as alluded to above, *musicographe* represents Morin's ideal, which he would define in terms of the dual informant-teacher role.

It may be stated with confidence, however, that Morin faced an imposing challenge in addressing, indeed in confronting and educating the vastly divergent readership of the "big daily newspapers" for which he wrote over a three-year period. It is a challenge which he met as directly and honestly as he knew how, and through which he allowed his vision of himself and responsibilities as a *musicographe* to guide and inspire his efforts. To be sure, his critical writings were subject to the dictates of musical events in Montreal and the immediate needs of his

public, thus precluding a complete record of Canadian music history for the modern reader. Yet this Quebecois milieu represented his point of departure for a large number of issues of broader scope, import and value, which has culminated in this *Papiers de musique* volume. *Papiers de musique* is, indeed, a tangible measure of Léo-Pol Morin's success and distinction both as a critic and educator of the Canadian peoples.

NOTES

- 1 "Eskimo Folklore", p. 242.
- 2 "Overture", pp. 105-06.
- 3 Those terms which Morin himself coins are placed in a "<<" bracket form; however, this one is not.

**"TOUR OF EUROPE IN SEVENTEEN MINUTES,
RETURN THROUGH THE UNITED STATES"**

In the span of a relatively abbreviated, yet prolific professional life, Léo-Pol Morin produced a large and outstanding series of columns on foreign musical life, both for *La Patrie* and *La Presse*. Intrigued by the progressive currents unfolding with breathtaking speed and diversity in Europe, his goal in these columns was to make known in Canada the concurrent innovations abroad. It is here that his extended trips to France permitted him to draw the necessary information from the source itself. Out of concern for the undeveloped personality of his native Canadian music, he remained closely abreast of emerging nationalist trends in European music culture. The initial section in his *Papiers de musique*, entitled "Tour of Europe in Seventeen Minutes, Return Through the United States", represents the culmination of this concern, a consolidation of extensive observations into a single, comprehensive survey of nationalism in music.

Within the "Tour of Europe" framework, Morin grapples with the issue of national character in music versus its universal impact and meaning. Using the music of Wagner as a model, he demonstrates that such music is not international or universal; rather, it is innately and necessarily national in terms of its personality, medium of thought and language. Only when recognized as the music of one particular country does it achieve a broadened, more global impact. The cultural boundaries, however, remain in place. He acknowledges this need for national music languages to express specifically national ideas and, through the "Tour of Europe" vehicle, he explores the varied use of folklore in Europe as a

resource and source of inspiration for distinctive, indigenous expression, a self-termed process of "re-nationalization" in music. In his mind, France serves as the epitome of this revitalized national language, unconsciously and profoundly assimilated into a pure music.

In its inherently dramatic and emotional nature, German Romanticism contained the germ of its own destruction. Many minds became taken with this germ in nineteenth-century Europe: the idea of "national musics". Indeed, the turn of the century saw the birth of national schools of composition throughout the continent, in which people were tempted to find their identity in the exploitation of folklore, nonmusical programmatic elements drawn from national folklore, myth and literature, or the characteristics and spirit of the nation. This heightened awareness of and questioning about what it meant to be "national" in music, and about nationalism in general, overtook North America at a later juncture, spawned in part by the arrival of Dvořák and Bartók.¹ Nationalism in music, as Arthur Farwell pointedly notes, became and remained a tenuous subject at that time:

It is dangerous to attempt to explain its issues clearly, and especially in a few words. It breeds impatient contention. Let a man broach the subject in any supposedly intelligent company, and half or more of those present will leap to dispose of the matter by affirming that music is a "universal language" and knows no country, or that there is "only good and bad music", while the other half (or more likely a minority) will insist that music is far from being a truly universal language, and that wherever it amounts to anything it can be proved that it strikes root deeply in its proper national soil... The difficulty in arriving at a general concurrence upon the values involved lies in the fact that not even the basic truisms of the matter, to say nothing of the more delicate points, have yet achieved wide dissemination.²

M. D. Calvocoressi, in 1914, frankly affirms that "...the question of music nationalism, indeed, appears to be one of the most puzzling that the modern historian, critic, or plain music lover has to deal with.... Suddenly launched in the midst of things, they had to make their own bricks (and even learn the technique of brick-making) as well as to discover the architectural principles of which they stood in need."¹

Thus in full strength at the beginning of the present century, musical nationalism represented a current, albeit somewhat ambiguous state of mind which did not escape Morin's watchful eye and thoughtful pen. As a product of the time in which he lived, one quickly senses his great interest in this issue in the "Tour of Europe" section. Yet, at the same time, his confusion and struggle in coming to terms with it are equally in evidence, manifested in the over-explanation of his views. It would seem that he has a vague conception of what nationalism in music signifies for him, but cannot adequately express it in his prose. From a syntactical standpoint, his sentences are lengthy and complicated by a tremendous number of clauses which do not lend themselves well to English-language translation. This corresponds to certain difficulties of content, the most prominent of which is a tendency towards increasing neutrality as he proceeds in his exposition. For instance, having previously stressed the importance of drawing on indigenous personality, spiritual and folkloric characteristics of a nation in developing a national music aesthetic that is recognizable as such on an international stage, he appears to have softened his stand at the point in which he cites Stravinsky:

But while this cold, insensitive and flawless art goes beyond the ordinarily delimited bounds within the frontiers, representing the most complete marvel of pure intelligence, it remains Russian through its ability to be everywhere in its country. On the other hand, it has an international impact through the power of its medium and the strength of its ideas.⁴

His apparent ambivalence here, where Stravinsky's oeuvre achieves universal meaning not through its Russian nature but through a set of relatively generic traits, is indeed symptomatic of a time in which nationalism represents

...an interplaying tangle of considerations of geography, race, nation, history, psychology, intermingled and confused with considerations of musical form, content, and degree of development...confronted by a discouraging array of exceptions, modifying conditions and apparent contradictions.⁵

Faced with the daunting task of summarizing and drawing conclusions on an intricate subject that he himself has not yet fully mastered, it is plausible that Morin would have sought some level of guidance from secondary sources, especially with respect to certain countries to which he had no previous exposure, such as Germany, Italy and Hungary. This impression is further strengthened in his piecemeal use of original newspaper column sources in the formation of the "Tour of Europe" section; in fact, a large proportion of the content appearing therein was written expressly for *Papiers de musique*.

A feasible French-language authority to which Morin might have had access is the volume edited by A. Lavignac and Lionel de la Laurencie, entitled *Encyclopédie de la musique et dictionnaire du Conservatoire*. Published in Paris in the years 1920-31, concurrent with Morin's residence in the French capital, the *Encyclopédie* exhibits a wide

variety of features including descriptions of compositions by true title or translation, geographical entries and surveys of national musics.⁶

Although not specifically referred to in this section devoted to musical nationalism, it is instructive to note that in a later *Papiers de musique* article, "In Favour of Jazz", he does paraphrase Laurencie in order to establish the long tradition of jazz in European music.⁷

Morin's need for direction on the nationalism subject is similarly witnessed in his directly cited choices of authority for this section. In consideration of his own views and those expressed in external sources by Maurice Ravel, André Coeuroy and Alfredo Casella, among others, strong parallels and obvious potential for influence emerge. The pervasive voice of Ravel in his thoughts and critical expression has already been established⁸ and, in the "Tour of Europe" context, several of his basic premises and enthusiasms may at once be attributed to the French composer. Speaking of nationalism in music in an interview with Augustus Bridle for the *Toronto Daily Star* (19 March 1928), Ravel remarks:

Much of it is national. We are all minutely different. *French are unlike Germans.* Schoenberg and *Stravinsky* and *Falla* and Rieti, all agree upon being opposed to romanticism *but also differ in themselves.* [italics mine]⁹

He expands upon this vision of music nationalism in a subsequent interview with an unnamed critic of *La Presse* on 19 April 1928, and in a manner not unlike that which Morin implements in the article "To Find National Meaning":

Speaking then of modern composers, Mr. Ravel does not hide his preferences for Stravinsky, Falla and Vaughan Williams. "The latter", he says, "is truly a national composer. His inspiration is really English.

It is a mistake to say that art is universal. On the contrary, art is essentially national. It is inspired by the legends and traditions of a country. An artist is always under the influence of his milieu, his native country."¹⁰

Morin cites the French musicologist André Coeuroy on at least two occasions in the "Tour of Europe" section; however, Coeuroy's authority in his prose is, likewise, far more prevalent than he admits. He speaks of the same Italian composers as does Coeuroy in his chapter "A la recherche d'un discipline", from *Panorama de la musique contemporaine* (Paris: Editions Kra, 1928). Where the concluding sentence of the latter reads, in translation, "Italian music has relearned the Rossinian grin",¹¹ that of Morin states, "Italy has begun to smile again as in the days of its former splendour."¹² Regarding his thoughts on Russian national music and Stravinsky, he appears once again to be indebted to Coeuroy, who writes:

It is the Ballets russes which permitted Stravinsky to reveal his true nature, of which the first profound creation is *Petrouchka*, the first epic expression is the *Sacre du printemps*, and the first pure work is [*Les*] *Noces*.¹³

From this source, Morin adapts a sentence about The Russian Five and Coeuroy's final paragraph into much of the content for the first paragraph of his "In Russia" ("To Find National Meaning"). To varying degrees, discreet borrowings such as this are also the rule with Alfredo Casella ("In Italy") and Pierre Lasserre ("In France", "Postlude").¹⁴

Perhaps Morin was merely maintaining the status quo of his day on musical nationalism, confirmed in a certain amount of reliance on others' views. Even if this were the case, he did so at a juncture in which the parameters and issues of national musics had not yet been sufficiently studied and definitively ascertained. Within a scant five years, Ralph

Vaughan Williams would popularize the idea of national character over universality in music in his important book, *National Music and Other Essays*:

It is not even true that music has an universal vocabulary, but even if it were so, it is the use of the vocabulary that counts and no one supposes that French and English are the same language because they happen to use twenty-five out of twenty-six of the letters of their alphabet in common. In the same way, in spite of the fact that they have musical alphabet in common, nobody could mistake Wagner for Verdi or Debussy for Richard Strauss. And, similarly, in spite of wide divergencies of personal style, there is a common factor in the music say of Schumann and Weber: and this common factor is nationality.¹⁵

Moreover, it may be seen that in spite of the complexities of these issues,¹⁶ Morin exhibits an exceptional command of principal figures and currents in the nationalist movement at that time, emphasizing how each in turn fits into this burgeoning trend in music. In fact, he possesses a near-prophetic insight into those composers who would ultimately reshape the face of music history in the twentieth century through radical experimentation. For instance, he consistently discredits the atonal medium of Schoenberg as a dead end for national expression through Western art music composition, this at a rather early stage in the composer's career:

The young Germans will hear nothing of the fussy language of Schoenberg. This art is not direct enough for them and does not represent life in the present, much less the future.¹⁷

Such sentiments are strikingly reinforced by Arthur Honegger, a bold musical writer in his own right whose invention mingled traditional harmony with atonal techniques. Buoyed by the immediate and unanimous success of *Le Roi David*, an oratorio which marked the end of his

professional allegiance to Schoenberg, Honegger remarked of the Austrian, "By taking his ideas to their logical conclusion, he came to a dead end, an art of abstraction. He lost touch with the public."¹⁸

Morin's prescience apropos of Schoenberg was neither fortuitous nor particularly unusual. With a singular power of observation that typifies his critical oeuvre, he similarly discerns and credits Paul Hindemith with the renewal and subsequent resurgence of the German musical idiom:

In a leap, [Germany] follows close on the heels of the boldest theories. A Hindemith has suddenly appeared, willful and determined to make the new voice of his country heard. He dares everything and everything is right for him, so long as it speaks the national language, a post-war language that has retained only the external richness of Romanticism, which can strengthen and "metalize itself" as it suits a music from the concrete period.¹⁹

Written in the late 1920s, his appraisal effectively captures the essence of Hindemith's music before the composer had garnered substantial acclaim for his innovation in music. At this juncture, Hindemith was only beginning to formulate his theories of *Gebrauchsmusik* and the corresponding remarkable changes to his compositional method. The monumental *Mathis der Maler* was not revealed to the musical world until 1934, some six years later.

In light of the foregoing illustrations, Léo-Pol Morin's accomplishment in and contribution to the general field of musical nationalism becomes evident. More than simply a product of his time, he stands apart from Canadians of his era as a thinker, writer and critic in addressing this controversial subject matter. However, there is more at stake for him than a mere "taking of the pulse" of the European

condition. His careful consideration of and personal struggle with the constitution and merits of national schools of music is ultimately undertaken as a point of reference and measurement for parallel achievements in Canadian music. It is indeed through this sole force that he sets the stage for the central function of *Papiers de musique*: to promote an indigenous Canadian music, a compositional medium and school of thought that might be acknowledged as typical of the land and its peoples.

NOTES

- 1 Arthur Farwell. "Nationalism in Music", in *The International Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians*. Oscar Thompson, ed. New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., Tenth Edition, 1975, pp. 1485-90.
- 2 Farwell, p. 1485.
- 3 Calvocoressi, in Farwell, p. 1485.
- 4 "To Find National Meaning", p. 113.
- 5 Farwell, p. 1486.
- 6 James B. Coover. "Dictionaries and Encyclopedias of Music", in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. Stanley Sadie, ed. London: MacMillan, 1980, vol. 5, pp. 441-59.
- 7 See "In Favour of Jazz", p. 292. It is also possible, albeit difficult to substantiate, that he was aware of and consulted Georges Humbert's French translation of the monumental Riemann *Musik-Lexicon: Dictionnaire de musique*, the second edition of which was published in Lausanne by Payot et cie. in 1913.
- 8 See "*Papiers de musique* and The Ravelian Voice", p. 32.

- 9 Bridle, p. 8. See Morin's definition in "To Find National Meaning", pp. 107-08.
- 10 "Parlant ensuite des compositeurs modernes, M. Ravel ne cache pas ses préférences pour Stravinsky, Falla, et Vaughan Williams. 'Ce dernier', dit-il, 'est vraiment un compositeur national. Son inspiration est vraiment anglaise. C'est un erreur de dire que l'art est universel. Au contraire, l'art est essentiellement national. Il s'inspire des légendes et des traditions d'un pays. Un artiste subit toujours l'influence de son milieu, de son pays natal." Ravel, in Potvin, p. 160.
- 11 Coeuroy, p. 198.
- 12 "To Find National Meaning", p. 112.
- 13 "Ce sont les Ballets russes qui ont permis à Stravinsky de manifester sa vraie nature, dont la première réalisation profonde est *Petrouchka*, dont la première expression épique est le *Sacre du printemps*, dont la première oeuvre pure est [*Les*] *Noces*." Coeuroy, pp. 198-99.
- 14 See corresponding "Notes" in "To Find National Meaning", pp. 117-22, for further information.
- 15 Ralph Vaughan Williams. *National Music and Other Essays*. London: Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 1-2.
- 16 Such questions are yet to be resolved in satisfactory fashion by the present-day scholarly community.
- 17 "To Find National Meaning", p. 111.
- 18 James Harding. *The Ox on the Roof: Scenes from Musical Life in Paris in the Twenties*. London: Macdonald, 1972, p. 129.
- 19 "To Find National Meaning", pp. 110-11.

"IN SEARCH OF A CANADIAN MUSIC"

From his childhood days, Léo-Pol Morin was made acutely aware of his artistic surroundings and the importance of preserving his native culture. Steeped in a musical tradition which had come to define his people over a period of centuries, he understood the unique position of this cultural inheritance within the Canadian fabric and felt a personal stake in ensuring its future. His formative experiences in the vibrant and flourishing climate of Paris—the heartbeat of continental Europe—only affirmed the necessity of overcoming resistance to a crucial process of transformation and growth.

Strengthened in his resolve to bring such apathy to a halt, Morin utilized his second *Papiers de musique* segment, "In Search of a Canadian Music", to examine the music culture of Canada (more specifically, of Montreal) in the 1920s and its status in terms of compositional practice and standards, the quality of education, public perceptions and the general artistic climate. It is exemplary of both the man and critic that, couched in a "tough love" assessment exposing the symptoms of his cherished culture's decline, lay his conscientious and deep-rooted vision for renewal: the genesis of a typically "Canadian" music and its secured future within Canadian society and on the world stage.

Morin's Montreal of the early twentieth century embarked upon the restoration and consolidation of cultural enterprises from the preceding century. The onset of World War I curtailed the city's artistic spirit to the extent that the will to revitalize the displaced activity in the 1920s was inconsistent and half-hearted at best. Perhaps in no other area was

this tendency more strongly reflected than in Montreal's musical life. With the dissolution of the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal in 1919, professional orchestral performances were offered sporadically and most often by visiting North American ensembles, heavily indebted to the popular French repertoire of Gounod, Massenet and Saint-Saëns. Choral singing remained the mainstay of amateur music-making. Perpetuated by organizations such as the Association des Chanteurs de Montréal (est. 1918), Association chorale Brassard (1921) and the Montreal Elgar Choir (1923), audiences heard selected works of native sons Guillaume Couture (1851-1915), Frédéric Pelletier (1870-1944) and Amédée Tremblay (1876-1949) amidst abundant offerings spanning Mendelssohn and Berlioz to Franck and Fauré.¹

Although closely tied to its society's economic fortunes, opera experienced a tremendous upsurge in public interest during the interwar period. This extraordinary inclination was fuelled by two distinct circumstances: the guest engagement of the renowned Metropolitan Opera Company under the baton of Toscanini (1911), and an influx of French-born opera singers settling in Montreal as teachers. The Montreal Opera Company, founded in 1910 "to develop the artistic abilities of the members, to instill in the public a liking for good wholesome music and to work for the establishment of a lyric theatre for and by Canadians",² enjoyed several seasons distinguished as much through its ambitious repertoire (*La Bohème*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Tosca*, *Aïda*, and *Carmen*) as by the quality of its performances. Not only did the company retain established international singers, but it was also one of few performing bodies which afforded Montreal's younger talents the invaluable

opportunity for exposure. While unsuccessful as an attempt to create a permanent operatic contingent, the Montreal Opera Company nevertheless rendered the city a Canadian leader in the professional-level production of grand opera.³

Inasmuch as the Montreal educational system could not keep pace with the ever-increasing demand for specialized performers, the majority of skilled musicians sustaining the metropolitan musical base were indeed immigrants. Few of the city's budding talents were discovered: those who received such recognition were generally obliged to seek further training in Europe, and particularly in France. The European conservatories were professional schools offering programmes of study under heavy State subsidization, whereas economic considerations in Montreal precluded a similar development. With music omitted in the elementary school curriculum, the task of mass music education often fell to private teachers and convent schools, both vying for the most gifted pupils. Only post-secondary education, somewhat embryonic and inadequate until the turn of the century, experienced considerable musical growth through the leadership of the McGill Conservatorium (est. 1904), the Conservatoire national de musique (1905; affiliated with the University of Montreal, 1921-51) and the Ecole normale de musique (1927). However, as in the present day, these institutions opened their doors solely to those who could pay for their training.⁴

Morin essentially found himself an active participant in and proponent of a "foreign"-based music culture in Montreal. Garnering public respect on the basis of reputed personalities rather than its repertoire, this milieu had nothing to call its own—students, performers,

composers or compositions. Convinced that Montreal's acute state of affairs represented the status quo in Canadian culture, he candidly declared in the article "In Search of Genius":

For, strictly speaking, if the musical idiom is considered in its most objective and characteristic sense, there is no more a Canadian music than there is a Canadian language. The French or English of Canadians is recognized by a certain turn of phrase, certain archaisms or in the accent. But Canadian music still has no distinctive features...our music recalls the gentle conventions of France or elsewhere, but its vocabulary is most limited and it still does not know the fluent turn of a natural and rich language.⁵

This was certainly not the first occasion in Morin's critical career in which he challenged the merit of his compatriots' musical endeavour. Fresh from his maturing contact with Paris and writing his inaugural feature as a critic, "La Légende de l'art musical canadien et les musiciens de Montréal",⁶ he brought the same issue to light a decade earlier in the most forceful manner possible: a direct comparison with the masters of Western art music:

Although they express themselves in an identical sonorous language, it is accepted that a Russian art, a French art, a German art are absolutely different in their essence. And today, what a difference between a German Strauss and a French Debussy! Yet the means are the same. Nothing of the sort exists in what we would call Canadian music. Thus I insist and I repeat that there is no Canadian musical art.⁷

In the present *Papiers de musique* context, Morin's blunt response to his artistic environment may be explained through his enumeration of several factors impeding the advent of a national music, as follows:

i. *The deficiency of genius, prestige and influence of Canadian composers within the national and international communities.* He discerned this

problem of variable, even non-existent standards among the nation's musicians as a product of an insufficient and often derivative craft, drawn in piecemeal fashion from Canadian and European schools:

We can no longer ignore the fact that if a Canadian music does not yet exist, it is because no creator has been equal to making it... In all of that, let us say up to the war of 1914, to give the youngest time to fully "manifest themselves", nothing could be regarded with admiration, less still with envy, by the well-informed and impartial judges.⁹

ii. *The reliance on a foreign aesthetic and repertoire to create the illusion of culture in Canada.* In the absence of fine "Canadian" compositional talents in his day, he cautioned that a false sense of security attached to the European musical "canon" had rendered little initiative to cultivate, at the very least, music written *by Canadians*:

But has it been considered that if we did not have foreign music here, if we had to be secretive about it, we would not have very much to hear. Could we really sustain ourselves solely with music created in our country? This simple suggestion fills me with anxiety...⁹

iii. *The apathy and misconceptions of the general public regarding the nature and function of the composer's craft in Canada.* Referring to the "paradoxical and exceptional circumstances" under which Canadian composers were obligated to serve, he depicted a post-World War I society preoccupied solely with the development of material comforts to the exclusion of intellectual and artistic pursuits. In this creative environment where the composer was considered an anomaly and writing music was "not a craft like the others",¹⁰ many musicians who wished to

devote themselves to composition could not find the necessary public interest and support to pursue their work:

Well! do we believe that our idea of music is of a nature to encourage a Canadian composer to produce? Do we believe that in the certainty of never being taken seriously, of never being performed, these composers will work with the same ardour, if they do not have an invincible genius to sustain them? There are limits to altruism and self-abandonment, even among musicians.¹¹

iv. *The absence of "a responsibly instituted and supervised scientific curriculum"¹² in the musical training of amateurs and professionals.* He saw the poorly grounded Canadian educational system as a key perpetrator of preconceived societal notions, presenting a limited and biased view of that which constituted music and composition in Canada. Moreover, he was clearly alarmed that none of these schools were prepared to teach composition, but rather performance.

It is evident from the foregoing considerations that Morin was observing and reacting to a vicious circle in the Canadian milieu which would indefinitely deter the production of an indigenous music without firm and effective intervention. In this "In Search of a Canadian Music" grouping, he inferred that such "Canadian" music would remain non-existent, or at best mediocre, as long as the populace of the nation continued to regard it with disinterest and suspicion. With the public and its few talented composers both manifesting the attitude, "If they don't care, why should we?", one problem merely fuelled the other and little progress could be made.

The key and common thread in Morin's emerging vision of Canadian music, as expressed through his four cited factors, was the need for

educational reform in the general and specialized sectors of music training:

While we have felt the need to educate ourselves in other fields of intellectual culture, in the Sciences and Fine Arts, this need threatens us but slightly on the music side. Yet music will not always put up with this starvation wage and we will have to invest it with this official character which will allow it to be taken seriously and to develop normally.¹³

From as early as 1926, Morin had already recognized the need for a solid musical education and advocated the teaching of music from the youngest age. In times of economic hardship, particularly that of early twentieth-century Montreal, music was often the first to suffer; however, that the subject was materializing in the schools' curricula conveyed its importance to everyday life. If nothing else, it was "art for art's sake". He perceived nevertheless that the students of his day were not receiving adequate instruction in musical appreciation: although told to "enjoy" the repertoire offered them, they were not learning how to listen to its many components. As such, these young men and women were only upholding a public which relied all too heavily on its music critics to formulate an accepted value judgement—"those who ordinarily content themselves with the praises of Mr. Know-It-All, be they the most extravagant, the most misleading and, therefore, the most dangerous."¹⁴

Through "In Search of a Canadian Music", Morin promoted an educational system which would cultivate the awareness and official recognition of music's value in Canadian society:

It is time that we clearly realize it: our culture in the domain of the spirit, I should say of fine arts and most especially still of music, is not equal to our material strengths. Being aware of this would already be the mark of a stronger conscience.¹⁵

The emphasis of instruction in Morin's revitalized teaching plan was to be placed on literacy in music, reaching both talented students and "non-performers". He reasoned that if one learned to understand and love music at a young age, developing an aesthetic curiosity for it, the choice of the musician's *métier* later in life—be it as a performer, composer or critic—would be made out of a genuine esteem for this creative medium. Even if music was not favoured in this way, the lifelong appreciation of music, instilled by such an educational plan, would remain a tangible result.¹⁶ Furthermore, he saw particular benefit in stimulating this young public's taste to Canadian music: developing a cult of national superiority, as it were, through acquired knowledge of the country's rich cultural heritage. Only then would the interest and support of the community-at-large for Canadian music be heightened and their belief in its preservation internalized.

At the same time, Morin insisted upon the necessity and urgency of providing future musicians with a specialized school in Canada in which to learn their craft. It was understood in his day that those who aspired to the compositional profession had to complete their education overseas, for lack of adequate facilities on Canadian soil. With only two notable exceptions over a sixty-year span,¹⁷ this was the case. However, he acknowledged an obvious danger in such a pattern. These fledgling creative artists were immersing themselves in foreign music at the most crucial stage in their development. The repertoire and compositional practices of their adoptive culture impressed on them to the extent that they risked imitation in creating a so-called "Canadian" music upon their return.

Morin's call for a "responsibly instituted and supervised scientific curriculum" was thus primarily directed towards this prospective professional sector: the young students who intended to put themselves forward as representatives of Canadian musical interests, both in Canada and around the world. He resolved that special educational requirements and higher standards should be exacted of these candidates:

Has the time not come to require knowledge other than that of amateurs from those who assume the title of composer? Has the time not also come to make a distinction between the amateur and the professional?... Harmonizing a figured bass or a given melody in accordance with the honourable and conventional rules of Théodore Dubois is a weak beginning that is too often confused with composition in our country.¹⁸

There were certainly good music schools supplying first-rate instruction in the Montreal of Morin's era, including L'Institut Nazareth, the Conservatoire national de musique and McGill Conservatorium, among others. However, the principal deficiency of these institutions was their "fee for service" approach which precluded the enrolment of many gifted, yet underprivileged musicians. He instead visualized the democratization of music education in Canada in the form of a public conservatory system, based on the Paris Conservatoire teaching model and subsidized by the State, to permit universal specialized study.¹⁹ It was his expectation that this school would instill the elements of a national voice among the next generation of composers:

It seems that Canadian music would indeed like to present itself more elegantly in the future and speak the language of the world's people, at the same time, a language of today. Knowledge, taste, culture, a sense of balance, grace, elegance of spirit and good measure are very rare things in Canada and it appears that the young musicians are closer to them than their elders.²⁰

Morin concluded in the article "Hopes" that this crisis of public apathy and derivative and inferior compositional practices would soon come to an end. Noting a receptive climate for change, he was led to believe in "the imminent existence of a Canadian music",¹¹ notwithstanding its apparent lack of intrinsic character in his lifetime. Through his vision of general and specialized educational reform, taught in a systematized curriculum by trained music instructors, he felt assured that the standards of music education in Canada would be dramatically elevated. Further, in raising public consciousness to the plight of their inherited musical culture, the growth and development of an indigenous repertoire was secured. This vision was his ultimate goal and measure of success in Canadian music.

The validity of Morin's position on the Canadian musical condition is difficult to fault, particularly in light of similar present-day circumstances. It is of note, however, that he was very much alone in his views at this time. None of his early twentieth-century colleagues were contemplating an intrinsic style in composition, much less indicting the public—the critic's livelihood—for their indifference towards the nation's musical fortunes.¹² Yet through his tireless promotion of this unique vision for Canadian music, he was ultimately to foreshadow a remarkable sequence of events which defined the artistic climate of post-World War II Montreal:

The immediate post-war period [ca. 1945] turned out to be a powerful stimulus of regenerative ambition, and the resumption of musical life paralleled the economic development of the metropolis.¹³

The most original innovation of this era, marking the realization of Morin's lifelong ambition and his final posthumous triumph, was the 1942 inauguration of the Conservatoire de musique du Québec in Montreal. Established on European models, and notably those of Paris, the Conservatoire provided free and systematized professional training in all musical disciplines through subsidies from the Quebec provincial government. The composers Rodolphe Mathieu (1890-1962) and Alfred LaLiberté (1882-1952), among others, were thus enabled to organize performances of their own works, and Claude Champagne (1891-1965) emerged as not only a gifted original composer but a teacher of many composers of the succeeding generations. A genuine Montreal school of composition indeed came into being through this institution, comprising Violet Archer, Maurice Blackburn, Jean Papineau-Couture, Robert Turner, followed by Serge Garant, Jacques Hétu, Roger Matton, Pierre Mercure, François Morel, André Prevost and Gilles Tremblay.²⁴

Few other opportunities for the performance of new Canadian music arose until 1953, when the Society of Canadian Music (later superseded by the Société de musique contemporaine du Québec) was instituted with the intent to disseminate and promote the latest Canadian and international musical endeavours among the general public. Moreover, the World Festival, a year-long extravaganza held in conjunction with Montreal's Expo '67, attracted a vast and diverse complement of international performing organizations to the city. That a large number of Canadian ensembles also partook of the event graphically illustrated to Canadians and foreign visitors alike that the country's artistic offerings could compare favourably to the best from the music capitals of the world.²⁵

Having taken the pulse of Parisian musical life as a young man, Léo-Pol Morin was compelled to shoulder a dispassionate review of his beloved cultural heritage. When confronted with its ill health and urgent need for revitalization, he faithfully manifested his personal vision of a transformed Canadian music, generated by a vital national school of composers and supported by the populace. This was his way with issues of music in the Canadian interest: to denounce, to inform and to educate. His insight, as presented in the "In Search of a Canadian Music" grouping, ultimately stimulated Canadian music production and fostered a general understanding of music's vital function in society. No one could have asked for more of Léo-Pol Morin, the advocate and guardian of our nation's music.

NOTES

- 1 Gilles Potvin. "Montreal", in *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*. Kelmur Kallmann, Gilles Potvin and Kenneth Winters, eds. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992, p. 872.
- 2 Potvin, *EMC*, p. 872.
- 3 Potvin, *EMC*, p. 872.
- 4 Potvin, *EMC*, p. 872.
- 5 "In Search of Genius", p. 134.
- 6 Morin. "La Légende de l'art musical canadien et les musiciens de Montréal". *Le Nigog* 1 (1918).

- 7 "On admet que, malgré qu'ils s'expriment dans un même langage sonore, un art russe, un art français, un art allemand sont absolument différents dans leur essence. Et aujourd'hui, quelle différence entre un Strauss allemand et un Debussy français! Pourtant les moyens sont les mêmes. Il n'existe rien de tel dans ce qu'on appellerait la musique canadienne. J'insiste donc, et je répète qu'il n'y a pas d'art musical canadien." Morin, "La Légende", p. 13.
- 8 "In Search of Genius", pp. 136-38.
- 9 "The Great Pity of Canadian Music", p. 147.
- 10 "In Search of Genius", p. 136.
- 11 "Music, Useless Art", p. 141.
- 12 "The Poor Relation", p. 143.
- 13 "The Poor Relation", p. 144.
- 14 "The Poor Relation", p. 143.
- 15 "In Search of Genius", p. 138.
- 16 Villeneuve, p. 91.
- 17 Calixa Lavallée and Alexis Contant; see "Those of Yesterday", p. 159.
- 18 "The Poor Relation", p. 143.
- 19 Villeneuve, p. 91.
- 20 "Hopes", p. 151.
- 21 "Hopes", p. 152.
- 22 A sampling of Morin's professional colleagues appears in the "Shots in the Dark" commentary, p. 90.
- 23 Potvin, *EMC*, p. 872.
- 24 Potvin, *EMC*, p. 873.
- 25 Potvin, *EMC*, p. 873.

"CANADIAN COMPOSERS"

Léo-Pol Morin pursued his critical craft during a transitional period in Canadian music. He was the privileged witness to the birth of careers and ground-breaking works at a time when the nation's musicians struggled to free themselves from nineteenth-century eurocentric traditions and to define what it meant to be "Canadian" in music. These developments captured the imagination of Morin as a man, intellectual and critic. Built on the realistic views of an informed, fluent writer and the professionalism of his systematized criteria for "Canadian" works, he brilliantly chronicled and assessed the course of this young musical movement in the focal section of *Papiers de musique*, "Canadian Composers".

Morin's dual capacity as performer and concert reviewer in Paris and Montreal provided a strong context for this ensemble of texts, and the active, even aggressive position he maintained as their premise. Acquainted with most of the cited musicians as teachers, classmates, professional colleagues and friends, and having variously played and evaluated their works, he was in a good position to provide thoroughgoing investigations of each man's craft, stylistic traits, primary compositions and impact on the Canadian musical condition. From the pioneers of composition in Canada (Calixa Lavallée, Alexis Contant and Guillaume Couture) to the young visionaries of its future (Rodolphe Mathieu, Claude Champagne and Ernest MacMillan), Morin demonstrated a fervent concern for the evolution and growth of a native music in Canada that would ultimately open doors and quicken perceptions to its fate.

A forthright and rather controversial pronouncement is levelled at the derivative Canadian repertoire and compositional standards of his time in the first article, "Gauging the Temperature". Referring to Canada as a country of variable talent and "appalingly free from music",¹ Morin cautions that the facile cultivation of European pastiche among French-trained Canadian composers has precluded a "national school" of music, that would express the Canadian nature and ethnic character through the use of indigenous folk elements. Without definitive acknowledgement of this vital missing link in the country's musical creations, such music is no more than an extension of an external and largely foreign tradition.

Morin advocates a rigorous critical evaluation of existing Canadian works as a healthy initiative in the process of gaining musical independence from Europe. Through "Canadian Composers", he himself attempts to identify those qualities of past and present composers which form a sound basis for the future "Canadian" voice in music, while discounting technical and expressional factors that impede its progress. Fairly consistent criteria emerge to that effect in his prose. Whether conscious or not, it is clear that he held a personal vision of how these musicians might better themselves and their compositional habits and, in turn, of how a "national school" of music might best be attained. Further examination of this underlying critical apparatus yields striking evidence of the means by which he, as a critic and analyst, approached and judged a given musical work.

As he writes about contemporary Quebecois and English-Canadian musicians and their creations in this "Canadian Composers" grouping, Morin seems to implement a reasonably standardized vocabulary for the

expression of his views. Terms such as "taste", "individuality", "elegance", "discipline" and "clarity" often arise in his endeavour to convey both strengths and deficiencies of technique and style.

Inasmuch as he tends to favour particular traits over others, witnessed by frequency of usage, his criteria are readily ascertained through a simple tally and grading of their occurrences in the texts (see Table 1).

The resultant statistics reveal an important discrepancy between that which Morin professes as his vision for an indigenous Canadian repertoire and the yardsticks he ultimately uses to weigh the composers' relative success or failure in this regard. It would appear on first glance that he places great faith in the distinctive subjects, structures, rhythm and manner of our folklore as a prolific source of inspiration for this "Canadian" musical language:

...he has tried his hand at the composition of songs identical in spirit to those of folklore, and I cannot express how much I admire him for attaching such nutritive value to Indian and Eskimo folklore. This theory is dear to me, that we must try to form the precious amalgam with these diverse elements which will express our spirit better than the ordinary borrowings from melodic Europe to which we are accustomed.²

However, Morin's folkloric "theory" does not translate as an overriding factor in his critical apparatus when evaluating the compositional efforts of his compatriots. In terms of relative recurrences in his prose, both in positive and negative contexts, free derivation of folklore elements ranks a mere tenth out of sixteen possible criteria. His primary stress in evaluation rests instead on the quality of the musician's education, i.e. the need for a "complete craft"³ and the effective use of its technical materials:

Possessing a complete craft, though not very blessed in terms of creative imagination, his was a composer's work, but not a creative musician's....while this work does not have all the imaginative value that we would wish it had, it demonstrates a serious knowledge of compositional dictates that were uncommon in Canada.'

Underlying this evident preoccupation with sound musical training is an agenda of broader implication for Canadian music. Morin intimates through his "Canadian Composers" assessments that the art of imitation thrived in Canada's oeuvre as the direct product of lax educational standards within the country. Forced to attain their credentials in musical matters from foreign institutions, particularly those of France, such indoctrination among Canadians was inescapable. Although not explicitly stated in *Papiers de musique*, it was his dream that a conservatory system modelled on the French be established in Quebec: music schools which would instill the elements of a national voice in its young. He believed this was the only means by which future musicians would fully come to think for themselves in composition, released from European models ill-suited to the Canadian spirit. Espoused through most of his professional life in *La Patrie* and *La Presse*, his vision for a public conservatory offering a complete music education was realized in 1942, one year after his death.

Despite its conspicuous absence from his contemporaries' compositions, Morin seems to value individuality of thought and musical expression, not only in terms of a national style but a personal one as well, on an equal footing with effective education. These qualities of originality and creativity are not necessarily contingent upon the composer's training, deriving instead from inborn character and

personality. Thus differentiated, it may be seen that self-expression in music functions as a discrete and high-ranking measure of ability in his critical apparatus:

This composer is reproached for not creating music like Mr. "Everybody" and not being as mercilessly clear as so many amateurs are. Precisely, his personality is reproached. Here is a composer who has his own way of doing things and, instead of extolling him for it, he is indicted, as for a flaw.⁵

The remaining standards of appraisal are essentially by-products of scholarly grounding and musical personality, his foremost priorities for the genesis of an indigenous music. In statistical sequence, these embrace factors of clarity and precision in compositional vocabulary and expression, innate ability, charm and elegance, and the tendency toward discipline and economical proportions manifested in the musician's work.

That Morin maintained and administered a set of guidelines in his approach to the pioneers and inheritors of the Canadian musical tradition points to an intriguing possibility for the modern reader. Observing his application of the established criteria within each text, one may reasonably extrapolate that he also envisioned a hierarchy of the composers themselves, expressed in Table 2. The present ranking, believed to closely approximate Morin's own thinking in this matter, has been determined by the relative degree to which each criterion is either positively or negatively stressed in his assessments.⁶ As suggested by the foregoing examination of the Morin critical apparatus, considerations of musical training and personality resources receive precedence over other attributes. In the event that two composers rate evenly in all other

factors, comparative success or failure of these elements has dictated their final positioning on the descending scale.

Certain issues immediately arise upon advancing this ordering, primarily related to Morin's incorporation of peripheral figures in his articles. For instance, he himself classifies the Gagnon family (Ernest, Gustave and Henri) as "teaching musicians" with no firm stake in composition,⁷ and the inclusion of alter-ego James Callihou in his criticisms might well be called into question on ethical grounds. Non-assessments also represent an unknown variable: his ambivalence towards Guillaume Couture and Georges-Émile Tanguay effectively lowers their standing in comparison with those about whom he has offered a clear opinion, while his purely factual accounts or hearsay evaluations of Joseph Vézina, Jean-Baptiste Labelle, Colin MacPhee, Alfred Whitehead and George M. Brewer preclude definitive placement altogether.

Notwithstanding its inherent complications, this exercise affirms Claude Champagne as Morin's consummate "Canadian" composer and his music as a model on which a national school of composition might be built. Emphasizing Champagne's strong educational background and suitability for "the musician's trade" even in his earliest statements, Morin speaks highly of a man whose craft is definitively acquired and disciplined and who possesses an uncommonly clear, refined and elegant style, "which belongs exclusively to the author of *Suite canadienne*."⁸ Through his examination of works such as *Prelude et filigrane*, *Hercule et Omphale*, *Suite espagnole* and *Danse villageoise*, he estimates that

Champagne likes plain and simple pitches, vivid and unequivocal colours.... He is natural and uncomplicated to the point of not retreating on occasion from

the most simple and even trifling ideas. And make no mistake: while clichés and commonplaces have always been fashionable in our country and have long constituted the clearest of our composers' originality, there is nothing of the sort in a Claude Champagne.⁹

When confronted by Morin's rigorous critical standards and high expectations of Canadian music, Champagne appears to fare exceptionally well in every measure. Not a single word of disfavour is voiced, indicating that Morin considers him to be beyond reproach. This impression is confirmed in his summation of the Champagne musical oeuvre, a description which reads much like an homage to the composer and an inventory of his central criteria:

Our author's [work] reveals a talent made first and foremost of delicacy, subtlety and charm. It is a polished, rounded and infinitely civilized art which strives for beautiful design, fine forms, precision and concision. No waste, no flaws, no hesitation ever encumber the style of this musician, one of the most educated and level-headed of his generation.¹⁰

Referring to Rodolphe Mathieu as "the most attacked and least understood" musician of his generation,¹¹ Morin makes it his mission to defend the young experimentalist at every opportunity—he was often the only member of the Montreal "press corps" to do so. It is noteworthy that he explains the nature of Mathieu's neglect in his article, "Rodolphe Mathieu":

To understand this capricious music, one needs at the very least a familiarity with today's musical language and a cultivation which ordinary listeners do not possess, nor all musicians either. The latter hold it against the young audacious one that he caught them in their lethargy. It dispenses them from making the effort to understand the meaning and true value of his music.¹²

Although Champagne's craft is portrayed as leaving "an

indifferent, unmoved Mathieu close to the wilds",¹³ the two composers may be considered of virtually equal station if weighed against Morin's critical apparatus on their own merits. Mathieu garners the respect of Morin for his natural musicianship and an output which conceals the acquired mechanics of composition. The *Quatuor à cordes*, *Trio* and *Sonate pour piano* are worthy of particular distinction in his thinking, inasmuch as they represent works "both full of virtues and thoroughly disconcerting."¹⁴ Their interest lies in substance, thought, dynamic strength and a unique melodic design that sets a new standard in and future for Canadian music.

As a man who composes in an individual manner, a refined, elegant and sensitive style with roots in Wagner and Scriabin, Mathieu like Champagne successfully meets all of the Morin measurements but one: "Only the imprecise forms prevent this rich material from agreeing with the present trends of music and those of the author, which still need to be clarified."¹⁵ However, this violated criterion has more to do with Morin's general distaste for Mathieu's adopted atonal idiom than the true abilities of the composer. It is certainly not the first instance on which he has spoken harshly of atonality.¹⁶ Preoccupied with the disavowal of "accustomed dictates" and "the straight and narrow paths", he ultimately concedes that atonality is natural to Mathieu, but remains a dangerous, contradictory and indistinct system with its lack of tonal vividness and structure. Such a discreet distinction affords the "modern" Mathieu a leading position among Canadian musicians, second only to Claude Champagne.

Perhaps the most controversial of Morin's evaluations is that of Guillaume Couture. Whereas other cited musicians have secured even-handed, if not unusually complementary reviews from him, the music of his own teacher Couture is curiously disparaged for its lack of inspiration and self-evident qualities: "Couture certainly left interesting works, but characterless and insignificant in their aesthetic.... He failed to put his own music to the test of the sound judgment that he applied to the music of others."¹⁷ At a time when the principal Couture works *Jean le Précurseur* and *Rêverie* were hailed as landmarks of Canadian music, Morin expresses concern that these efforts could be misunderstood by future generations and lapse into obscurity.

Yet through a closer textual analysis and the benefit of hindsight, it may be acknowledged that the profound critical instinct of Morin is as much in effect with Couture as with those he has evaluated in mid-career: Champagne and Mathieu, among others. He cannot accede to the Couture oeuvre—a failure of his criteria which results in a lower hierarchical ranking—but nevertheless recognizes his pioneering contributions as an educator, critic and conductor, elements on which Couture's current reputation in Canadian music history has been founded:

The works of Guillaume Couture will not live on, but his name will remain in the history of Canadian music because he was a key figure, because he did something, because he exercised an influence and developed excellent students.... indeed a distinguished musician, the most educated, intelligent and cultured of his day.¹⁸

Our modern perspective is equally relevant in resolving the conflict associated with Morin's critical approach toward English-Canadian musicians. Obligated to address anglophone initiatives in the nation's

music, thus assuring a balance of coverage, he contends with a substantial deficiency in his professional background: a limited exposure to the English-Canadian output. Despite the small sampling of this repertoire afforded by the Quebec City CPR Festivals of 1927-28,¹⁹ many manuscripts had been stored, lost or even destroyed in his day, preventing his knowledge of these efforts. In the article "Among the English", he also cites the mutual exclusion of two disparate cultures in Canada, "a question of two innocences of the same value transposed onto two different planes, one English and the other French."²⁰

Morin may well have neglected the popular figures of English-Canadian composition, particularly Colin MacPhee and Alfred Whitehead, as the direct result of such factors. However, this oversight is outweighed in retrospect by his singular recognition of Healey Willan and Sir Ernest MacMillan, two men who are now regarded as the most influential English-Canadian musicians of the early twentieth century. Not content to focus solely on the present, it is evident that he has looked to the future and those names he feels will endure in the country's musical history. Moreover, his sure identification of these anglophone leaders is achieved without bias, applying the same criteria through which he appraised their francophone counterparts.

That Morin delineates English-Canadian composers as the more educated of the "two solitudes" in musical matters, yet lacking the spontaneity, imagination and personality which characterizes the French, confirms the operation of his critical apparatus in the "Among the English" synopsis. Of the cited anglophone musicians, the "delicate and

subtle talent" of Ernest MacMillan²¹ emerges with top billing based on successful realization of the Morin standards:

An infinitely agreeable, spontaneous, flowing, free and spacious music. A music full of taste which feels good. Beautiful music to see as well, of fine lines and harmonious proportions.... We are not in the presence of entirely new designs here, nor original ideas, but in our climate the taste with which Mr. MacMillan expresses himself and the elegance of his language are almost equivalent."²²

One need only consider the prescience and intuition embodied in the assertion, "...it certainly seems that, with MacMillan, we are already in the presence of a musician from whom we can only expect important works",²³ to understand the real significance and impact of Morin's vision for a distinctly "Canadian" music. As expressed through a set of criteria and, by extension, a hierarchical scale of the country's contemporary composers, he has distinguished two tendencies in the young musical movement: that which is inspired by folklore (Champagne, Callihou, MacMillan) and that which is not (Mathieu, Tanguay). Champagne and Mathieu, his proposed models for the development of a national school, have indeed left their mark on our age. It may be seen that Champagne influenced the subsequent generations of Montreal musicians,²⁴ whereas Mathieu remains noted for his audacious writing even at the threshold of the twenty-first century.

Certain correlations arising from the compositional ordering permit further precision of the Morin "master plan" for Canadian music. Such an arrangement clearly demonstrates his remarkable faith in what might be deemed "the younger generation": those born at or near the turn of the century, whose most important works are dated ca. 1920-59. In like

manner, a greater emphasis is placed on French-Canadian innovators who do not look back to and draw upon folkloric elements in their music, providing striking corroboration of folklore's lowered standing in Morin's critical apparatus. His own chosen sequence of articles in the ensemble (Fortier-Mathieu-Champagne) ultimately secures the highest ranks.

The central "Canadian Composers" section of *Papiers de musique* reveals Léo-Pol Morin to be an exceptionally learned and skilled professional with an ingrained, personal stake in the future of a national treasure: native Canadian music. In fostering and promoting his conception of a domestic school of musical thought and composition, definitively emancipated from foreign guise, Morin not only places Canadian music in an international context with which few others of his day were concerned, but ultimately guides its course through an uncertain period in its history. Approached in this light, the "Canadian Composers" texts represent an unparalleled resource for the modern scholar of early twentieth-century trends in the national oeuvre.

NOTES

- 1 "Gauging the Temperature", p. 157.
- 2 "James Callihou", p. 213.
- 3 In the article, "The Prix d'Europe", Morin infers that a "complete craft" would embrace such elements as performance, solfège, harmony and history. See p. 288.

- 4 "Guillaume Couture", p. 173.
- 5 "Rodolphe Mathieu", p. 184.
- 6 Although an approach which largely depends on subjective interpretation, it will be seen that Morin's remarks have, to some extent, predisposed the chosen ordering.
- 7 See "Those of Yesterday", p. 159.
- 8 "Claude Champagne", p. 196.
- 9 "Claude Champagne", p. 197.
- 10 "Claude Champagne", pp. 197-98.
- 11 "Rodolphe Mathieu", p. 184.
- 12 "Rodolphe Mathieu", p. 184.
- 13 "Claude Champagne", p. 197.
- 14 "Rodolphe Mathieu", p. 185.
- 15 "Rodolphe Mathieu", p. 188.
- 16 See the article, "To Find National Meaning", p. 111, in reference to Schoenberg.
- 17 "Guillaume Couture", p. 173.
- 18 "Guillaume Couture", p. 172.
- 19 See "Among the English", Note 2, regarding the CPR Festivals.
- 20 "Among the English", p. 218.
- 21 "Among the English", p. 221.
- 22 "Among the English", p. 221.
- 23 "Among the English", p. 223.
- 24 See the "*In Search of a Canadian Music*" commentary, p. 48.

Table 1
Criteria for Canadian Composers (per Léo-Pol Morin)

| CRITERION | NUMBER OF OCCURRENCES | RANK |
|--|-----------------------|------|
| Complete craft: effective use of materials | 24 | 1 |
| Individuality of thought & musical expression: freedom from imitation, personal style, imagination | 24 | 1 |
| Clarity and precision of language & structure | 22 | 2 |
| Natural talent | 19 | 3 |
| Charm, elegance, delicacy | 18 | 4 |
| Discipline, economy, proportion | 17 | 5 |
| Taste, commonsense, critical instinct | 15 | 6 |
| Fluidity of style | 12 | 7 |
| Stylistic assurance: confidence, strength | 12 | 7 |
| Innovation: "language of our time" | 10 | 8 |
| Intelligence | 8 | 9 |
| Freely-derived inspiration from folklore | 7 | 10 |
| Sensitivity | 6 | 11 |
| Spontaneity | 6 | 11 |
| Simplicity | 4 | 12 |
| Output | 1 | 13 |

Table 2

Hierarchy of Canadian Composers

| <i>French Canadian.....</i> | | <i>English Canadian.....</i> | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|-----------|
| COMPOSER | DATES | COMPOSER | DATES |
| Claude Champagne | 1891-1965 | Ernest MacMillan | 1893-1973 |
| Rodolphe Mathieu | 1890-1962 | Leo Smith | 1881-1952 |
| Achille Fortier | 1864-1939 | Healey Willan | 1880-1968 |
| G.-E. Tanguay | 1893-1964 | George Bowles | — |
| James Callihou | 1892-1941 | A. Cleland-Lloyd | — |
| Guillaume Couture | 1851-1915 | | |
| Calixa Lavallée | 1842-1891 | | |
| Alexis Contant | 1858-1918 | | |
| A. Lavallée-Smith | 1873-1912 | | |

External to Compositional Ranking:

Ernest Gagnon - educator
 Gustave Gagnon - educator
 Henri Gagnon - organist

Non-assessments:

Joseph Vézina (1849-1924)
 J.-B. Labelle (1828-91)

Hearsay/Non-assessments:

Colin MacPhee (1900-1964)
 Alfred Whitehead (1887-1974)
 George Brewer (1889-1947)

"CANADIAN FOLKLORE"

In Léo-Pol Morin's day, Canadian folklore was little more than a "work in progress", completely bound in the musical histories of the founding nations. Songs such as *A la claire fontaine* and *Ah! si mon moine voulait danser* were recounted as they were remembered in an oral tradition, with Canadian-inspired variations of text and music. Although this music was thought to reveal "the features of customs and character very typical of our rural civilization",¹ it was, and essentially remained, that of Canada's French ancestors.

In some instances, the strains of the Quebecois musical heritage readily conveyed the way of life in the new land: *Et mai j'enfouiyais*, procured by Ernest Gagnon in Kamouraska County,² played upon the sound of a millwheel on the shores of the St. Lawrence. More often than not, though, fresh settings transformed the character of the old songs, as explained by the Canadian writer and folklorist, John Murray Gibbon:³

Those ignorant of French who heard Canadians roaring *En roulant ma boule roulant* would hardly imagine this was originally a fairy tale song by children rolling balls, or that the canoemen paddling up a stiff stream to the chant of *C'est l'aviron qui nous mont' en haut* were telling the tale of a girl coming along the road from La Rochelle.⁴

For a newly founded country without its own musical traditions, these adaptations were certainly a beginning point. However, the development of a *pure* "Canadian" repertoire called for an infusion of the Canadian experience and geography: a process of evolution from its cultural roots, yet perpetually sustained by this national and cultural context. Morin affirmed in the article "Canadian Folklore" that such an

inherited culture was the foundation upon which a distinctive Canadian music would be produced. Inasmuch as faithful adherence to its letter would amount to a refined variety of pastiche, based on the songs' provenance, capturing its essence and spirit was imperative:

A musician of genius...would have to penetrate the spirit of it and express its meaning with strength and magnanimity. Such a musician will be able to invent melodies and rhythms where the same blood will course but which will be expressed just as well through the newest means.⁵

Morin believed folklore to be richly deserving of the attention accorded it because it represented, by his definition, "the soil, atmosphere, customs, the very essence of our country."⁶ Within his vision of an indigenous music, embracing educational reforms ("In Search of a Canadian Music") and standard measurements of compositional achievement ("Canadian Composers"), this ready-made, yet largely untapped source of inspiration represented both a missing link and common thread. Recognizing that awareness was the sole obstacle hindering the free assimilation of folk music in Canada's oeuvre, his tireless efforts to promote this objective at home and abroad, as exemplified in the "Canadian Folklore" section, became but another facet to a far-reaching and diversified professional mission.

While Morin's ideology of folklore applications in Canadian compositional practice was clearly reasonable and accurate, it nevertheless constituted an idealism ahead of its time. Canada, unlike France and the diverse European nations, did not possess enough history to carry out a nationalist movement of this kind. Merely fifty years beyond Confederation, the country remained locked in a substantial and difficult

process of adjustment to its new nationhood, solely looking forward in defining local, regional, national and even international boundaries and responsibilities. Such a political climate, built on pride in Canada's daily triumphs yet tempered by a distinct uncertainty regarding future directions and goals, rendered Canadians an essentially practical, task-oriented people. Faced with the ongoing obligation of forging a living for themselves and for their families, the issues surrounding a distant folkloric heritage and its place in Canadian musical endeavour lay well outside the scope of their immediate concerns.

Moreover, the multi-racial nature of this Canadian society was not, indeed had never been, conducive to cultural unity and a representative medium of musical expression. Even from the early days of the colonies, two discrete bodies of music were cultivated: a British repertoire appropriated from England, Scotland and Ireland, and that of the French settlers who adapted France's folk tradition to accommodate their new circumstances. These divergent culture bases shared little common ground on which a complementary alliance might be built, thus sealing a parallel and mutually exclusive development marked by incomprehension, suspicion and prejudice. Added to the volatile coexistence of the country's central music practices were the simple manifestations of an autonomous multinational Indian and Inuit population. The vacuum of linguistic and cultural differences could not be bridged based on geography alone, a factor eluding Morin's observation. It would appear that Canadians preferred it that way. In musical matters, this multiculturalism was ironically celebrated as a Canadian virtue and symbol

of national identity, in lieu of any notions surrounding a uniform mode of artistic expression.

These political and cultural circumstances, into which Morin's vision of a characteristic, folklore-inspired Canadian music was to take root, were not considered by him in the "Canadian Folklore" context. However, the absence of such determinants in his reasoning did not in any way devalue or minimize the point he endeavoured to make. His singular faith in and advocacy of Canada's diverse folkloric roots as a basis for national composition was a significant goal with a place in our history, recognized and acknowledged to some extent even in his time. His leadership in the contemporary French-Canadian folksong movement--as much of a "musical" movement as the nation ever had--spawned Canada's phase of musical nationalism, the same phenomenon that swept nineteenth-century Bohemia and Russia and early twentieth-century Spain and Hungary. Works such as Champagne's *Danse villageoise*, MacMillan's *Six Bergerettes du Bas-Canada* and Callihou/Morin's *Suite canadienne* have survived to become permanent and valuable features of the Canadian concert repertoire at a time when the musical outlook of the nation has been primarily international in scope.¹

The remarkable candour, optimism and foresight in Morin's approach to the contentious Canadian folklore issue are echoed in his more restrictive, culture-bound article "Eskimo Folklore".¹ From the days when native Canadians first encountered the European explorers four centuries ago, there had been concerted efforts to assimilate the "savages" and their peculiar social and musical customs into a mainstream

cultural framework. The emergence of ethnomusicological research in the mid-nineteenth century, although not labelled as such at the time, afforded indigenous music traditions a new respect and deserved recognition as autonomous and meaningful threads in the broader Canadian cultural fabric. Through his own examination of aboriginal song types and functions and the problems of transplanting this distinctive source of inspiration into the Canadian oeuvre, Morin furthered an awareness of the isolated native heritage. Moreover, in bringing such a rich musical repertoire into a national context, he also affirmed the value of ethnomusicological concerns as an alternative to the customary journalism and scholarship on Canadian music.

Whereas Morin's extensive travels to Paris had enabled him to "draw from the source" in compiling his impressions of European music nationalism, similar firsthand experience of Inuit cultural practices was impracticable. The Canadian North remained an uncharted frontier in the early twentieth century, and it was only through large anthropological missions such as the Canadian Arctic Expedition (1913-18) and the Thule Expedition (1921-24) that this distant, primitive way of life could be penetrated.⁹ Nevertheless, in the absence of direct contact with the culture about which he writes—regarded by Morin as an optimal scenario for the professional critic—he significantly states in the "Eskimo Folklore" article that he "heard them on phonograph at the Museum of Ottawa."¹⁰

During the period in which he researched and composed his original *La Patrie* sources for "Eskimo Folklore",¹¹ the Oxford-educated anthropologist Diamond Jenness (1886-1969) was engaged as Chief of the

Museum's Anthropology Division. Jenness had recently completed investigations of the Parry Island Ojibwa and Copper Inuit. Given Morin's interest in "Eskimo" musical traditions and their cultural context, it would certainly have fallen to him to guide Morin through a plethora of recorded examples. Furthermore, the results of his Copper Inuit inquiry had been published in the previous year.¹² Morin's knowledge and use of this volume is readily substantiated in light of textual similarities revealed in his "Eskimo Folklore" essay.

The influence of Jenness' research on Morin's own thoughts and prose is far more prevalent than Morin admits in his article, extending over much of his explanation of Inuit social and artistic conventions. For instance, addressing the primary Copper Inuit song classifications and their applications in his introduction to *Eskimo Songs: Songs of the Copper Eskimos*, Jenness observes:

The dance-house is the centre of social life.... There is no singing out of doors, for the natives believe that a spirit, carrying away their words, might rob them of the breath of life. Hence there are no work-songs in this region, no chants for the trail or the caribou-hunt; no game songs...and practically no rigamaroles or children's chants. Every notable incident, every important experience or emotion in the daily life is recorded in a dance-song, which takes the place to some extent of a local newspaper.¹³

He accounts for the notable absence of love songs in this native repertoire on the basis of their adopted way of life, and in a manner which similarly demonstrates Morin's indebtedness to his investigations:

The passion of love had little place in their lives, owing to the hard struggle for existence, early marriages, and the looseness of the marriage tie. Celibacy holds no joy for either sex; the man needs a wife to prepare his food, and to make clothing and a tent from the caribou skins he secures; and the

woman needs a husband to provide her with all three necessities of life, food, clothing and shelter. Beauty of form or face are of very minor importance.¹⁴

Jenness had immersed himself for a number of years in the Copper Inuit culture prior to the completion of his report. Although a band which ultimately settled in the heart of the Canadian North—the north-central Arctic region of Coppermine, N.W.T.—he found their lifestyle and musical customs to be wholly anomalous in relation to that of their neighbours, the Netsilik, Iglulik and Caribou Inuit. Unable to establish the same familiarity with and understanding of this distant Inuit society, Morin innocently generalizes "Copper Eskimo" into "Eskimo" and portrays such culture-specific activities as common practice in his writing.

From a more global perspective, these appropriations are but a minor flaw in Morin's work on the subject of native culture, the product of geographical circumstances over which he had no control. His singular personal enthusiasms nevertheless prevail when he is challenged with the distinctive and colourful musical manifestations of the Inuit. Through a conscientious effort to grasp the particularities of this repertoire, accessible only by means of imperfect technology, he extracts its very essence and openly recognizes its compatibility with his ideal of a "Canadian"-inspired music:

What a marvellous appeal these Eskimo songs possess!...[I] was deeply impressed by their haunting melancholy and their rhythmic and fatal strength.... These melodies and rhythms are full of flavour and life and, in this way, no musician could be insensitive to them. It will be an infinitely rich and more characterized source of inspiration for our future music than that of French folklore which obliges our musicians, as it were, to timidly make French music.¹⁵

Moreover, Morin acknowledges that the transposition of Inuit culture into the central compositional practices of Canadian music will require judicious study. In this, his first significant foray into the ethnomusicological arena, he touches upon those issues which have come to lie at the heart of the discipline at the present day, as follows:

- i. the recognition of cultural disparities in the creation of music;
- ii. the introduction of technology into primitive societies;
- iii. the quality of recording discs and the conditions under which they are produced, and
- iv. the problems of uniform, accurate transcription into a Western-based notational system.¹⁶

It has only been since the recent emergence of the Inuit peoples as a political force that their music has at last come to the Canadian ear. Historically, then, Morin's accomplishment in the field of native folklore and ethnomusicology is remarkable. Although geographical distance effectively precluded a certain degree of originality in his views, he pursued this music of his own free will and endeavoured to convey his personal reflections of its beauties and value as simply and honestly as he knew how. In doing so, he was one of the earliest twentieth-century Canadian music critics to raise consciousness of and open minds to the possibility of a broader spectrum in Canadian music: a music capturing the pioneering and elemental spirit and destiny of Canada's "lost frontier".

Léo-Pol Morin's contribution to Canadian and native folklore lay in the truth and realistic insight of his strong convictions. In a country still intent on nation-building and defining the parameters of its identity, his views have ostensibly remained a real and valid prospect for the Canadian musical future. If a genuine concern for the preservation of

this musical heritage exists, it becomes imperative that Morin's idealism and recognition of these cultures be recaptured. In binding ourselves to the land and rediscovering the displaced spirit and sensibility of its peoples, "...it will be more surely a question of a Canadian musical aesthetic",¹⁷ as he so fervently desired.

NOTES

- 1 "Canadian Folklore", p. 230.
- 2 See "Those Of Yesterday", Note 7.
- 3 See "Canadian Folklore", Note 10.
- 4 John Murray Gibbon. *Canadian Folk Songs (Old and New)*. London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1927, p. xii.
- 5 "Canadian Folklore", p. 237.
- 6 "Canadian Folklore", p. 233.
- 7 Helmut Kallmann and Stephen Willis. "Folk music-inspired composition", in *EMC*, p. 481.
- 8 See also "Overture", pp. 35-36.
- 9 Beverley Diamond Cavanagh and James Robbins. "Ethnomusicology", in *EMC*, p. 425.
- 10 "Eskimo Folklore", p. 244.
- 11 1926-27; See "Eskimo Folklore", p. 247.
- 12 Diamond Jenness and Helen H. Roberts. *Eskimo Songs: Songs of the Copper Eskimos*. Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913-18. Ottawa: F. A. Acland, vol. 14, 1925.

- 13 Jenness and Roberts, p. 9. Morin states in "Eskimo Folklore":
"...there is a great abundance of dancing songs and incantations among the Copper Eskimos. Little or no hunting songs, work songs, children's rounds, no war songs at all nor love songs. Incidents from their life are put into dancing songs and that takes the place of a diary, as it were, for them. They meet in the largest local tent, which can just as easily be called a 'dancing house', and there, encircled around the the singer and to the sound of a drum, they hear the account of the latest events with ears and eyes." (p. 243)
- 14 Jenness and Roberts, pp. 13-14. Morin, in "Eskimo Folklore":
"Love does not have much place in their affairs either, owing to the hard necessities of existence. It appears that celibacy holds no pleasure for anyone among them, hence very young marriages and, accordingly, very loose conjugal ties. The man needs a woman to prepare his food, mend his clothes and to do certain hard tasks, and the woman needs a man who provides her with food, clothing and shelter. Bodily and facial beauty has no importance for them. They never think of it." (pp. 243-44)
- 15 "Eskimo Folklore", p. 244.
- 16 "Eskimo Folklore", p. 245.
- 17 "Canadian Folklore", p. 237.

"SHOTS IN THE DARK"

The role of critical writer was central to the life of Léo-Pol Morin. In many respects, this responsibility came to define who he was: an inquisitive and disciplined man who wanted no less than the development of music and cultural growth in his country. Acutely conscious of the inherent authority attached to the title of "critic" in Canadian society, a power capable of shaping perceptions and opinions, he made it his mission to fully understand the inner workings of criticism and education and to share his ideas and experiences with his readers. Throughout the course of a brief, yet fertile career in music criticism, his pursuit of fresh insights with which to sustain and educate his readership continually led him into new frontiers for his profession in Canada. The final texts of *Papiers de musique*, arranged under a heading which literally translates to read "Shots in the Dark", are illustrative of his wide-ranging interests and unique cultural commitment. Although comprised of a veritable potpourri of issues which had appeared in *La Presse* as recently as one week prior to the completion of *Papiers de musique*, the strong underlying structure of the section suggests that he clearly rationalized the choice and sequencing of his original sources. Representing the various elements of a broader discussion of Canadian music, he examines, as follows:

- i. The past, present and future of the critical profession in the three-article segment, "Music Criticism Fifty Years Ago", "The Duties of the Critic" and "Where is Criticism Going?";
- ii. The current status of the Canadian educational system and the means to ameliorate its functioning in the four subsequent texts, "Defense of the Public", "The Canadian Student", "Solfège" and "The Prix d'Europe", and

- iii. The fashionable trends of twentieth-century music, including the jazz idiom and new communications media, in the final articles, "In Favour of Jazz" and "Of Music Boxes and Their Dangers".

"Shots in the Dark" is by far the most explicit and forceful component of the *Papiers de musique* discourse. It represents the consolidation of Morin's vision for Canadian music which has been implied to varying degrees in each of the previous textual groupings. While continuing to highlight where problems exist in terms of public apathy and educational and compositional standards, he retains the fundamental premise of "Canadian Folklore" in advocating the ways in which such intricacies might be resolved and his ideal of an indigenous Canadian compositional school thus realized. His solutions are predicated upon a single, common denominator whereby the significance of music among critics, educators and public is restored through enhanced critical judgement. Only when firmly ensconced as a serious art form in the collective mind of Canadian society would solid and substantive "national" works be assured in Canada's musical output.

One of the more striking features emerging from this final thread in the Morin conception is the subtle shift of his views on the public's role in impeding the evolution of a typically "Canadian" music. From his depiction of a post-World War I community solely concerned with its material comforts to the exclusion of all intellectual and artistic pursuits ("In Search of a Canadian Music"), he now stresses educational failings and the accountability of a system which has neither offered its students the opportunity to "begin from the beginning", nor challenged them with a serious, even "modern" repertoire:

As long as we do not create what is lacking in the general training of our musicians in our country, a rational and scientific music education, it will be the same. We would not think of leaving future doctors to pick up bits of knowledge from anyone, without method or discernment, just enough to make the sick ...die afterwards. Once again: the teaching methods recognized as correct and necessary for medicine and the fine arts in general are also correct and necessary for music.¹

As a postscript of sorts to the issue of "a responsibly instituted and supervised scientific curriculum", first raised in "In Search of a Canadian Music", he advances the notion that music should be presented as a compulsory subject with the youngest children through the application of "the only [method] to impose in Canada":² solfège, or the musical cultivation of the ear. Through teaching excellence, the right, ready-made method and an effective approach to that method, it follows that the educational system would be enabled to identify those with potential and encourage their development—and the future of Canadian music—in any way possible (e.g. criticism, the Prix d'Europe, moral and monetary support). Moreover, the promotion and application of jazz and new technologies could be an invaluable means to elicit greater interest from the public and musicians, particularly in Montreal where these elements were only beginning to emerge.

The use of such integral educational tools for the recovery and diversification of the artistic community and the musical life of the populace might seem in the present day to be a rather simplistic and conventional approach to the problem of national identity in music, which continues to dominate the Canadian musical condition. In Morin's context, however, few critics and educators had grasped the tenuousness of

music's place in Canadian society and, as far as can be ascertained, none had contemplated tangible measures in education through which a fresh outlook on the nation's musical endeavour might be achieved.

This foresight is most markedly represented in Morin's examination of the profession of music criticism. To be sure, his convictions and insight regarding the Canadian music critic and criticism form the nucleus of the "Shots in the Dark" segment. He continues to grapple with the question of "roots" established in the previous section of *Papiers de musique*, "Canadian Folklore", transforming his focus from the cultural heritage of the Quebecois and aboriginal peoples to that of his own professional craft and its role in society. In contemplating what it means to him to be a critic of this transitional period in Canadian music history, he acknowledges both the strengths and deficiencies of criticism and manifests a vision of its future course. By extension, this vision may be viewed as his personal philosophy and statement of critical purpose.

The presumption prevails among modern analysts of music criticism that the discipline did not exist in the Canada of Morin's day or that it was confined to social reportage. While this may be true of earlier journalistic writings (ca. mid-nineteenth century), the latter decades of the era were not entirely without examples of informed and ardent critical writing. An outstanding case was that of his teacher, Guillaume Couture, the first of many prominent composer-critics who was virtually unique in having written extensively in both French and English.¹

Following in the critical path forged by Couture, the first half of the present century has been noted as "a period of cultural expansion, reflected in the emergence of music journalists who acquired local, and

sometimes national, prominence and whose articles attracted a steady readership..."¹ Much of the country's critical activity, albeit somewhat superficial at times, concentrated upon major centres. Morin's contemporaries, including Thomas Archer and H. P. Bell in Montreal, Frédéric Pelletier and Léo Roy in Quebec City, and Augustus Bridle and Hector Charlesworth in Toronto, were conscientious and spirited adjudicators of musical concerns in Canada.⁵

However, Morin was not solely a practitioner of the critic's *métier*. The present "Shots in the Dark" grouping confirms his equal personal stake in formulating a theoretical and aesthetic perspective on music criticism. John Daniel Logan before him had begun to prepare the ideological groundwork for critical efforts in English Canada through his *Aesthetic Criticism in Canada - its Aims, Methods and Status*.⁶ Even though the language barrier would have precluded Morin's awareness of this volume, *Aesthetic Criticism* would not have been of great benefit to him at any rate, as it did not pursue issues of musical interest. Morin was thus important in Canada, indeed in North America as a whole, in challenging the very aesthetic basis of Canadian music criticism.

Criticism, for Morin, was a basic necessity in that it served as an intermediary between the public and musicians, composers and performers. The critic was to be an informant, if not a censor, with the goal of instructing his readers and helping them to understand the meaning and beauty of the works that musicians offered for their attention. Moreover, in judging the value of the work or interpretation, he expressed to the composer or performer his evaluative reactions and reasons for them. Even if musicians received the public's acclaim and applause, they

remained interested in the critic's opinion in principle. Inasmuch as his readership looked to the critic for their system of values in the face of a musical work, criticism had to be of a subjective nature:

...[Subjective criticism] can discover the secrets of a work, its organization, form and very essence as much as the other. It is perhaps the most true to life and appealing for everyone in that it is first of all the reflection of a personality, the expression of an opinion, a reaction, an impression, an emotion before a work of art. And the reader can experience this impression in turn if it is well-explained and described.⁷

In Morin's relatively idealized scenario, clearly based upon a European model, it fell to criticism to take a selfless leadership role in Canadian society. Critics were obligated to promote the arts, to afford their public a means to make musical choices and extend their pleasure and knowledge and, above all, to guide those who would produce a characteristic "Canadian" music. He nevertheless recognized that in the Canada of his time, there could be no ideals or absolutes. Confronted with little Canadian material to study and judge and no established vision of criticism as an art form in and of itself, he candidly remarks in "Music Criticism Fifty Years Ago":

But what is most striking in this flashback is that things have not changed a great deal since 1875. Progress has not been made in the field of music analogous to that which we delight in noting in the other fields of culture, and we have retained a bit of this innocence, puerility and sentimentality which distinguished our masters of old.... Nor should we lose sight of the fact that if musical progress has been so slow in our country, it is because too many people have been silent.⁸

The unifying thread in this perception seems to rest on a lack of critical judgement in all facets of the nation's musical enterprise. Morin emphasizes that Canadian critics of his day addressed a less

knowledgeable public who possessed little understanding and appreciation of key composers and works. Their need for rudimentary explanations of music precluded a criticism founded on detailed analyses and true evaluative measurements. Conversely, such a mode of presentation--at best a lofty form of descriptive writing rather than criticism itself--facilitated widespread amateurism among critics in Canada. Many of these "professionals" did not know how to accurately recognize, advise and encourage genuine talent. Through this deficit of artistic knowledge and discernment, they were not only unable to convey the significance of music to their readership, but also could not distribute their enthusiasms or disappointments wisely. "Pressed to fête or applaud" a modest and ineffective Canadian musical repertoire, as he asserts,

We get carried away at the slightest little thing. What a lot of people who were buried under grandiloquent and disproportionate praise and could not get back on their feet again! In tactless hands, praise is a much more fearsome weapon than a conspiracy of silence.¹⁰

Comparable to the relationship between public apathy and poor compositional standards in Morin's time,¹¹ this deficiency of critical instinct resulted in a vicious circle. Unable to judge for themselves, the populace harboured suspicion of its critics who, in perpetuating their craft in an indiscriminate fashion, were no longer consulted as they once were. Based on the article "The Duties of the Critic", it is clear that he felt the same powerful need to effect change in the face of this detrimental pattern as he had in "In Search of a Canadian Music": to take criticism in hand so that it might become a serious, general teaching vehicle and not a compliant banter regarding ineffectual compositions.

His strong personal vision of criticism and its purveyors originated from a basic premise expressed some ten years earlier in *Le Nigog*: "Art is the sole objective of our effort as it will be the sole criterion of our criticism."¹² He acknowledges that the responsibility entailed in projecting art as both an objective and criterion is contingent upon the level of cultural maturation and prevailing tastes within the community:

And, of course, these duties may be markedly different in Montreal from those normally accepted in the large European cities, where the general public no longer needs the existence of Rameau, Pergolesi, Brahms and Mahler revealed to them, nor the names of the authors put before them in looking at the *Fifth* or the *Ninth*, *Parsifal* or *Zarathustra*, *Antigone* or *L'Heure espagnole*.... Hence it emerges that the task of the critic is at once more rudimentary and more difficult in Canada...¹³

The critical craft was to be viewed as a vocation and a considerable factor in the development of musical culture, requiring special attributes and duties of those who assumed the title of "critic". According to Morin, these elements were not mutually exclusive but rather comprised an integral "package" in terms of the critic's disposition and abilities. Not unlike that of a judge, this package demanded ongoing attention and betterment. Allied with a natural facility for criticism (i.e. innate critical instinct, acuity of perception and imagination), he delineates the charge of Canadian critics, as follows:

- i. *To maintain a solid and varied foundation of musical knowledge:* "One of the first duties of the critic (or censor) is to know his craft in the first place and, since it is music in question, to be acquainted with music, In a word, he must know what he is talking about."¹⁴
- ii. *To practice impartiality in critical endeavour.* Since the critic's work rests primarily upon the choice between mediocre and valuable manifestations, he is bound "to condemn as much as to admire",¹⁵ provided that reasons are given. This could be a sign

of strength and measure of trust with the public and musicians alike.

- iii. *To recognize and promote Canadian talent:*
"Kindness also has limits, and is it not being generous to prevent an artist, on the threshold of his career, from going completely astray? It is still being good to unmask the imposters and charlatans and warn the public against their faults."¹⁶
- iv. *To present one's knowledge and observations in a simple and precise manner.* In order to serve in the capacity of "educator" that Morin desired of the Canadian critic, one had to be easily understood by those who were to benefit from his thoughts: the general public.

Through his exigencies surrounding a renewed and formative Canadian music criticism, it may be extrapolated that he held Guillaume Couture as an archetype of the complete critical writer and the future course of the discipline. As substantiated by the article "Music Criticism Fifty Years Ago", his high valuation and respect of Couture was not merely that of a student's affection towards an original and influential teacher. In his mind, Couture had instilled a rare professionalism into the critic's *métier* of his time, the product of his bold demeanour, exceptional understanding of music and accurate estimations of Canada's musical resources:

The credit is his for having dared to be frank and even a little blunt, one of the first to do so. And to be all that, he had to have a lot of courage in 1875, to be young in any case.... Couture's criticism was not only blunt and negative. It was constructive and I like the fact that there was such an example of vigour in our country's past.¹⁷

When Morin looked toward the future in his vision of music criticism, it was indeed Couture's refined breed of journalism that he supported. Sensing a receptive climate for change in the profession— notwithstanding ongoing public apathy and a limited compositional

output—he effectively promoted this tested and proven path as a means for criticism to evolve into its vital educational function. Moreover, given the opportunity to oversee the inspirations of Canada's composers to the end of a typically "Canadian" repertoire, he states in the article "Where is Criticism Going?" (bearing in mind Couture's critical approach):

[Criticism] has to be merciless in the face of the void. Our musical history needs solid works, and we know all too well the danger there would be in forming a Canadian music phantom on such hopelessness, whether from 1890 or 1930.... Never mind the knocks, the aversions, the threatened daily bread.¹³

Morin's conception of music criticism, like the future of the craft itself, lay in relatively new and uncharted fields of investigation in Canada. Through his "In Favour of Jazz" article, he attracted attention as a faithful defender of jazz as a serious musical idiom and a source of inspiration in an era when it was scorned even in its heartland, the United States. Similarly, his vision extended into the article, "Of Music Boxes and Their Dangers", and the fledgling realm of technology. While the Canadian public adapted to the very existence of radios, phonographs and the recording and broadcasting sciences, grappling with their ramifications in their own lives, Morin quite remarkably took it upon himself to establish the optimal applications of such advances in Canadian critical endeavour. Discerning their latent contribution to the educational obligations of the critic—a vehicle through which to attract public attention to good works—he advocated a pure subsidiary of music criticism dealing with the technical appraisal of records. This prediction, above all others, translated into a major and defining phenomenon of the modern-day cultural condition, where the quality of the compact disc has

ultimately superseded consideration of the music itself in critical assessment.

As an inquisitive man whose critical art form represented a way of life and an extension of his very being, Morin could not be content to perceive its functioning solely through the practical eyes of his colleagues. He continually reflected upon and questioned the nature and standing of criticism in Canadian society, enriching himself to better serve the interests of his public. This pursuit of excellence rendered him an authority and pioneer of Canadian music criticism. His nearest contemporaries in the study of the aesthetics of music criticism, for instance, were the critical writers M. D. Calvocoressi from Britain and the American, Oscar Thompson.¹⁹ A Canadian voice in critical aesthetics did not emerge until some thirty years later with the respective "credos" of Alan Detweiler and Kenneth Winters.²⁰

An instigator rather than a follower, Léo-Pol Morin systematized the ideological foundations of the profession of music criticism in completing his "Shots in the Dark" vision of the role of criticism, education and technologies in the advent of a Canadian-inspired school of thought on music. Practicing his critical craft in direct accord with the theory he laid out for his peers and their successors, criticism was and will remain Morin's true and abiding legacy in the history of Canadian music.

NOTES

- 1 "The Prix d'Europe", pp. 287-88.
- 2 "Solfège", p. 280.
- 3 John Beckwith, "Criticism", in *EMC*, p. 332.
- 4 Beckwith, *EMC*, p. 332.
- 5 Beckwith, *EMC*, p. 332.
- 6 John Daniel Logan. *Aesthetic Criticism in Canada - its Aims, Methods and Status*. Toronto: McClelland, Goodchild and Stewart, 1917.
- 7 "The Duties of the Critic", p. 258.
- 8 "Music Criticism Fifty Years Ago", p. 249.
- 9 "The Duties Of the Critic", p. 256.
- 10 "The Duties of the Critic", p. 256.
- 11 See the "*In Search of a Canadian Music*" commentary, p. 53.
- 12 "L'art est le seul but de notre effort comme il sera le seul critère de notre critique." Morin. "Signification". *Le Nigog* 1 (1918), p. 2.
- 13 "The Duties of the Critic", p. 257.
- 14 "The Duties of the Critic", p. 259.
- 15 "Where is Criticism Going?", p. 266.
- 16 "The Duties of the Critic", p. 259.
- 17 "Music Criticism Fifty Years Ago", pp. 250-51.
- 18 "Where is Criticism Going?", pp. 266-67.
- 19 M. D. Calvo-coressi. *The Principles and Methods of Musical Criticism*. London: Oxford University Press, 1931; Oscar Thompson. *Practical Music Criticism*. New York: Witmark Educational Publications, 1934.
- 20 Alan Detweiler. "Music Criticism: Its Functions and Limitations". *Canadian Music Journal* 3 (1958-59), pp. 24-32; Kenneth Winters. "Music Criticism". *Canadian Music Journal* 5 (1961), pp. 4-13.

CONCLUSIONS

*"He had dreamed of life more beautiful than it was.
And yet, his life was a chef-d'oeuvre."*

- Robert de Roquebrune

A personal love of learning, a noteworthy cosmopolitan music education, and an innate creative and literary facility: these are but a sampling of the attributes that define Léo-Pol Morin, the man, and assuredly qualify him as a writer on musical concerns in the Canadian interest. The role of "music critic" is one which he embraced with the utmost integrity and gravity, sustained by the influence of his subsidiary professional activities. As a young pianist, he mastered not only technique, but also the harmonic, formal and aesthetic content of music. This exposure, later facilitating a keen critical instinct and lucid judgement, accounted for the competence and professionalism of his criticisms. His involvements with the educational system in Montreal heightened his consciousness of the need to present his convictions in a precise and attractive manner--a means of meeting his readership on their terms. When composing under the guise of James Callihou, he affirmed a lifelong curiosity for new music and a command of the evolution of musical language.

Morin indeed carried out his diverse musical responsibilities to serve his critical prose, and did so motivated by one overriding concern: the development of a Canadian musical art. He had been deeply touched by his contact with the refined social, artistic and intellectual

environment of Paris and could have chosen to exile himself there, as did his writer-friend Marcel Dugas and many others. However, as attractive as this level of creative stimulation might have been for the young, impressionable man, it is revealing that he preferred to maintain a direct link with his native Quebecois cultural milieu over that of his artistic mother country:

...this indefatigable traveller who entertained Europeanism was nonetheless the most patriotic of our musicians and the most concerned with our musical future.¹

Such an abiding commitment to the welfare of the nation's musical manifestations and their fate in an ever-changing society is clearly embodied in Morin's principal work, *Papiers de musique*. A volume which offers the tools, in writing, with which to cultivate a distinctive Canadian music culture, *Papiers* reveals an erudite and conscientious scholar of music yet, at the same time, one who was acutely impressed by that which he saw, heard and read and by those whom he met. The personal and professional authority of Ravel ("To Find National Meaning", "In America", "In Favour of Jazz") and the secondary source influences of André Coeuroy and Pierre Lasserre ("To Find National Meaning"), Ernest Gagnon ("Canadian Folklore") and Diamond Jenness ("Eskimo Folklore") shaped his sensibilities as a critical thinker and writer and, in a broad sense, determined the tone of and his approach to the issues addressed in *Papiers*.

Morin's forthright and realistic appraisal of the status of Canadian musical endeavour in the interwar period and his singular vision for the advent of an indigenous repertoire—a compositional medium and school of

thought that might be acknowledged as typical of our land and peoples—nevertheless emerge as both his deep-seated critical mission and the central function of *Papiers de musique*. The latent three-part structure of its constituent texts entrenches his judicious, insightful exposition. His careful consideration of the constitution and merits of European and American music nationalism in the inaugural division, "Tour of Europe in Seventeen Minutes, Return Through the United States", yields a remarkably early acknowledgement of the vanguard composers of the twentieth century, including Stravinsky, Hindemith, Schoenberg and Varèse. However, this survey is primarily undertaken as a point of reference and measurement for corresponding achievements in Canadian music.

The intervening segment, comprising "In Search of a Canadian Music" and "Canadian Composers", continues his pursuit of a characteristic national repertoire. Adopted as a mechanism by which Canada's leading musicians and works might be adjudicated in light of societal and cultural circumstances, he uncovers a limited and inflexible artistic climate in which public apathy, the misperceptions of the arts community and inferior educational and compositional standards threaten the very existence of the country's musical life. Built on the professionalism of his implicit, systematized criteria for "Canadian" composition, he denounces the mediocrity of past efforts by Alexis Contant, Guillaume Couture and Achille Fortier, yet also brilliantly chronicles and champions the young musical movement of his time, represented in Rodolphe Mathieu, Claude Champagne and Ernest MacMillan.

Along the lines of this early focus, the articles of "Canadian Folklore" and "Shots in the Dark" may be considered the third element of the textual structure. Morin, in the final thrust of his vision, demonstrates the means through which he believes a distinctly Canadian voice in music might be established by its creators. Admiring the riches of our native cultural heritage, a musical tradition which had shaped his people over a period of centuries, he advocates a return to the distinctive springs of Canadian and aboriginal folklore for national identity in music.

Moreover, his "Shots in the Dark" affords the reader a rare and prescient glimpse into the role of criticism, education and technology, supported by the people, in facilitating this process of change. Through the renewal of music's importance in all facets of society and enhanced standards in everything that was done with regard to this fledgling art form (rigorous criticism, solfège as a basis for music education), fresh compositional talents would be encouraged and established ones stimulated. The development and future of a purely "Canadian" music output on the international stage would thus be ensured.

Among his penetrating and enlightened ideas on the Canadian musical enterprise, presented in a "national" context, Morin lingers a bit too long in his suggestion of folklore as a source from which the country's composers must create an identifiable oeuvre. Should our efforts be forced into this medium of expression, whether in the 1920s or the present decade, the results could well be disastrous: an impure, diluted music with stronger ties to the founding nations than to Canada itself. Indeed, these songs and inherited traditions are at best a starting

point and provisional measure until Canadian musicians realize that it matters less to cultivate a national music recognizable as such than to discover oneself and to allow one's creative imagination free rein. This does not mean that our cultural roots could not one day evolve into an effective and satisfying interpretation, in music, of the Canadian spirit, experience and land. Folklore, however, cannot stand as its sole basis, but rather a mode of sustenance as the musical production of the nation continues to mature and unfold.

Morin nevertheless profits in convincing fashion from the expanded and more flexible presentation afforded by this *Papiers de musique* volume. It is an instrument through which he is enabled, in unpretentious and transparent terms, to define national aesthetics, to effect the necessary realignment of attitudes and standards, and to establish merited reputations. Founded on the current events and broad concerns of his Montreal milieu and expressed in weekly commentaries for *La Patrie* and *La Presse*, Morin's *Papiers de musique* serves as a model of a deepened critical tone and treatment of larger issues in music criticism that has ultimately narrowed the angle of Canadian prejudice by many degrees on the matter of its original musical manifestations.

Although the *Papiers de musique* commentaries might be said to reflect a range of nationalistic, moralizing and epithetic tendencies, Morin, fundamentally attuned to his readers' more superficial needs, wrote out of a desire and obligation to inform them. All of his *Papiers* articles reveal that he is an educator entrusted with the precious task of guiding the public in the formation of their taste and critical sense in music:

His great knowledge, integrity, open-mindedness, in short, that which is perhaps most important, his concern for educating his readers by all possible means emerge from his writings.³

This overriding didactic tone, conveying the need to transcend preconceived notions and to discover the potential of a representative Canadian music, accounts for Morin's just and eminently direct mode of expression in his *Papiers de musique*. Rendering him a severe critic in many respects, he could not endorse the diluted form of reviewing perpetuated by the "beaten track" of contemporary music criticism and never camouflaged his thoughts and beliefs in the fear of creating enemies. Graced with piquant language and elegant, studied turns of phrase, his criticisms within the constituent texts are no less than literary, subjective and impressionistic: the essence of the man himself.

In light of present-day musicological and critical efforts, Léo-Pol Morin's vision and advocacy of an indigenous Canadian music, pursued to its logical end in the course of his *Papiers de musique*, might well be regarded as a simplistic and naïve account of the cultural conditions defining early twentieth-century Canada. However, when taken in relation to past, contemporary and succeeding accomplishments of the Canadian music criticism profession, the marginality, originality and real value of his endeavour is profoundly illuminated:

...[Morin's] essays form a high-water mark in Canadian musical writing, in their security of knowledge and taste, in the span of their subjects, and in their clear, sharp honesty of view.⁴

One of the finest, most lucid and penetrating of our twentieth-century critics, Léo-Pol Morin ushered in a highly competent and professional era of Canadian music criticism, buoyed by the truth and

strength of his personal convictions. Through the landmark volume *Papiers de musique*, his was a lasting contribution to the spread of musical culture in Canada.

NOTES

- 1 "Il avait rêvé la vie plus belle qu'elle n'est. Et pourtant, sa vie a été un chef-d'oeuvre." Robert de Roquebrune. "Léo-Pol Morin", in *Musique*. Montréal: Beauchemin, 1944, p. 25.
- 2 "... cet infatigable voyageur que l'on traitait d'européanisme a quand même été le plus patriote de nos musiciens et le plus soucieux de notre avenir musical." Jean Désy. "Eloge de Léo-Pol Morin", in *Musique*, p. 10.
- 3 "De ses écrits ressortent sa grande culture, son intégrité, son ouverture d'esprit, enfin, ce qui est peut-être le plus important, son souci d'éduquer ses lecteurs par tous les moyens possibles." Claire Villeneuve. "Léo-Pol Morin 1892-1941, musicographe". Unpublished M.Mus. Thesis, Université de Montréal, 1976, p. 58.
- 4 Beckwith, *EMC*, p. 244.

PAPIERS DE MUSIQUE

OVERTURE

The newspaper article presents a fleeting side which makes it become dated and robs it of interest when the current events that have inspired it are out of date. This is why I never thought of collecting, in one volume, the musical chronicles I wrote over a period of three years for La Patrie, La Presse and occasionally for journals such as Canadian Forum, La Vie canadienne, Opinions, La Revue musicale (Paris), Le Monde nouveau (Paris), etc. But a few friends, having observed that these "papers" are composed like studies, assured me that their interest is timeless and that they have an educational value which will be enhanced by their collection in book form. I have acted on this influence in publishing this volume.

The main thrust of these articles is didactic, but you must remember that most of these pages were intended for the readers of big daily newspapers. This is probably what gives them a disjointed appearance. In compiling them, I was subjected to the dictates of musical happenings in Montreal. But nevertheless you will be happy to note that they form groups, and that while I was always attentive to current events, I have not neglected the logical sequence of the subjects and was not afraid of pursuing or taking up a study again. It stems from what I consider the double role of the musicographe: he is both the informant

and the teacher of the public. I owe my public this double duty, and I hope I have fulfilled this task so far.

At any rate, you must not look for a complete history of music in Canada in these "papers". Too many names and considerations are missing from it that I have been forced to overlook against my better judgement. Nor should you seek the unedited text of articles already published some years ago. And if in certain cases you do not find exactly the same thinking, it must not be seen as a contradiction, but a natural evolution submitted to an honest discipline.

Thus I dedicate these Papiers de musique to my public, in which they will encounter facts, criticism and ideas that could be of interest to them.

L.P.M.

TOUR OF EUROPE IN SEVENTEEN MINUTES, RETURN THROUGH THE UNITED STATES

TO FIND NATIONAL MEANING

National music! This expression only has true meaning in our day. For music did not seek to be national in the seventeenth century, although it was much more in its nature to be so at that time than in the nineteenth century. It was preoccupied even then with being aristocratic first and foremost, and this noble and sentimental storm called Romanticism had to pass, in order that the influence of this art might expand and broaden to become popular.

Until about the end of the last century, France, Germany and Italy provided the European countries with music. And since these countries had never had a really firm concern for being national in their art, the music of the great official purveyors was thus in its due place everywhere. Moreover, it is in this way that the fine, generous, romantic and mistaken idea that music is an international art became established.

The medium by which a musical thought or idea expresses itself is no doubt universal and understood in all countries of the world where the same system of sounds is in favour, but the soul of this music, its meaning and spirit, remains national. And music must be national! It is still national, even if it seems not to be, and perhaps in a more precise way than the diverse current literature is. That of Wagner is German in spite of all the books written to make one believe the contrary or that it

could profoundly agree with the French spirits, minds and hearts. It is understood in France, where it has already been loved even to the point of immodesty, but it remains German. That does not prevent it from being universally beautiful, eloquent, moving and understood even in Canada. Italians can love it as well as the Japanese, but it is and will remain German. Besides, it is quite good in this way. Imagine an identical style of houses for all countries, the same morals and customs, a vegetation and cookery everywhere the same, as Alfred Casella said one day before the members of the Pro-Musica Society in Montreal.²

Make no mistake in the meaning of this expression: national music. That it is national does not belittle the value of the music in any way. We have never contemplated denigrating the beauty of Greek architecture in calling it Greek, and this architecture is known to have found applications in the most diverse countries which is not up to us to appraise here. But we know all too well that neither the intellectually intricate music of Alban Berg, nor the authoritarian music of Hindemith, nor even the very clear music of Georges Auric would satisfy the Alaskan Eskimos who, it must be said, know nothing of our musical writing.³

In becoming national, European musics have not submitted to a fashion as much as a need. It was not a matter of putting up insurmountable barriers with no possible exchange between them, but of learning national languages, which still seems to be the best way for the expression of specifically national ideas, be they French, German, English or Russian.

IN FRANCE — In reappraising its values at the end of the nineteenth century, France realized that, musically, it no longer thought in French as it had in the time of Rameau and Couperin long ago. France understood that the Wagnerian art form was not within its capabilities and did not suit the genius of its race. It was France which first began to "re-nationalize" music⁴ and which soon turned the generous suggestion of an international art into a cliché, not only in its language but in its innermost meaning. French musicians had the will and the good sense to turn back and draw on their past. They not only found justification for their tastes and sympathies among the Classics such as Rameau, Couperin, etc., but also a thousand sources in which to restore their spirit and genius. Consequently, France could be itself again. It was in good form to be French in music. And if, for example, the music of Fauré, Debussy and Ravel is French, well! it is French "without doing it on purpose", as Pierre Lasserre said it so well.⁵ It is a way of being which does not deceive. The art of Debussy is understood and loved outside p deceive. The art of Debussy is understood and loved outside the French borders, as is that of Ravel and Fauré. But in hearing *Pelléas*, in hearing *Daphnis*, in hearing *Pénélope*, there is no hesitation: we are in the presence of French masterpieces.⁶ This music is recognized everywhere around the world, just as the French language is recognized. That does not prevent it from expressing sentiments which are the province of the universal soul, and thus from broadening its impact.

Therefore, a pure music free of blending has taken form in France and has reached its peak of perfection in less than half a century. Added to the names of Debussy, Fauré and Ravel, those of Schmitt, Dukas, D'Indy, Roussel, the younger ones such as Honegger, Milhaud, Poulenc,

Auric, Roland-Manuel, Ibert, Ferroud, Maurice Delage, are claims to fame for a country.⁷ And it seems that the French school has never had as much vitality as today, nor as much curiosity, originality and diversity. Never has it compelled the recognition of the world with as much persuasive strength and charm.

IN GERMANY — Meanwhile, Germany rests. The Wagnerian fame had been too great and its victory too profound. No matter what is said, and although we deny having been so utterly under its grip, the last of the great Romantics had shut the doors behind him with *Tristan* and *Parsifal* and set precise limits and inescapable motifs on German music. Whatever their relative independence, neither Brahms, nor Mahler or Bruckner did anything else but develop an aesthetic which holds the mark of a more and more distant era.

The headstrong Richard Strauss, who mingled so many sentimental and domestic preoccupations as he pleased and for whom the means of expression had a luxurious eloquence, did not give his music the Nietzschean strength that it nonetheless claims. The tempo of this Romantic is not of today, not so much because of the language, through which he is the greatest and most persuasive, as in the ideas it conveys. Germany has thus witnessed the musical revival of the surrounding countries, impassive, indifferent. It has ceased to lead as the Wagnerian influence exhausted itself.

But now war has transformed Germany's musical face. It too wants a new look. In a leap, it follows close on the heels of the boldest theories. A Hindemith has suddenly appeared, willful and determined to

make the new voice of his country heard. He dares everything and everything is right for him, so long as it speaks the national language, a post-war language that has retained only the external richness of Romanticism, which can strengthen and "metalize itself" as it suits a music from the concrete period.⁹ It is then curious that the art of the young has turned to a Max Reger, to the only one of the great elders whose heart was not melted in the ardent Romantic material and who had always known how to control it. This great musician, who loved music for itself and whose work was not free from pedantry, happened thus to have kept the expressions of pure music alive much more so than had his contemporaries. From then on the way is open to Paul Hindemith, Max Butting⁹ and Ernst Toch.¹⁰ With them, mechanization has entered into German music like sport in French music with Honegger.¹¹ This mechanization is closely akin to the steely phrases of Prokofieff in Russia, the sentimental musician whose desire is classic. The young Germans will hear nothing of the fussy language of Schoenberg.¹² This art is not direct enough for them and does not represent life in the present, much less the future.

IN ITALY — Italy, which suffered terribly from the melodramatico-musical virus at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth,¹³ has also put itself back on the path of national achievement. There, as elsewhere, miracles were worked and while Popular Song came to the aid of other musics in other countries, it is noteworthy that the fascist Peninsula was saved by Gregorian chant just as much as by the

resurrected music of the ancient classics, as Malipiero, Respighi and Casella give us evidence.¹⁴

In assassinating verismo, the musicians of the new Italy have restored meaning to chamber music and the symphony such as we understood them in times past, that is, as pure forms free of extramusical blending. To that end, they have relearned the Italian language and their proud genius now finds free expression. They know that the Italian musician can henceforth express himself without necessarily resorting to verismo, and they remember Monteverdi, Pergolesi, the Scarlattis and Corelli, whose strength and vigour are not exhausted. Musicians such as Martucci, Malipiero, Respighi, Pizzetti, Casella and Castelnuovo-Tedesco,¹⁵ the youngest ones such as Rieti, Labroca, Massarani, Mortari etc. have freed Italian music from its crude and vulgar vapours and have wanted it to live henceforth in pure air, released from all hindrances and poison.¹⁶ An excellent hygienic measure in a country where the Mascagnis, Boitos and Puccinis skilfully and astutely lead musical taste astray. In forsaking the posturings of feigned verist distress, Italy has begun to smile again as in the days of its former splendour.¹⁷

IN RUSSIA — Russia also turned away from the preponderant nineteenth-century Germanic influence following the great Moussorgsky. While with the Five (excluding Moussorgsky), it did not immediately stop soliciting the necessary wisdom from Germany, the Russian national voice has nonetheless become more and more potent. With Stravinsky and Prokofieff, it is presently equal to indulging itself without risk in the most dazzling and even the most unsettling escapades, just as easily from

the mystical side as the realistic, from the Eastern side as the Western. Its personality is established. Stravinsky is Russian in spite of the common or exotic nature of works such as *Pulcinella* and *Oedipus Rex*. He is Russian because of *The Rite of Spring*, *Petrushka* and above all *Les Noces*, with its implacable and moving percussive of a strictly Russian obsession and fatality.¹⁸ He is Russian through the tragic instinct of his work, through its propelling force. But while this cold, insensitive and flawless art goes beyond the ordinarily delimited bounds within the frontiers, representing the most complete marvel of pure intelligence, it remains Russian through its ability to be everywhere in its country. On the other hand, it has an international impact through the power of its medium and the strength of its ideas. Of all the national arts, it is the most extensive. But it is definitely not an easy art.

IN SPAIN — Yet another example of a national art is found in Spain, with wide-ranging motifs that transcend the ordinary framework: that of Manuel de Falla. When Father Eximeno advised Spanish musicians to edify their music system on the basis of the national song,¹⁹ he did not foresee that such a natural theory would soon find a brilliant illustration in his own country. He undoubtedly had not dared to hope that a musician of genius would one day compose resolutely Spanish music without the need for servile inspiration from folklore, nor that this music could merge into the international soul without losing a bit of its physiognomy. Yet this is the case of Manuel de Falla, the great Spaniard. And if his art is universal, if it can be understood everywhere without ceasing to speak an essentially personal language, following in the footsteps of a

Stravinsky, a Debussy or a Ravel, it is because his art seems to come from the very soil of Spain, new, alive and natural, rather than borrowing verbatim from folklore and expressing external features through it. After having been confined to a rigid folklore which the free genius of Albéniz did not succeed in definitively disengaging from the soil, Spanish music has, because of Falla, an increasingly far-reaching and humane impact.

IN ENGLAND — The young English music has not attained such a brilliant destiny. But while it has deteriorated in the course of the last two centuries, we know that there was once an infinitely rich and distinctive English music. A rebirth of this music is thus quite natural and the current movement in England is renewing illustrious traditions, following the example of other European countries.

A country so imbued with folksong could not definitively die out to music. Nor should it remain eternally subjected to the backbreaking yoke of Handel, any more than that of Mendelssohn and, later, Brahms. As other European countries marked a return to national expressions at the end of the nineteenth century, English music put a "hold back" on its frontiers, infinitely beneficial for the future. Like others, it was saved by folklore. But in the meantime, it had raised the "ballad" genre up to a style from which it drew both praise and monotony.

But if it is a long way from Purcell to Elgar, whose personality was often confused with that of Brahms, it appears that the distance is smaller from the same Purcell to musicians such as Arthur Bliss²⁰ or Eugene Goossens.²¹ When Arnold Bax wrote that "all art which is related

to a national ideal must find its inspiration and life in the spiritual life of the country", and that such an expression needed "a national atmosphere or local colour or, above all, a typical frame of mind",²² he defined the art of Bliss or that of Goossens. However, do not assume that the sole sound of business and schillings is at the root of Bliss' art and that he went to the Stock Exchange for his inspirations.²³ And while he does not pursue the mystical or symbolic expression of a Bax any more than the photographic orientalism of a Holst, this young musician is only more precise, closer to everyday English life and also to this tragi-comic instinct which seems to be the prerogative of English genius.

No aesthetic in the new English music is as disinterested or as free as his in the sense in which André Gide would understand it.²⁴ That of Goossens, where humour and melancholy mingle in a cruel, harsh and aggressive language, appears to be less lively and disinterested. But compared to Bliss, and in company with Lord Berners²⁵—inquiring mind—he restores a necessary balance. Thus we can no longer doubt that an English music already exists which, beyond time and the various continental misfortunes and ravages, is getting back to the great tradition of Purcell, Byrd, Blow and Gibbons. For while the English long contented themselves with understanding the music, they are beginning to feel it as musicians.

IN HUNGARY AND ELSEWHERE — The national movement is also appreciable in Hungary, where Béla Bartók has succeeded in restoring Hungarian meaning to the music of his country, less academic than the one until then in use. His music has regained an authentic popular

accent which constitutes one of the most powerful features of his style. But a stylized popular accent like Falla's, although the Hungarian's inflection is much more of its native soil.

Czech music is characterized in the same way, as is that of Romania. Holland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark are known to be pursuing national idioms. In the figure of Szymanowski²⁶ and, more typically, Tansman,²⁷ Poland is quite close to the goal.

The same physical difference as there is between such countries as Norway and Italy, between typical men such as the Czechs and the English, exists in their respective music, more or less characterized. But it does not prevent this national music at all from being understood everywhere, when it has a strong accent, when it is great, when it is the work of a creator. Thus it assumes universal meaning.

POSTLUDE — For the most part, these musical births or rebirths have a common origin: folklore. It is understood that the most reliable national expression resided there. But the era of direct borrowings is past and at present it is a matter of transposing a cast of mind, a way of doing things drawn from the soil, onto the general and universal plan (Stravinsky and Falla). In this sense, melodies and rhythms are created which bear the mark of their native countries and, consequently, the features of the race.

But not all national musics are inspired by folklore. If the example of Albéniz and Falla confirms the thesis, that of Wagner and Debussy, among others, illustrates the antithesis. For it is remarkable that such essentially national musics as the German and French owe very little to

folklore. No music is more German than Hindemith's, more French than that of Poulenc and Auric. If it is not through the land or folklore itself that this music is German or French, it is so through the personality, the spirit, by that which it expresses of the individual and that which this individual has in particular and, at the same time, in common. To borrow an idea from Pierre Lasserre, the music of a man of genius has a physiognomy as recognizable as are the features and expressions of a race.²⁸ And if, as André Coeuroy puts it, national musics are by definition made in "the image of the peoples or the countries which illustrate them",²⁹ it is natural that they accommodate the general characteristics of those of whom they are the expression.

Folklore is not the sole and unique source of inspiration for a national music, but it remains a known fact that folklore is an excellent, genuinely good one, of which it is only a matter of knowing how to use it with tact, taste, subtlety, in a word, with genius.

NOTES

Sources

"La musique aujourd'hui en Italie: M. Alfredo Casella". *La Patrie*, vol. 49, no. 9, 5 March 1927, p. 36.

"Une musique nationale". *La Patrie*, vol. 49, no. 15, 12 March 1927, p. 40.

"Musiques nationales". *La Patrie*, vol. 50, no. 102, 23 June 1928, p. 34.
Duplicated in *La Presse*, vol. 46, no. 191, 31 May 1930, p. 65.

"La Musique française". *La Patrie*, vol. 50, no. 150, 18 August 1928, p. 34.

"Visage de la musique française". *La Patrie*, vol. 50, no. 156, 25 August 1928, p. 34.

- 1 See "*Tour of Europe in Seventeen Minutes, Return Through the United States*", pp. 42-43, regarding the similarity of Morin's basic premise on music nationalism to that of Ravel.
- 2 Alfredo Casella (1883-1947), the most influential composer and advocate of "modern" and "national" music in Italy, ca. 1920-40, gave a 1927 conference on Italian music in Montreal under the auspices of the Pro-Musica Society. Possessing little firsthand knowledge of this repertoire prior to Casella's session, it seems reasonable that Morin gleaned much of his information for the "In Italy" synopsis from these lectures. See Morin's review of the conference and related performances in the original source, "La musique aujourd'hui en Italie: M. Alfredo Casella" (noted above).
- 3 Morin's "Alaskan Eskimos" are actually the Copper Inuit, an Inupiak-speaking native group which settled in the north-central Arctic region of Coppermine, N.W.T.. Consult the article "Eskimo Folklore", p. 242, and corresponding commentary "Canadian Folklore", p. 76, for more complete detail on this remote culture.
- 4 In his suffix to *Papiers de musique*, "The Inevitable Coda", Morin apparently contradicts this notion of "re-nationalizing music" with the assertion, "It is not a matter of 're-nationalizing' ourselves, but quite simply of becoming 'naturalized'.... a search for a characteristic accent here." (p. 305)
- 5 The French literary critic of nineteenth-century idealism, Pierre Lasserre (1867-1930), writes in the "Forward" to his *L'Esprit de musique française*: "It is right to be French in everything: but one must not be so of set purpose. That is the right attitude. The French spirit, the French taste—these are things that do not define themselves, do not put themselves into formulae.... It is a thing that is felt...a living individuality." (*The Spirit of French Music*. trans. Denis Turner. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1921, p. 10)
- 6 Debussy, *Pelléas et Mélisande* (opera, 1893-95, 1901-02); Ravel, *Daphnis et Chloé* (symphonie chorégraphique, 1909-12); Fauré, *Pénélope* (drame lyrique, 1913).
- 7 Apropos of Morin's personal and professional associations with these early twentieth-century representatives of the "French compositional school" while in Paris (1912-14), see "Morin: The Paris Years", pp. 21-22.
- 8 By "concrete period", Morin is referring to neoclassicism.

- 9 The German composer Max Butting (1888-1976) numbered Bach, the Classics and Reger among his formative influences. Typical of his compositional style in Morin's day was the *Kleine Stücke* for string quartet (1925), with their elaborate polyphony, contrapuntal facility and transparent structure. He was not indifferent to the novel stylistic trends of the 1920s, including composition for radio, and acknowledged new techniques as a means of clarifying content. See *Grove's*, vol. 3, pp. 522-23.
- 10 Ernst Toch (1887-1964), a self-taught Austrian composer, cultivated an essentially neoclassical style, although he did experiment at times with a highly chromatic idiom verging on the atonal. First and foremost a composer of chamber music, he entered into a new phase after 1920, marked by the appearance of the *String Quartet no. 9 in C major, op. 26* (1919) and its freer use of dissonance, intensification of counterpoint and individual approach to form. Consult *Grove's*, vol. 18, pp. 20-21.
- 11 This mechanization of which Morin speaks is most clearly embodied in the early stylization of Paul Hindemith. His was a spontaneous and carefree impulse to make music which prioritized the rhythmically dynamic "line of force" (*Kraftlinie*) and broke through the bounds of traditional harmony (extended tonality). See *Grove's*, vol. 7, pp. 278-80.
- 12 It is Arnold Schoenberg's principle of twelve-tone composition which inspires Morin's "fussy language" pronouncement.
- 13 "Verismo" was the name given the Italian music version of a late nineteenth-century movement towards naturalism in literature. The operatic works spawned by this trend followed general naturalistic tendencies of introducing characters from the lower social classes, strong local colour and situations centring on the violent clash of passions: hatred, lust, betrayal and murder. Morin's "melodramatico-musical virus" is an apt, self-coined term. See *Grove's*, vol. 19, p. 670.
- 14 Morin's notion that Italian music was "saved" by Gregorian chant rather than its folklore may be directly attributed to the French music critic and scholar André Coeuroy (1891-1976) and his "A la recherche d'une discipline", in *Panorama de la musique contemporaine* (Paris: Editions Kra, 1928): "The rebirth of our great ancient art was established particularly after the reconsecration of Gregorian chant which, for the Italians, took the same place as popular song in the young Russian school." Coeuroy, with Henri Prunières, founded and edited the Parisian journal *La Revue musicale* (1920-37), for which Morin was a frequent contributor. See *Grove's*, vol. 4, p. 519.

- 15 Martucci (1856-1909), Malipiero (1882-1973), Respighi (1879-1936), Pizzetti (1880-1968; Morin writes "Pizetti"), Casella and Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895-1968) were co-founders of the Società italiana di musica moderna (est. 1917), an institution which gave concerts devoted to avant-garde music. All were regular performers at these events, introducing the music of Ravel, Stravinsky and their compatriots to the Italian public. See *Grove's*, vol. 3, pp. 852-55, and individual entries.
- 16 The Italian composers Vittorio Rieti (1898-1994), Mario Labroca (1896-1973), Renzo Massarani (1898-1975; Morin's "Masarini" is clearly an error) and Virgilio Mortari (b. 1902) were students of Respighi and Malipiero and protégés of Casella. Straddling Romantic tendencies of the late-nineteenth century and modern currents in twentieth-century Italian music, these men wrote in a predominantly neoclassical style with some sympathies to innovative trends. Regarding their output, Rossi-Doria writes of "compositions saturated with life and with warm, red, very Italian blood like that of our rough Lombard craftsmen." Consult individual entries in *Grove's* for further biographical detail.
- 17 The similarity of Morin's concluding remarks on Italian music to those of Coeuroy in his *Panorama de la musique contemporaine* are discussed at greater length in the "Tour of Europe" commentary, p. 43.
- 18 See "Morin: The Paris Years", p. 20, apropos of the impact of Stravinsky's music upon Morin's professional endeavour.
- 19 Late nineteenth-century Spaniards rightly considered Antonio Eximeno (1729-1808) a national hero in his polemical and theoretical battles concerning the strictures of counterpoint, taken up with Cerone (1566-1625), Tartini (1692-1770), Martini (1706-84) and Euler (1707-83). However, they erred in attributing to him the declaration that "a nation's music should be based on its folksong". Eximeno was an iconoclast who, while criticizing Cerone, never hesitated to appropriate his ideas. See *Grove's*, vol. 6, p. 323.
- 20 Arthur Bliss (1891-1975) began his compositional career in the early 1920s as the enfant terrible of English music, outspoken in his rejection of established Germanic tradition and aligning himself with the new ways of Stravinsky, Schoenberg and the younger French composers. His personal contact with Elgar made a lasting impression: he soon rediscovered the strong ties which bound him to his English predecessors. Although ultimately content to work within an early Romantic stylization, his music retained some advanced characteristics which had inspired his youth: wide-ranging melodies, brilliant orchestrations reminiscent of Stravinsky and some use of jazz idioms. See *Grove's* for biographical detail and output.

- 21 It is recognized that the chief work of Eugene Goossens (1893–1962) lay in his conducting and particularly in bringing modern, difficult works to public note. His own compositions in diverse genres have fallen into neglect, although in the interwar period his reputation was equal to that of Bax, Bridge and Walton. One of the first English composers to assimilate and build on the language of Debussy, Ravel and a mature Strauss, his style became a blend of impressionistic harmonies and neoclassical polyphony which retained a clear tonal outline. Consult *Baker's Biographical*, p. 649, for the Goossens biography; see also Morin's reviews of his lecture-recital given on 16 December 1926 for the Pro-Musica Society (appearing in the 11 and 18 December edition of *La Patrie*).
- 22 Arnold Bax. "A British School of Composers", in *Farewell, My Youth and Other Writings*. ed. Lewis Foreman. Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1992, pp. 105–07.
- 23 Able to compose to commission and to fulfill many needs without compromising his musical character, Bliss won a reputation as a cosmopolitan and advanced composer. He wrote a series of lively occasional works (ca. 1919), many of which were written to be performed at private parties or at select chamber concerts attended by the English cognoscenti.
- 24 See André Gide, "Nationalisme et littérature", in *Nouveau prétextes: réflexions sur quelques points de littérature et de morale*. Paris: Mercure de France, 1913, pp. 67–84.
- 25 Delineated by Stravinsky as "droll and delightful...an amateur; but in the best—literal—sense", the English composer, writer and painter Lord Berners (Gerald Tyrwhitt-Wilson; 1883–1950) was largely self-taught despite advice and encouragement from Stravinsky and Casella. Apart from a subtle talent for musical parody (in particular, the opera *Le Carrosse du Saint Sacrement* (Paris, 1924) and ballet *The Triumph of Neptune* (London, 1926)), Berners had a gift for light music, uncommon in composers with a non-professional background. Consult *Grove's*, vol. 2, p. 623.
- 26 Karol Szymanowski (1882–1937), a central figure in Polish music in the first half of the twentieth century, was profoundly affected by the liberation of his native land: his ruling principle became, as he said, "a fanatic love of the idea of Poland". He insisted in essays that the Polish repertoire should be worthy of Chopin and also achieve international standards of modernity and quality. Szymanowski's own compositional efforts towards a national style, largely carried out in the 1920s, included the song cycle *Słopiewnie* (1921), the ballet *Harnasie* (1923–31) and *Piesni kurpiowskie* ("Kurpie Songs"; 1928–29). See *Grove's*, vol. 18, pp. 499–500.

- 27 In retrospect, the French composer (of Polish origin) Alexandre Tansman (1897-1986) held less personal stake in the cultivation of a typically Polish music than did his compatriot Szymanowski. Touched by the tastes of his adopted Paris, his earliest works were written under the influence of Chopin, Stravinsky and Ravel. However, by the early 1920s he was composing in diverse styles of a more individual lyricism and melancholy, at times using serial, atonal and polytonal idioms (e.g. *Sonata for flute* (1925)). Tansman may be compared to Milhaud in his use of folk materials. See *Grove's*, vol. 18, p. 566.
- 28 "There is nothing more real, more distinct, than the physiognomy of an individual, especially if a superior personality shines through its features. But that is a thing that is felt and cannot be defined. It is the same with the French spirit." (Lasserre, *The Spirit*, p. 10.)
- 29 Morin's second quotation from Coeuroy is similarly derived from *Panorama de la musique contemporaine* and his opening chapter on musical nationalism, as follows: "This is why the Panorama we are attempting to sketch offers in the first place the image of the people or of the spirits that illustrate them, free to discover at once the ways that unite them, or the crossroads where adventure gathers them together." (p. 12)

IN AMERICA

Since folklore gives rise to miraculous creations, it is surprising that the young America does not wallow in its Negro or Indian idioms. It is just that American folklore is rather mixed up, rather muddled in diverse and disturbing origins and nationalities. Moreover, to be able to profit from an immersion as deep as that which emerges in this case, one must know how to swim or, if you prefer, thoroughly possess the skill of writing. This is not yet the case of young America.

Even so, it seems that America also wants to have its own characteristic style of musical thought. At the beginning of the twentieth century, many musicians of this country were interested in native folklore, I mean Indian and Negro. Certain pages of Farwell and MacDowell, too, have a distinctive flavour in this sense.¹ But for some years, musicians known as light-minded seem to have abandoned the Indian idiom in favour of the Negro, which is skillfully adapted to the needs of the day. Future American music will nevertheless recall these colourful and perfectly recognizable idioms; it will recall jazz, the fascinating and passionate themes and rhythms it has invented.²

Thus while European musics rest on a culture and sound principles or, to speak pretentiously, on certain traditions, it is not so for American music which, in drawing from just about everywhere, still endeavours to create a language for itself.

I might add that this is an excellent way of doing things when one has no past, and we know that ideas are quickly assimilated in America. An American literature and poetry have already taken form. Architecture

is well on the way to precise realizations and the sciences are up to date. So there is no danger in voicing the opinion that music could well find favourable ground, in time, for its genesis in America. American music appropriately began by being English, and the work of MacDowell, for example, should not be envisaged otherwise, whatever the Germano-Nordic influence that characterizes it may be.³ We know that the England of thirty and fifty years ago looked only that way. Hadley, Cadman, Deems Taylor and Hammond certainly made a serious effort to naturalize and adapt, but they remain no less subjected to external Anglo-Celtic or German influence, scarcely touched by vague French or Russian currents.⁴ Carpenter⁵ and Whithorne⁶ are perhaps better imbued with Americanisms, particularly the former, who was so impressed by skyscrapers that he made them the subject of a work, *Skyscraper*. But external and superficial signs. The profoundly American spirit is not yet in this music, despite the musty smell of jazz which tries to give it an indigenous air. Loeffler, who at times keeps company with the Devil under the pretext of *Villanelle*, at times with St. Francis of Assisi when he wants to speak to the birds,⁷ has not found, any more than Marion Bauer, the precious American alchemy otherwise known as national expression.⁸

Other musicians like Eichheim cross the Pacific seeking a particular fragrance from China or Japan.⁹ Still others such as John Powell and Henry Gilbert find black rhythms in Harlem (N.Y.) or the southern States,¹⁰ while a Frederick Jacobi, a refined, subtle and somewhat precious musician, favours the Redskins and Saint Agnes as well.¹¹ And then there are also liberal and conservative dissidents, even among the young

people. There is still jazz, which has much more importance in American music than one would imagine.

All of that yields a strange blend of tastes, odours and colours, where European ancestors are found in American clothes, ever running, speculating on the Stock Exchange or, that which is less in good form but also less frequent, "chewing gum".

But the American soil seems to lend itself to the genesis and establishment of a Hebrew music with benevolence and good-naturedness, and even with some pride. This desire to create a Jewish music exists in Europe, even in France and Italy where musicians such as Milhaud and Castelnuovo-Tedesco endeavour to find the proper formula. But this sentiment is not generalized and well-established, and neither Stravinsky, nor Schoenberg, Tansman or Roland-Manuel work from this sense of music of a specifically Jewish character. Whereas the work of Ernest Bloch, entirely imbued with Judaism, is blossoming in the United States, as is that of Lazare Saminsky which sings the Sabbath liturgy with monotonous and melancholic energy.¹² The work of Gruenberg is also encountered, whose *Daniel Jazz* nevertheless conforms to the Negro idioms.¹³

Apparently it would be wise to wait several years and even fifty years before forming an opinion on the young American music. Waiting is much safer indeed. Once matters are closed or dead, there is less chance of making a mistake. But until then, nothing is known and later, well! it is too late.

Certain works and trends demand caution and distance. But is this really the case of young American music, that of Charles Ives, Ruth Crawford, Bernard Wagenaar, Adolph Weiss, Carlos Salzedo—French of

late—of Aaron Copland, Leo Sowerby, Emerson, Whithorne, Dane Rudhyar (formerly Daniel Chennevière, also French), Quinto Maganini, Henry Cowell, Roger Sessions, Confrey, Marc Blitzstein?¹⁴ Is it not instead a question of relatively easy music to classify and understand, however complicated and vague it might be in its intentions and expression?

At any rate, at first glance and in its entirety, this music does not appear as new as we say it is and it would like to be. We find ourselves in the presence of classified and catalogued phenomena and it seems already outdated in its meaning as in its expression. This is the danger of musics stemming from poorly assimilated and ill-digested influences. The medium through which most of these musicians express their simplistic and ordinary ideas does not in any way present the characteristics of a new language, nor a new spirit. And without being that of street musicians, this language is terribly well-known and has even already been abandoned by illustrious precursors, for whom it was not natural.

The atonal chromaticism of an Ives, the occasional bitonality of Ruth Crawford are outmoded. Dane Rudhyar's feeble spasms have a distressing languidness, Cowell's sarcasms a pointless clownery.¹⁵ All roads are open in atonalism, provided that it is mastered. Escape is being sought. But from what? The framework of the tonal scale is understood to be a nuisance for anyone who does not think according to these dictates, but if the need to go beyond that framework is experienced, this need has to be seriously motivated. We must go elsewhere with propriety. And that being the case, why, apart from this abhorred tonal system, continue to use the same forms and processes, worked out on twelve semitones

instead of seven tones and semitones? This is not honest. Ideas must be in close rapport with the form. The same with the language. And if the ideas are new—who is not piqued by new ideas?—they have to be expressed by means of a new language and inhabit a new framework. Thus, if this language cannot create its own form, it is wrong. These gentlemen of the young American music achieve academicism the other way round, without having pursued it.

I have said outdated and imitative music. Well! look at the works of Ornstein from 1914 to 1918.¹⁶ Better still those of Schoenberg, for example op. 11 which, in time, Daniel Chennevière played with such disturbing frenzy in Paris.¹⁷ Look at Stravinsky's, in the days when he very nearly conformed to the Schoenbergian god, Gerald Tyrwhitt's, since become Lord Berners, Szymanowski's, even Scriabin's, Tansman's, Goossens', etc.¹⁸

But the curiosity of the young American musicians is pleasant and while they are twenty or so years behind, they cannot be reproached for producing such substantial musical classics, although a little too late. After all, what does it matter if their music is patterned by all it repeats of what we already know! What else does it matter if its so-called dissonant and belligerent harmonies can be reduced to consonances without even costing them their originality; what does it matter if all that can turn into a dreadful banality after such a process; what else does it matter if their credo is: without dissonance, there is no salvation! They will not be long in understanding that it is a question of mastery, personality, genius.

The young American music will overcome its ills the day when it possesses the necessary skill to step out alone beyond the beaten track, the day when it understands the futility of systems which do not correspond to a need of nature. Just as in architecture the Americans have tried to have their Gothic and Renaissance monuments, music wants patterned *Symphonies* and *Sonatas*, give or take a few floors. The discovery and use of new materials will suggest forms befitting their genius as their language in due course. In the meantime, it is perhaps in Gershwin, untroubled by any embarrassing culture, who ignores the whole art of composition, who loves life, light and movement in itself, that the most striking thought in American music may be found.¹⁹ A little Gershwin *Prelude* contains in itself much more material that is true to life and recognizable as American than all the gloomy transparencies of a Rudhyar and the noisy grimaces of a Cowell.

The rhythmic energy with which the American seems to overflow will not be able to tolerate the atonal system for long, without contrasts, light, movement and true dynamism. Such as it is represented by the above-mentioned musicians of today, it is a music of yesterday. In the past lies death. The music of tomorrow has to be alive.

But among others, the names of Marc Blitzstein, Roger Sessions, Edgar Varèse, etc. must be retained. These musicians seem to have something to say and they are on the right track to a personal language. They will know how to put away the musty smells of absolute chromaticism and certain inadequate forms in the antiquities museum, with which an American mind cannot burden itself much longer without harm.

No country in the world offers as much variety and disparity. Wagner, Debussy, Mahler, Reger, Rimsky-Korsakoff, Schoenberg, Bartók, Stravinsky, Ravel and less esteemed composers are such flamboyant and inevitable models for American music. The assimilation is by no means perfect, but if the young people digest and succeed at last in possessing the secrets of a personal musical language, well! they will make something out of all that. It is inevitable in so alive a country. At any rate, it will not really matter whether American music is green or red, so long as it is American. It must acquire a race.

NOTES

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- 1 Fine examples of the early twentieth-century American interest in native folklore ("Indian and Negro") include works such as Arthur Farwell's (1872-1952; Morin's "Farewell" is likely a typo) *Folksongs of the West and South*, op. 19 (1905), *Impressions of the Wa-Wan Ceremony of the Omahas*, op. 21 (1905) and *From Mesa and Plain*, op. 20 (1905) for piano, as well as Edward MacDowell's (1860-1908) orchestra *Suite no. 2 in E minor* ("Indian", 1891-95) and the *Woodland Sketches*, op. 51, for piano (1896). Both men, however, were essentially Romantics in temperament and technique who never wholly seized upon the musical innovations of their time.

- 2 See Morin's appraisal of the twentieth-century jazz phenomenon in his article, "In Favour of Jazz", p. 292.
- 3 The nature of the self-coined term, *Germano-Nordique*, is not clearly specified by Morin in text; as such, it may be variously interpreted as "North German", "German-Nordic (Scandinavian)" or other combinations thereof. Given MacDowell's long-standing association with Liszt, though, the former seems most reasonable. Descended from English settlers to the United States, MacDowell himself spent only the summer of 1885 in England. While his music might be English in terms of its subject matter, his compositional style owes much to Raff, Liszt, Wagner and Grieg.
- 4 Many of the views expressed by Morin in this section, extending through to his citation of Loeffler's *Villanelle du diable*, may again be ascribed in varying degrees to Coeuroy's *Panorama de la musique contemporaine*, pp. 64-71. Although advocates of American music as composers, performers, conductors and lecturers, the Americans Henry Hadley (1871-1937), Charles Cadman (1881-1946), Deems Taylor (1885-1966) and Richard Hammond (b. 1896) composed primarily in the conventional Romantic vein of German-trained American musicians. Cadman's efforts, in particular, "belong to that group of American composers who 'idealized' (i.e. set into a conservative nineteenth-century harmonic idiom) the music of the American Indians." (vol. 1, p. 333) See individual entries in *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music*.
- 5 With his *Piano Concertino* (1915), John Alden Carpenter (1876-1951) began a mild but persistent flirtation with American popular music, including ragtime and jazz. His place in American music was assured by the historical significance of the "ballet of modern American life", *Skyscrapers* (1923-24), a work commissioned by Diaghilev for production in Monte Carlo. Other such works include the jazz pantomime *Krazy Kat* (1921), *Jazz Orchestra Pieces* (Oil and Vinegar; 1925-26) and *Young Man, Chieftain!* (1929). See *New Grove American*, vol. 1, pp. 359-60.
- 6 The compositions of Emerson Whithorne (1884-1958) have been described as quite modern but without "the tendency of some modern writers to do away with melody." However, the piano suite *New York Days and Nights* (1922) indicated a style change in which his awareness of polytonality was evident. Chosen to represent American composition at the 1923 Salzburg Chamber Music Festival in an orchestral version, the work was played by jazz band and symphony orchestra alike. Although frequently categorized as "American" in stylization, Whithorne did not resort to obvious jazz devices and quotations of American themes. See *New Grove American*, vol. 4, p. 519.
- 7 The German-born composer and violinist Charles Loeffler (1861-1935) supported the musical activity of his adopted United States and admired its native composers. With the exception of some

works which incorporated jazz elements (for example, the *Partita* for violin and piano of 1930), though, he did not attempt to write in an American style per se. He drew from a variety of literary inspirations, including Virgil, St. Francis of Assisi, Whitman and Verlaine, and his musical interests ranged from Gregorian chant (*Canticum fratris solis*, 1925; *Music for Four Stringed Instruments*, 1917-19) to national musics (*Divertissement espagnol*, 1900; *Five Irish Fantasies*, 1920). See *New Grove American*, vol. 3, pp. 97-100.

- 8 A proponent of American music like Loeffler, Marion Bauer (1887-1955) nevertheless composed in an impressionist idiom, showing clarity of texture and a strong sense of form. Her compositions on American themes embraced *Up the Ocklawaha* (1913) and *From the New Hampshire Woods* (1921) for piano, and the orchestral *Indian Pipes* (1927). See *New Grove American*, vol. 1, p. 162.
- 9 The American composer, violinist and conductor Henry Eichheim (1870-1942; Morin's spelling reads "Eichem") was a pioneer in the use of Asian materials. The piano piece *Gleanings from Buddha Fields* (1906) reveals his early interest in the repertoire of the Far East (China, Japan, Korea, India and Indonesia), but his focus was irrevocably fixed with *Oriental Impressions* (1918-22), a suite of "sketches" in three discreet scorings that evokes the exotic colours and musical landscapes of these countries. Authentic melodies were assimilated into Eichheim's scores. See *New Grove American*, vol. 2, pp. 23-24.
- 10 John Powell's (1882-1963) *Rhapsodie nègre* for piano and orchestra, op. 27 (1918) and Henry Gilbert's (1868-1928) *Comedy Overture on Negro Themes* (1912) and *Negro Dances* (1914) are typical of early twentieth-century compositions which employed African-American music as their source of inspiration. Gilbert, in particular, was the first to use Negro spirituals and ragtime in orchestral concert works. See respectively *New Grove American*, vol. 3, pp. 616-17, and vol. 2, pp. 218-19, for biographical sketches of these men.
- 11 Frederick Jacobi's (1891-1952) study of Pueblo Indian music from New Mexico and Arizona—hence Morin's reference to "Redskins"—provided the material for his *String Quartet on Indian Themes* (1924) and *Indian Dances* for orchestra (1927-28). He experienced an "Indian period" predating his main path of development, during which time he attempted to adapt indigenous material to European art forms. Morin also alludes to his symphonic poem *The Eve of Saint Agnes*, written in 1919. Consult *New Grove American*, vol. 2, pp. 528-29, for further information.
- 12 The Ukraine-born Lazare Saminsky (1882-1959) was among the founders of the Society for Jewish Folk Music. In 1913, he participated in the Baron de Guinzberg Ethnological Expedition to collect religious chants of the Transcaucasian Jews. This folk and liturgical music was subtly reworked and developed in his compositions (e.g. *Ten Hebrew Folk Songs and Folk Dances* for

- piano, 1922), in which lyricism and Romantic expressiveness are blended with polyphonic and rhythmic facility. See Coeuroy's reference to Saminsky in his *Panorama de la musique contemporaine*, and *New Grove American*, vol. 4, pp. 128-29.
- 13 Louis Gruenberg (1884-1964) took the view that the American composer best achieved individual expression by developing native resources, and himself turned to jazz and spirituals. The *Daniel Jazz*, op. 21 (1924), scored for tenor, clarinet, trumpet and string quartet, is one of the most successful pieces of its type composed in the 1920s. By 1926, he had published four volumes of spirituals in skillful harmonizations. See *New Grove American*, vol. 2, pp. 293-94, regarding the life and output of Gruenberg.
- 14 Literally days before Morin penned the original May 1929 *La Patrie* sources (see above), he attended a concert at the Matinée Musical Club featuring the American pianist Keith Corelli. The repertoire performed at this event forms the basis for the rather unusual list of composers cited herein as representatives of the American musical movement. Corelli played selected works of Rudhyar (1895-1985), Salzedo (1885-1961), Ives (1874-1954), Crawford (1901-53), Wagenaar (1894-1971), Weiss (1891-1971), Blitzstein (1905-64), Copland (1900-90), Sowerby (1895-1968), Whithorne and Cowell (1897-1965). With such music fresh in his ears, Morin was thus enabled to afford his readers penetrating critical comments regarding its merits in a national context. See the review, "Le pianiste Keith Corelli". *La Patrie*, 8 May 1929, p. 7.
- 15 Based on Morin's one-time exposure to American music through the piano repertoire of Corelli, one may reasonably speculate that he has in mind works such as Ives' *Three Quarter Tone Pieces* (1923-24), Crawford's *Five Preludes* (1924-25), Rudhyar's *Moments*, *Fifteen Tone Poems* (1924-26) and Cowell's *The Banshee* (1925) in levelling his harsh pronouncements upon these composers.
- 16 The compositional output of Leo Ornstein (b. 1892) of the 1914-18 period in question took in the chamber, keyboard and vocal media. Reacting to their characteristic dissonance, polyrhythm, polytonality and unusual colour effects, Morin was ostensibly speaking of *Impressions de Notre Dame*, op. 16 (1914), *Wild Men's Dance*, op. 13 (ca. 1915) and *Dwarf Suite*, op. 11 (ca. 1915).
- 17 Dane Rudhyar.
- 18 The common bond of these composers appears to have been their flirtation, to varying degrees, with atonality, an idiom which Morin saw as being without prospect in terms of a future American music. Apropos of the defining influences of Berners, Szymanowski, Tansman and Goossens, in particular, consult individual entries in *Grove's*.

- 19 Although remarkably accurate in his assessment, Morin did not have the opportunity for firsthand experience of the "striking thought" in Gershwin's legendary oeuvre; rather, it was through Ravel that his appreciation seems to have arisen. See "*Papiers de musique* and The Ravelian Voice", pp. 30-31, for anecdotal evidence of this view.

IN SEARCH OF A CANADIAN MUSIC

IN SEARCH OF GENIUS

We could not speak of Canadian music with the earnestness that is advisable, for example, to bring to matters of European music and even to the already alive American music. For, strictly speaking, if the musical idiom is considered in its most objective and characteristic sense, there is no more a Canadian music than there is a Canadian language. The French or English of Canadians is recognized by a certain turn of phrase, certain archaisms or in the accent. But Canadian music still has no distinctive features, either melodically or harmonically. Just as we no doubt speak French or English rather than Canadian, our music recalls the gentle conventions of France or elsewhere, but its vocabulary is most limited and it still does not know the fluent turn of a natural and rich language.

That being the case, speaking of it becomes difficult. It would not be less so to try to define the features of a thing that, according to general opinion, has not yet officially taken form in our country. But we can put our minds at ease. I have no intention of attempting to create the Canadian musical phantom from all the pieces. Even pessimists are doubtful that a Canadian music could ever exist. But they are no more serious than these excessive optimists who confuse everything and believe in their naïve candour that it has long since happened. I am not partisan to spontaneous creations and I know that musical births are also

induced. And I like to believe that speaking a great deal about Canadian music already gives it reasons to exist.

For lack of music pretentiously labelled Canadian, we have Canadian musicians, whose music is not Negro, whatever our mania for imitation may be. Thus the *Made in Canada* stamp can be attached to this music without endowing it with a strictly indigenous character. That which comes from Canadians of French origin who have completed their education in France will be French; that of others of English origin educated in the British Isles or Germany will be Anglo-Saxon. And even the music of those who have never crossed the seas will bear these distinct characteristics, since our two cultures walk abreast at home without merging and, alas! without complementing one another.

But while musicians have devoted themselves to the paradoxical craft of composing in our country, none of them seem to have exerted this prestige, this influence that is the mark of strong personalities on the general public and even on the initiated. No name has immediately aroused not universal, but only Canadian admiration. The case of Guillaume Couture,¹ whose influence while a teacher has been so beneficial, could not invalidate this observation on its own.

If our composers have lacked this prestige, it is not solely because they were short of strength and personality, or because their works were weak: it is just as easily because of the public's ignorance to what music and composition are.² The craft of composing is not officially recognized in our country. Such an anomaly has not been anticipated in the Canadian future. And for a little, we would deny that it truly exists. For the composers are seen—these artists, all the same!—producing their

music as an apple tree produces apples, and it follows that writing music is not a craft like the others. Certainly, in reading the works of certain composers, we are entitled to think that this occupation is not one, in actual fact, or that it is puerile. But the poverty of amateurs proves nothing against the work of genuine composers, against those who have something to say and have learned the necessary trade in order to express themselves.

On the other hand, would our composers not have had the misfortune at times of lacking genius? Whoever says composer does not necessarily say genius. And while, in the strictly practical sense of the word, Claude Debussy and Gabriel Marie,¹ Maurice Ravel and the author of *La Prière d'une vierge*² are on an equal plane in the minds of a good many, nothing prevents us from seeing the enormous crevice between them. But it would be in bad form to brutally reproach our composers for having lacked genius! This imponderable does not wash. Further, they have lived in such paradoxical and exceptional circumstances that even endowed with a glint of the precious flame, their works perhaps would not have found the best reception and lived longer.³ As long as the art of composition is not acknowledged among our intellectual activities, it will remain rather imprudent to venture into it. Unless genius demands it.

This lack of genius plainly and completely sheds light on the situation of our music, in the past as in the present. We can no longer ignore the fact that if a Canadian music does not yet exist, it is because no creator has been equal to making it. Perhaps we are a long way still

from such a fertilization and, until then, composition will remain the least of our worries.

We constantly repeat that the standard of living in our country has never been favourable to the genesis of large musical works. Bread, it is said, is still quite scarce. Known, all of that. But we are in 1930.⁶ There is bread. And even more: the automatic telephone, the telegraph, the automobile, the wireless, the airplane, a thousand marvellous machines which we know how to use, and then appropriate institutions, etc. And all of that in modern cities—of course—equipped with all the latest by way of conveniences, where the finest streetcars in the world run and where the number of imposing buildings increases each day. Modern life, genius, bread...could there be a mutual incompatibility between these words and these things?

Yet we know of poverty-stricken countries where the taste for fine things exists, where musical art is a part of life. But these are old countries where man has old customs. We are a new country without old practices, where the arts occupations are often comparable to scarcely excusable obsessions which must not be too favoured with development. Although this might be deemed a romantic error, is it not believed that a man of genius always succeeds in demonstrating his power, in spite of everything, if he has it in him? That being the case, though material conditions have long been adverse to musical creation here, could not a musician blessed with creative imagination have left at least a fine page, a personal page, be it for a voice alone, a page as recognizable as a human face? But the great manuscripts of all the great sketches have no surprise in store for us, if we judge them—which is fair, moreover—by

the published pages which are certainly among the good ones. In all of that, let us say up to the war of 1914, to give the youngest time to fully "manifest themselves",¹ nothing could be regarded with admiration, less still with envy, by the well-informed and impartial judges.

Would we take pride in only having been able, until now, to build wooden shacks to shelter our business, our industry, our varied institutions? What would we think of a stage coach as a means of transport through the country? Instead of that, the finest ships in the world come into our ports, magnificently equipped to receive them, where luxurious and "modern" trains (but of course!) wait to transport the travellers without delay from one ocean to the other. Why find this paucity, which would no longer be advisable to tolerate in material things of life, normal, excusable, natural in spiritual things? It is time that we clearly realize it: our culture in the domain of the spirit, I should say, of fine arts and most especially still of music, is not equal to our material strengths. Being aware of this would already be the mark of a stronger conscience.

NOTES

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"Musique canadienne". *La Revue musicale* (Paris), vol. 10, no. 11, December 1929, pp. 176-80. Duplicated in *La Presse*, vol. 46, no. 197, 7 June 1930, p. 61.

- 1 See Morin's article, "Guillaume Couture", pp. 172-77.
- 2 In his article, "In Defense of the Public", Morin puts forward a somewhat different perspective on the issue of the public's response to music, suggesting that the masses are willing and able to appreciate "serious, scholarly and even 'modern' music" if they are afforded the opportunity. See pp. 269-72.
- 3 There is no "Gabriel Marie" cited in any of the standard music reference tools. Given the context in which the name appears, i.e. alongside Debussy and Ravel, it is conceivable that Morin was thinking of Gabriel Fauré. He was well acquainted with the elder Frenchman through his studies in Paris and may have adopted this appellation as an endearment.
- 4 *La Prière d'une vierge* was penned by the amateur Polish composer, Thecla Badarewska (1834-61). First published in Warsaw in 1856, this salon piece represented the sole basis for Badarewska's repute. It appeared as a supplement to the French periodical *Revue et gazette musicale* (Paris, 1859).
- 5 Morin is certainly alluding to the apathy of the Canadian public toward its native composers and compositions in his day, a milieu in which material comforts were more highly valued than artistic and intellectual pursuits. See "*In Search of a Canadian Music*", pp. 48-60.
- 6 In the source for this passage, "A la recherche du génie" (see above), Morin specifies "1928": the year in which his *La Patrie* feature was originally written.
- 7 Amédée Tremblay (1876-1949), Rodolphe Mathieu (1890-1962), Claude Champagne (1891-1965), Georges-Émile Tanguay (1893-1964) and Ernest MacMillan (1893-1973), among others. See Morin's corresponding articles.

MUSIC, USELESS ART

The state of our music seems much more normal when we consider that it has been looked upon from time immemorial as the inordinately useless art. What can it really matter to us that a musician writes music or not and that this music be good or bad? Do we need it in a country where so many other things remain to be done, as it is said? Moreover, if it should be discussed in the schools, colleges and convents (note in passing that solfège is not a part of primary education),¹ the students are taught that, with few exceptions, music is only a "pleasure art".²

Pleasure arts are of no use and painting, sculpture and music are placed in this category of life's idle diversions. It is not that we should object to the words "pleasure art" or "useless art". Art being an artifice in itself, it tolerates these innocent definitions without danger. However, does it not seem that the attraction of useful things is quickly exhausted and that the mind occasionally needs to take an interest in less utilitarian matters than public transport or the traffic jam in the heart of the metropolis?

Music, useless art? It is true that the Bachs, Beethovens, Wagners, Rameaus and Debussys do not count in mankind in the same way as the Pasteurs and other scientists who have relieved human suffering. They do not matter as much as the inventors of all these machines which have transformed the rhythm of our life, especially this ace of invention who gave us the wheel long ago. But we would need only agree and establish a sort of hierarchy of the genres. Other nations, whose material civilization is even more advanced than in Canada, the Americans for

example, have already understood all that this form of intellectual culture represents in strength and interest for a country. They know that a civilization is not complete if it ignores certain activities of the spirit.

Well! Do we believe that our idea of music is of a nature to encourage a Canadian composer to produce? Do we believe that in the certainty of never being taken seriously, of never being performed, these composers will work with the same ardour, if they do not have an invincible genius to sustain them? There are limits to altruism and self-abandonment, even among musicians.

But it does not appear that our composers in the past looked upon music as a pleasure art alone.³ And this is a pity, for instead of having left us "exercises", instead of having bored us, perhaps they could have appealed to us more. Pleasing is not a despicable act. Music can occasionally consent to it. In our country, it should have had to do so more than elsewhere. This would have been a means to interest the public in local production. And to make myself quite clear: the finest and most superior works can adapt to please. On the contrary, it is the most mediocre and weak in workmanship and ideas that always set such an objective here. As soon as a work is of large dimension and endeavours to have better construction, it is immediately and by nature tedious and dismal. In this situation, we must not only speak of useless art, but of useless works.

NOTES

Source

"Musique, art inutile?". *La Patrie*, vol. 50, no. 120, 14 July 1928, p. 34.

- 1 Morin enumerates this instructional method as "the root of musical teaching" and a model for the Canadian educational system in his "Shots in the Dark" article, "Solfège". See pp. 277-82.
- 2 According to *Larousse de poche* (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1979, p. 10), the French expression *arts d'agrément* is a generic categorization for pastimes such as music, painting and dance. In this context, however, "pleasure art" more effectively captures Morin's intended signification.
- 3 Calixa Lavallée (1842-91), Guillaume Couture (1851-1915) and Alexis Contant (1858-1918) are notable among this "ancestral" generation. See the articles "Those of Yesterday", pp. 159-71, and "Guillaume Couture", pp. 172-77.

THE POOR RELATION

Music will continue to be treated like a poor relation for a long time yet. It will continue to function with difficulty, according to the whim of some and the ignorance of others. Moreover, we do not want to know where it is going, nor what result might be expected of an art taught without direction or of a responsibly instituted and supervised scientific curriculum.¹ Has the time not come to require knowledge other than that of amateurs from those who assume the title of composer? Has the time not also come to make a distinction between the amateur and the professional? It is not enough to know that a musician's skill is acquired like any other skill, through work and study, and that it is neither as simple nor as rudimentary as we would imagine. Harmonizing a figured bass or a given melody in accordance with the honourable and conventional rules of Théodore Dubois is a weak beginning that is too often confused with composition in our country.² Do not be surprised to see so many elementary and simple truths here and make an effort to consider that nowhere else would the condition of music force such a great number of commonplaces to accumulate.

I am fully aware that these remarks will appear unfair and appalling to some. They will seem out of place to those who ordinarily content themselves with the praises of Mr. Know-It-All, be they the most extravagant, the most misleading and, therefore, the most dangerous. Truth does not appeal to everyone and it will appear to many that it is a matter of showing much concern for music, for this "inordinately useless art", rather than applying such sensible methods to it. Very few will in

fact acknowledge that this art can command such reasonable arguments, notwithstanding the thousand forethoughts to which governments are obliged beneath other skies.

But it must be understood. If music does not interest us, well! let us not "make" it. We have to stop talking about it and saying in every possible way that we love and encourage it. For what we are doing for music at the moment does not much merit our shouting it from the rooftops. While we have felt the need to educate ourselves in other fields of intellectual culture, in the Sciences and Fine Arts, this need threatens us but slightly on the music side. Yet music will not always put up with this starvation wage, and we will have to invest it with this official character which will allow it to be taken seriously and to develop normally.

NOTES

Sources

"On rentre". *La Patrie*, vol. 50, no. 173, 15 September 1928, p. 38.

"La Parente pauvre". *La Patrie*, vol. 50, no. 179, 22 September 1928, p. 36.

- 1 Morin pursues the themes of educational responsibility and sytematized curricula at greater length in "The Canadian Student" (p. 273), followed by his personal response to the need for reform in "Solfège" (p. 277).

- 2 The composer and Paris Conservatoire professor, Théodore Dubois (1837-1924), may be considered a characteristic representative of the "classical" school of French musicians (LeSueur, Cherubini) at the end of the nineteenth century. His theoretical works, *Traité d'harmonie théorique et pratique*, *Notes et études d'harmonie* and *Traité de contrepoint et de fugue*, have served several generations of student composers including the Canadians Guillaume Couture and Achille Fortier.

THE GREAT PITY OF CANADIAN MUSIC

Painters, sculptors, writers and architects complain of the conditions made for their art in our country. They think music "takes pride of place". They occasionally tell me: "You are much more advanced in music than us. You have a public. Concerts pack the house. You are heard. Music is loved. Everyone, or just about, seems to understand it, etc." Indeed!

We need not see burden or irony here. These painters or sculptors are much more serious than we imagine. And if I am tempted to think they are mistaken, it is not without believing that I might well in turn be the victim, in their place, of the same delusion which clouds their view of the music side. And if I accuse them of confusing the genres for the sake of it, are they not going to hold me responsible for the same fault?

However, the error is not so simple in their domain. There is no distinction to be made between interpreter and creator, as in music. Painting and sculpture are seen and appreciated without an intermediary, whereas music needs this medium called the performer or interpreter to be heard.

Of course we have concerts in Montreal in which the public takes less and less interest besides.¹ But that we take pleasure in hearing Rachmaninoff and applaud his music, that we are fond of Galli-Curci, Heifetz or Mischa Elman,¹ that we like Beethoven's music and also that of Debussy, does not prove that we have many composers or that we are as advanced as that. We indeed have many more concerts than painters, for example, have painting exhibitions. We hear more foreign music than they

see foreign painting. For a European picture gallery is transported with more difficulty than a European artist. Granted. But has it been considered that if we did not have foreign music here, if we had to be secretive about it, we would not have very much to hear. Could we really sustain ourselves solely with music created in our country? This simple suggestion fills me with anxiety...

When I say that the musical output in our country is inferior to the pictorial, sculptural, literary or architectural output, I am obviously talking about composition, not about all the performers who come to display their virtuosity here. Only the respective outputs, music (composition) and painting, should be compared, although I find these comparisons odious. But I am not comparing two works of different technique, I am comparing one set of creations with another set of creations. Well! The count is made and we will see that music comes after the other above-mentioned art forms.

Do not forget that an Art College exists in Montreal, and also in Quebec City,³ where the necessary skill for the "making" of a work of art is taught. Do not forget either that there is an art gallery in Montreal,⁴ endowed with fine and vast rooms where great exhibitions take place each year; that there are in addition several small galleries in which various exhibitions follow one after the other; in short, that the number of works shown is sizeable. And I beseech you not to laugh: I know that this number proves nothing and that only the quality of the works matters. But it has its importance even so. It has meaning.

Having already condemned these comparisons, I will not go as far as to say that the most famous of all the Canadian painters—by the way,

who is he?—is greater than our most important composer—and who is this other one?—But I am really tempted to think that, in music (do I always have to repeat, in composition?), we still do not have many James W. Morrises, whose reputation extends as far as Europe and who has caught on in Luxembourg (do not laugh, shrewd painters; for us, this Luxembourg is meaningful),⁵ nor many Maurice Cullens, Brymners, Jacksons, Robinsons, Edwin Holgates, Clarence Gagnons, Adrien Héberts, Robert Pilots, etc.⁶ Nor do we have many Philippe Héberts, Allwards, Tait Mackenzies, Henri Héberts, etc.⁷ Do we have many names which are comparable to architectural folk such as Ernest Cormier, Nobbs, Melville Miller, Barrett, Durnford, Smith, etc.?⁸ In answer to my suggestion, I will not name any composer. For even if they were dead, I could offend their susceptibility. As I have already said, we have a few interesting composers, especially among the young, but the time has not yet come to talk about these ones with the solemnity in which the reputations of Nelligan in literature,⁹ Philippe Hébert in sculpture, Ernest Cormier in architecture may be accepted. The sides seem to me to have been heard. And as it is the special attribute of young countries to be able to wait, our last word must thus be reserved.

NOTES

Source

"La Grande pitié de la musique canadienne". *La Patrie*, vol. 50, no. 67, 12 May 1928, p. 39.

- 1 The original source (see above) reads, "But of course we have many concerts in Montreal and the public seems to take an ever-growing interest in them." This is a rare instance in which Morin undertook a complete reversal of opinion in compiling his *Papiers de musique*, a modification made to highlight his mounting concern over public indifference to Canadian music. See also "*In Search of a Canadian Music*", pp. 48-60.
- 2 The singer Amelita Galli-Curci and violinists Mischa Elman and Jascha Heifetz were featured soloists in separate Montreal performances over the period 1927-30. In his capacity as critic for *La Patrie* and *La Presse*, Morin had occasion to review these concerts prior to the compilation of his *Papiers de musique* and evidently alludes to them in this context. See respectively "Madame Galli-Curci". *La Patrie*, 15 October 1927, p. 36; "Mischa Elman, célèbre violoniste". *La Patrie*, 26 November 1928, p. 4; "Jascha Heifetz au Saint-Denis". *La Presse*, 14 March 1930, p. 8.
- 3 New vitality was given to the post-Confederation art world when the Ecole des arts et manufactures was founded in Montreal (1871). Quebec City's Ecole des arts et métiers opened two years later: when the province assumed its operation in 1921, it was enlarged and renamed the Ecole des beaux-arts. A similar Montreal college, subsidized by provincial resources, emerged in 1922. Consult J. Russell Harper. *Painting in Canada: A History*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966, p. 177.
- 4 The first and oldest of the Quebec museums, the Musée des beaux-arts de Montreal was established in 1847 under the name of Montreal Society of Artists. Throughout its long history the Museum has held Canadian works of all styles and eras and, from 1909, maintained an outstanding room devoted to drawings and prints. See *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, second edition, vol. 3, p. 1408.
- 5 James Wilson Morrice (1865-1924) was a founding father of Canadian modernism in painting and the first to achieve widespread acceptance abroad. A Canadian expatriate living in Paris, he exhibited regularly amidst the great European public collections long before Canadian galleries discovered his work. His art is at once noted for its place in a European modernist

tradition and for its cold light and stark forms exemplified in his winter paintings of Quebec. See *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, vol. 3, pp. 1390-91.

- 6 Maurice Cullen (1866-1934), William Brymner (1855-1925), A. Y. Jackson (1882-1974), Albert H. Robinson (n.d.), Edwin Holgate (1892-1977), Clarence Gagnon (1881-1942), Adrien Hébert (n.d.) and Robert Pilot (1898-1967), all Paris-trained, were among the first Canadian artists to apply the principles and mannerisms of French Impressionism to the Canadian landscape. This land-based nationalist movement in painting closely paralleled Morin's vision of Canadian music. See *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, vol. 3, pp. 1603-06.
- 7 The dominating ideology of Quebecois sculpture at the turn of the century attempted to define the people of French Canada in terms of their French Catholic origins. The principal sculptors of this generation, including Louis-Philippe Hébert (1850-1917), his son Henri (1884-1950), Walter Seymour Allward (n.d.) and Robert Tait McKenzie (1867-1938), rendered commemorative representations of their compatriots' history as an expression of pride in the achievements of Quebec's native sons. See *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, vol. 3, pp. 1964-65.
- 8 A formative figure in Quebec architecture of the twentieth century, Ernest Cormier (1885-1980) was noted for his quest of high quality building appropriate to its physical and historical context. Other, lesser-known architects such as Percy Erskine Nobbs, Melville Miller, Barrett, Durnford and Smith largely functioned under the influence of Cormier's philosophy; however, little has been written of these men. See *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, pp. 102-04.
- 9 Strongly influenced by the French Parnassian and symbolist veins and fascinated with the dark world of Edgar Allan Poe, the gifted French-Canadian *littérateur* Emile Nelligan (1879-1941) cultivated a prolific collection of sombre and nostalgic poetry. His "Romance du vin" and "Vaisseau d'or" particularly bear witness to an exceptional mastery of verse which afforded him legendary status in Quebec literature. See *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, vol. 3, pp. 1465 and 1699, for further detail.

HOPES

It is still too soon to leave this last word to public curiosity. But we certainly can no longer write that Canadian music will never exist, as in the days of the most heroic intransigence. We have talked about it so much for a few years that we really must believe in its existence. Moreover, in taking a great deal of interest in it, it has become more stylish. I do not mean that it has become almost attractive, pleasant, invested with a rare charm and appeal, such attributes which have been most lacking in it until now. But if it does not yet have a real "crowd", an intrinsic style or any aristocratic manner, it is not altogether common for that. It is just that its poorly grounded education has not yet been completed.

Canadian music has had a very bad name and even a rather bad reputation within the intransigent coteries. It has had and always will have very serious flaws. Besides that which pertains to technique, it remains unintelligent, naïve, ill-formed and often, oh very often!, boring. Well! If it has already been boring, we have the right to believe that this crisis will soon be over. Henceforth, it will naturally endeavour not to be as such any longer.

It seems that Canadian music would indeed like to present itself more elegantly in the future and speak the language of the world's people, at the same time, a language of today. Knowledge, taste, culture, a sense of balance, grace, elegance of spirit and good measure are very rare things in Canada and it appears that the young musicians are closer to them than their elders. Their music sings with less restraint. It

progresses more freely. Its manner is more agreeable, less formal, less rustic, freer and more detached. Charm and appeal are present in Claude Champagne,¹ subtlety and elegance in MacMillan,² a terribly civilized harshness in James Callihou,³ a lyrical and relaxed strength in Rodolphe Mathieu,⁴ a sweet sentimental perfume in Georges-Emile Tanguay⁵ and Robert Talbot,⁶ tender reminiscences of days gone by forever in Charles Baudouin,⁷ a liberal rhythmic instinct in Hector Gratton,⁸ a happy fluency of improvisation in Conrad Bernier.⁹ The musicians of today have more freedom in inspiration, more directness in expression and less naïvety in technique. In the absence of great wealth and power, pages of an unusual balance of form lead us to believe in the imminent existence of a Canadian music. And even if the character of this music is not recognizable among a thousand others, the substantial pages permit the most generous optimisms.

NOTES

Sources

"Le 4ième salon de la musique canadienne". *La Patrie*, vol. 51, no. 12, 9 March 1929, p. 36.

"Nouveau visage de la musique canadienne". *La Patrie*, vol. 51, no. 24, 23 March 1929, p. 34.

"Musique canadienne". *La Revue musicale* (Paris), vol. 10, no. 11, December 1929, pp. 176-80.

- 1 See "Claude Champagne", pp. 194-200.
- 2 Morin expands upon the compositional style of Ernest MacMillan in his article, "Among the English". See pp. 221-22.
- 3 See "James Callihou", pp. 212-17.
- 4 See "Rodolphe Mathieu", pp. 184-93.
- 5 See "Georges-Emile Tanguay", pp. 201-06.
- 6 Born in Montmagny (near Quebec City), the violinist, educator and composer Robert Talbot (1893-1954) received his training at New York's Institute of Musical Art under Albert Stoessel and Louis Svecenski. His compositions, none of which were published, include the oratorio *Evangéline*, the opera *Celle qui voit*, a symphony, a string quartet and numerous orchestral and organ works. See the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, p. 1273.
- 7 Charles Baudouin (1877-1961), a former pupil of André Gédalge and Vincent d'Indy in Paris, composed songs based on texts by Canadian (Albert Lozeau, Emile Nelligan) and French poets. See *EMC*, p. 1015.
- 8 Hector Gratton (1900-70) came under the influence of Scriabin and Medtner through his early teacher, the composer Alfred LaLiberté. However, the basic material for his compositions was essentially folkloric and popular. Morin's opinion of him was formed solely on the basis of his *Danses canadiennes* (1927-30) which, in its simple and subtle harmonic structure, revealed echoes of the Quebecois *violoneux*. See *EMC*, pp. 551-52.
- 9 The Quebec-born organist, composer and teacher Conrad Bernier (1904-62) wrote *Croquis petit-capiens* and *Variations et fugue* for two pianos, *Esquisse* and *Prière* for organ, a *Mass* for mixed-voice choir, and several songs and motets. See *EMC*, p. 115.

CANADIAN COMPOSERS

GAUGING THE TEMPERATURE

Few Canadian composers could resist an even remotely pedantic study of their works. But whatever their stature in Canadian output, it is interesting to put them forward for the attention of young musicians. We will see that while genius has been sparingly distributed, talent has been variable from Calixa Lavallée to Achille Fortier.¹ We will also see that while the prevailing influences were not always prolific nor felicitous, nor even commendable at times, they have at least created fairly large-scale works.²

It is time for us to see these works as they really are. We must take stock of them and not fear the essential comparisons. We need not be afraid of negative criticism. In the case which occupies us, it is often a principle of hygiene. I am well aware that if they are considered in a specifically local point of view, this music demands great indulgence. But I believe that the rigorous principles of criticism must be enforced, failing which the ill-formed and unofficial "pieces" of the most essential seeds of life could be raised to the rank of works representative of our race. Too many misunderstandings and prejudices have, in the past, prevented us from applying these sound and stern measures to matters of the spirit which are the attribute of people conscious of their value.

We do not know all the works of Canadian composers, of which few have been printed. Music publishing has not taken much interest in

their output and this is what has given composers the habit of storing their manuscripts in boxes, as they would rare values. At any rate, they are there, safe from a good many indiscretions.

Thus it is too often on the strength of hearsay that their reputation is built, and it is here that the delicate and risky duty of the historian shows itself. But do we not believe that the author of a half-dozen little works can be revealed fully enough by one or two of them, and that an opinion can then be formed on the personality of the musician, however negative it may be? The future will tell us whether the unrecognized masterpieces should be inscribed on the frontispiece of our music. It suits me to think that we have discovered the best, and that we need not harbour the insane hope of one day unearthing the perfect work which was missing from our genius.

That does not prevent a real affinity from pulling us towards the eldest,³ for whom the task was so hard and the life of a musician so hazardous and paradoxical. Such pioneers would make rather peculiar figures in other countries, around the end of the nineteenth century. But do not forget that the common measure does not always work in Canada. If the hygienic measures thus demand a little severity from us on the one hand, a little indulgence is advised by truly extenuating circumstances.

In the past, no Canadian musician has had either the taste or concern to give his music an indigenous character which distinguishes it from foreign musics. Far from seeking to express their nature according to a suitable rhythm and in new forms, our musicians have always

contented themselves with imitation, this obsession common to all expressions of art in our country. For example, instead of searching for subjects and forms in keeping with their ethnic character, instead of looking for a fragrance, a rhythm and a distinctive manner in our folklore, they have assumed ready-made European models which they have not always been able to transpose to their scale. We do not really know how easy and irrelevant it has been to repeat certain prematurely outdated oratorio forms of Dubois and Gounod in Canada, with a sizeable delay besides. It is perhaps this development of the European pastiche which has prevented the genesis of a national music.

But it was inevitable that Canadian musicians would go and get the art, unobtainable in Canada, in Europe and particularly in France. If several got bogged down and assumed only harmonic obsessions, we know that it is not the fault of the European art. It proves once more that pastiche is neither a commendable genre nor a very fruitful form of art and that it is not from there that the elements of a precise "Canadian" language will arise. Gaining what we need abroad is natural and necessary, but being unable to subsequently think for ourselves indicates a scarcely reassuring weakness.

Besides genius, Canadian musicians have failed to possess what is commonly called a complete craft. This complete craft is still extremely rare in our country at the present time. We continue to mumble. This is why I believe that Canadian music will be subjected to imitation for as long as it needs to acquire such a craft. But I am of the opinion that we must hasten to leave this thankless period, and while it is in writing that we learn to write, let us not go against commonsense. It remains certain

that we will not have weighty, age-old traditions to shake off the day in which we try to craft a musical style appropriate to the expression of our soul. And while being a country appallingly free from music is for some a source of anxiety and uncertainty for the future, others find reasons therein to be optimistic. Until we have been definitively awakened to our national soul, nothing prevents us from considering Canada, musically, a province under formation of musical Europe.¹

NOTES

Sources

"Les Compositeurs canadiens: Ernest Gagnon". *La Patrie*, vol. 48, no. 28, 27 March 1926, p. 40.

"Sources d'inspiration pour une musique canadienne". *La Patrie*, vol. 50, no. 108, 30 June 1928, p. 34.

"Musique canadienne". *La Revue musicale* (Paris), vol. 10, no. 11, December 1929, pp. 176-80. Duplicated in *La Presse*, vol. 46, no. 197, 7 June 1930, p. 61.

- 1 Lavallée (1842-91) and Fortier (1864-1939) are generally thought to represent the outer limits of the "elder" generation in Quebecois music history: those composers whose primary output was generated in the nineteenth century, following in the tradition of the Frenchmen Charles Gounod (1818-93), César Franck (1822-90) and Vincent d'Indy (1851-1931). Although Fortier, in particular, lived well into the twentieth century, his most significant contribution to the Canadian musical life and oeuvre preceded World War I.
- 2 It was not Morin's intent to portray the preponderant Franckian element in nineteenth-century Canadian music as a fruitless or undesirable influence; rather, he sought to demonstrate that

Canadian composers should rely on their own, indigenous resources to the end of a more typically "Canadian" compositional school and output.

- 3 As one born on the threshold of the twentieth century, Morin's conception of "the eldest" would incorporate Canadian musicians of the early to middle 1800s, including Jean-Baptiste Labelle (1825-98), Lavallée, Guillaume Couture (1851-1915) and Alexis Contant (1858-1918). See the following article, "Those of Yesterday", for evaluations of these composers and their works.
- 4 Helmut Kallmann, noted Canadian music historian and archivist, corroborates Morin's sentiments regarding music of this period in Canada: "But there is no history of composition for the same period [late 19th/early 20th century], only an accumulation of examples, examples that have everything to do with European models and European teachers, and almost nothing to do with one another.... It is true that Lavallée taught Contant and Vézina for brief periods and that Contant in turn taught Rodolphe Mathieu for awhile.... But the common bond would have been the admiration of certain European master composers and hardly the teacher's own works." (Kallmann, *Canadian Musical Heritage*, vol. 7, p. v.)

THOSE OF YESTERDAY

Artistic families are rare in Canada, such as are encountered in Europe, where it is a sound tradition that the son continues the father's work. The Gagnon family of Quebec is one of these families which lived only for music. Everyone in Canada knows what this name means. Whoever says Gagnon, says music. It is a name most intimately bound in the development of Canadian music. There could be no question of the history of our music without their work, educational above all else, immediately coming to light. Ernest and Gustave Gagnon were the first to practice the craft of teaching musician in Quebec, at a time when such a profession was not clearly defined and uncertain in its future.¹ Their reputation was swiftly established and their influence has been considerable.

To this point the Gagnons are three: Ernest, deceased a few years ago, Gustave his brother, and Henri, son of the latter. Organists and composers on several accounts, they have been organists at the Quebec Basilica since 1864.¹ Ernest was there for twelve years, Gustave for fourteen years, and Henri has been the organist since 1915. They supervised the music education of young people for nearly three-quarters of a century at the Quebec Seminary and the Teachers' Training Colleges.¹

A native of Louiseville like his brother Gustave,¹ Ernest Gagnon (1834-1915) studied music in France with Auguste Durand, Henri Herz and Goria. He is thus one of the first Canadian musicians to have completed an educational sojourn in France and that at the time of the Second Empire.⁵ Well-read, a distinguished writer and curious about everything,

our folklore was bound to entice him and provide the material for his most important work, that by which he proved himself to be a remarkably intelligent musician.⁶ His anthology of Popular Songs of Canada is indeed an infinitely precious work for us, the historical value of which has long since been recognized. But strictly speaking, it is not a work of composition, nor of inspiration. It is a scholarly work, an ingenious and intelligent compilation of the most widespread songs among the people.⁷

But while imagination does not have an active part there, good taste, good sense and the musician's knowledge turn out to be of a superior quality. Conscious of his value and strength, he had a sufficiently critical mind to understand that he was not equipped to attempt certain large forms. So he has not, to my knowledge, encumbered his heirs with these traditional oratorios that are so difficult to place, pseudo-Gounod or pseudo-Dubois in genre, through which it has generally been fashionable to flaunt one's ineffectiveness.⁸

It was enough for him to bring the popular song of his country to light and put it forward as a source of inspiration for his contemporaries. While this source has not yet yielded anything definitive in the compositional field, this pioneer's work is no less exemplary for it. With Larue he was and will remain one of the most fervent researchers of national sources,⁹ and the day in which our music freely draws its inspiration from Canadian folklore is the day in which the name of Ernest Gagnon will have found its true significance.

Ernest Gagnon was also a valued historian. His book, *Le Fort et le château Saint-Louis*, is excellent and authoritative.¹⁰

Gustave Gagnon studied music in Europe as well, first in Paris and then at the Liège Conservatory.¹¹ His was pedagogical work above all and, in this domain, his effect has been considerable, to the extent that he was a teacher in all the strength of the word. The best Quebecois pianists were shaped by him and he is a Canadian Diémer of sorts in this country.¹² Indeed, he had to keep company with Marmontel and some of these other specialists of the day, who were known to be purveyors of the most brilliant pianistic formulas.¹³ The young musicians in Canada who owe a solid formation to him, not only pianistic but largely musical, are many.

After the Gagnons (Henri will be discussed a bit later), we should mention Joseph Vézina, a Quebecois musician who also carried on great activity throughout his life.¹⁴ The son of a military bandmaster, he was himself the bandmaster of the Ninth Infantrymen of Quebec as soon as he graduated from military academy.¹⁵ And it is he who founded and conducted the everliving Quebec Symphony for many years.¹⁶ He left several works, including three comic operas: *Le Lauréat*, in collaboration with the Hon. Marchand for the libretto,¹⁷ *Le Fétiche*¹⁸ and *Le Rajah*, with Mr. Ben Michaud.¹⁹ These three works have been successfully performed in Quebec.²⁰ He also wrote many works for military band, notably a piece entitled *La Brise* and a *Fantaisie* on Canadian airs.²¹

Montreal's Jean-Baptiste Labelle (1825-1898) completed his musical studies in Europe with Meyer and Thalberg.²² Organist at Notre-Dame of Montreal for many years, he wrote a sizeable number of organ pieces, *Cantate à la Confédération*, *Zouaves pontificaux*, operettas and songs of

which *O Canada, mon pays, mes amours*, among others, enjoys a certain popularity.²³

All of this music eludes criticism just as easily as that of the likeable Lavallée-Smith (1873-1912), who studied in France with Gigout, Widor and Guilmant.²⁴ We certainly have the right to say that Lavallée-Smith did not always write really good and pretty music and that an operetta like *Gisèle* could not be enough for the fame of a musician.²⁵

But with Calixa Lavallée (1842-1891), we are in a much more serious sphere and the presence of a genuine musician.²⁶ He received his first lessons from his father and later from Paul Letondal and Sabatier.²⁷ Around 1875, he studied at the Paris Conservatoire with Marmontel, Bazin and Boieldieu (the son of François-Adrien, of course).²⁸ Quite a brilliant pianist, he achieved great success in concert, notably in the United States. Endowed with a great aptitude for composition, he left a rather impressive number of works, among which are these *Papillons*,²⁹ known to some extent throughout Canada and even abroad, an agreeably pianistic piece that would not have refused to sign a Dubois or Moskowsky.³⁰

Besides a *Sonata* and several *Etudes* for piano,³¹ his work also comprises an opera, *La Veuve*,³² an *Oratorio* and a *Cantata* which bear witness to an earnest effort to make use of everything possible.³³ But it lacks effectiveness in composition, orchestration and style, as is generally the case among Canadian composers. Nevertheless, Calixa Lavallée was surely one of the most outstanding musicians of his day, the closest to being innovative and the closest to a personal style. No other has surpassed him in ability and taste. It is unnecessary to add that he is

the author of the national anthem, *O Canada*, which would be worth a certain gravity all the same.

On the other hand, while a certain ability or, better still, a certain fecundity was not absent in Alexis Contant (1858-1918), taste and critical sense always let him down. He never had the sparkle that characterizes Calixa Lavallée's music. He was less educated than his elder and never spent time in Europe.³⁴ He studied with Calixa Lavallée, Fowler and Couture, and then in Boston.³⁵ His oratorios are great attempts in which he proved himself a conscientious musician, but lacking in originality of thought and form and in possession of childish technique.³⁶ *Cain*³⁷ and *Les Deux Ames*³⁸ betray a large inadequacy of skill and an imagination at once generous and in questionable taste. But these works attest to a power which was infrequent in Canada. Their greatest fault is to have been written half a century too late and to have revealed an ambitious and characterless verbiage rather than a genuine inspiration.

In the words of those who knew him well, this musician, whose great desire was to be personal, would have neglected his culture and usual influences under the naïve pretext of preserving his personality intact. This caution, this defense, which could have been both fortunate and unnecessary in a musician of genius, gave him nothing. At any rate, this led him never to possess the necessary skill for the construction of large works as well as the smallest.

In short, these musicians have their place in our history, such as they are. They had grand and noble ambitions which overly limited means did not permit them to fully realize. The scepticism known by the youngest composers scarcely impeded them in their undertakings and

they lived at a time when one was unfortunately compelled to write for the chest of drawers. Because of that, criticism, in making its way among them, commits an indiscretion.

NOTES

Sources

"Les Compositeurs canadiens: Joseph Vézina, J.-B. Labelle, Alphonse Lavallée-Smith, Calixa Lavallée, Alexis Contant". *La Patrie*, vol. 48, no. 33, 3 April 1926, p. 39.

"Les Compositeurs canadiens: Ernest Gagnon". *La Patrie*, vol. 48, no. 28, 27 March 1926, p. 40.

"Les Chansons populaires du Canada". *La Patrie*, vol. 48, no. 210, 30 October 1926, p. 38.

- 1 Morin's vision of a "teaching musician", as exemplified by Ernest (1834-1915) and Gustave (1842-1930) Gagnon, constitutes a hybrid profession in which one's primary function is that of an educator, with subsidiary activity carried out in performance and composition. This self-coined term is employed to convey his desire for well-rounded musicians in Canadian musical life.
- 2 More commonly designated "the Basilica" or "Quebec Basilica" by early twentieth-century Quebecois people, Morin refers to the centre of Roman Catholic worship in Quebec City, Notre-Dame Cathedral (est. c. 17th century). The Gagnons' service to the church spanned a remarkable ninety-seven years, commencing with Ernest (1864-76) and succeeding through Gustave (1876-1915) and Henri (1915-61). Consult the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, pp. 507-09, and Morin's article, "Henri Gagnon", for biographies, selected compositions and writings of the Gagnon family.
- 3 Established in 1663 by the first bishop of New France, François de Laval, the Petit Séminaire de Québec first introduced a church music course into its curriculum as early as 1666. Subsequent musical offerings through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

maintained a strict performance orientation: the Gagnons were variously tenured as instructors of piano and organ from 1858 to 1933. Ernest Gagnon was also among the founding members and the first music teacher of L'Ecole normale Laval (1857), and with brother Gustave created the Académie de musique du Québec (1868), a conservatory which set examinations and published lists of graded repertoire for study.

- 4 Now Rivière-du-Loup, near Trois Rivières, Quebec.
- 5 Although just appointed to the faculty of Ecole normale Laval, Ernest Gagnon obtained a study leave for its initial school year and travelled to Paris in 1857. His European musical education entailed piano training with Alexandre Gorla and the idol of Parisian salons, concert pianist Henri Herz (1803-88). Through Auguste Durand (1830-1909), a Franck and Saint-Saëns classmate and founder of the reputed Paris publishing house Durand et cie., Gagnon gained a thorough foundation in harmony and composition and met Auber, Marmontel, Niedermeyer, Rossini and Verdi. See Kallmann, p. 181, regarding Rossini's reaction to the young French-Canadian.
- 6 Morin's teacher, Arthur Letondal, writes that Gagnon only turned to historical and folkloric research in Canadian music after his tenure as Basilica organist, having the provincial archives at his disposal in a subsequent career as Secretary-General for the Quebec Department of Public Works (1876-1905). See Letondal, "Ernest Gagnon 1834-1915: organiste et historien", *Le Passe-temps* 890 (September 1945), pp. 4 and 12.
- 7 Gagnon's most far-reaching impact was achieved in his landmark work, *Chansons populaires du Canada* (Quebec, 1865; Thirteenth edition, Montreal, 1955), an annotated compilation of French-Canadian folksongs transcribed during excursions to the Quebec countryside. In its historical context, the collection is exceptional in that it contains complete textual and musical renditions with selected variants for over one hundred songs. Neither arrangements nor harmonizations, the tunes, together with annotations and framing essays, reveal Gagnon's high regard for authenticity and thorough knowledge of traditional song. Helmut Kallmann notes that the *Chansons populaires* gave a musical legitimacy, dignity and beauty to French-Canadian folk music, both in Canada and in France, "at a time when it was too often considered barbaric and primitive." (Kallmann, p. 181; See also "Franco-Canadian Folk Music", *EMC*, pp. 477-78.)
- 8 Gagnon's output as a composer was quite small, treated much like a pastime amidst a diverse array of professional activities. His works include a number of character pieces for piano, sacred and secular songs scored for choir or solo voice, and folksong harmonizations.

- 9 Hubert LaRue's (1833-81) "Les Chansons populaires et historiques du Canada" (*Le Foyer canadien*, vol. 1, 1863) stands as the first collection to include a study of Indian and French-Canadian song repertoires as historical and national documents, anticipating Gagnon's *Chansons populaires du Canada* by two years. However, its exclusive focus on comparisons between French and Canadian versions of the same songs achieved literary rather than musical interest. Conveying his editor's request for the corresponding tunes to Gagnon, Larue provided his colleague with the impetus to prepare *Chansons populaires*. See "Ethnomusicology", *EMC*, p. 424.
- 10 Ernest Gagnon. *Le Fort et le château Saint-Louis: étude archéologique et historique*. Montréal: Beauchemin, 1908.
- 11 While in Paris, Gustave Gagnon studied with Alexis Chauvet (organ), Antoine Marmontel (piano) and Auguste Durand (harmony), and then in Liège with Etienne Ledent (piano) and Jean-Théodore Radoux (harmony). During subsequent travels to Dresden, Leipzig and Italy in 1871-72, he met Liszt and Saint-Saëns.
- 12 Morin alludes to French pianist Louis Diémer (1843-1919) to highlight existing parallels between the two men. Always popular with his public, Diémer offered piano lessons to those with talent and interest while steadily gaining a reputation as a concert performer himself. He exercised great influence over the next generation of French pianists whom he taught from 1887 at the Paris Conservatoire—not unlike Gagnon's role in Canada—and numbered among his pupils Cortot, Rislér and Casadesus. See *Grove's*, vol. 5, p. 463.
- 13 The French pedagogue and pianist Antoine-François Marmontel (1816-1898) was himself a pupil of the Paris Conservatoire prior to his appointment as instructor of solfège and piano there in 1837. Celebrated for his innovative and efficient teaching methods, Marmontel's expertise touched such noted students as Albéniz, Bizet, Debussy, d'Indy and Wienawski.
- 14 Unique in his Canadian training and largely self-taught in music, Joseph Vézina (1849-1924) was a leading figure in Quebec City's musical life of 1870-1924. His ability to play and teach most wind instruments, piano and organ, coupled with an inborn talent as a conductor, compelled him to organize, train, conduct and compose for many civilian ensembles and military bands in the region. Summarizing Vézina's achievements, which included his leadership at the historic premiere of *O Canada* (24 June 1880), Helmut Kallmann remarks, "Along with Calixa Lavallée, Vézina was Canada's finest, most experienced leader of and writer for band or orchestra in the late nineteenth century." (*CMH*, Vol. 8, p. ix; See *EMC*, pp. 1366-67, and Ford, pp. 74-75, for additional details.)

- 15 Vézina joined the Quebec Rifles 9th Battalion Band as a euphonium player in 1867. He was appointed the group's director and bandmaster two years later, a post held through 1879. Other important associations included his own Royal Canadian Artillery "B" Battery Band (1879-80, 1886-1919) and the Beauport Concert Band (1876-1924).
- 16 Chosen as president and first conductor of the Société symphonique de Québec in 1903, Vézina's direction yielded several premieres of his own compositions. The Société, now known as the Orchestre symphonique de Québec, has sustained an unbroken history since its founding, which renders it the oldest orchestra still active in Canada today.
- 17 Supported by a lively libretto centring on Quebecois student life, Vézina's musical setting of *Le Lauréat* (Opéra-comique, 1906. Libretto: Félix-Gabriel Marchand. Piano-vocal Ms. *CMH*, vol. 10.) draws on the local colour of Offenbach and *The Tales of Hoffmann*. Its premiere (26 & 27 March 1906), presented in the composer's orchestrated version, was judged the artistic event of the year. See *CMH*, vol. 10, p. xiv.
- 18 Large in conception, distinguished in musical ideas and well-planned for theatrical effect, *Le Fétiche* (Opéra-comique, 1912. Libretto: Alex Villandray, Louis Fleur. Piano-vocal, orchestra Mss.) is the most accomplished and varied of the three Vézina operetta scores, revealing an imaginative and colourful orchestrator. The libretto deals with the 1701 conciliation of the Iroquois hunters, near Lake Champlain, with a good-luck charm: the French Governor's daughter. Its final onstage death has been hailed as "an exceptional piece of theatrical boldness in the operetta genre." (Dorith Cooper, *CMH*, vol. 10, p. xv.)
- 19 *Le Rajah's* (Opéra-bouffe, 1910. Libretto: Benjamin Michaud. Piano-vocal Ms.) nonsensical plot was a spoof on political corruption, touched with an exotic flavour. Despite occasional over-reliance on repetition, Vézina's music was estimated to be intelligent and spirited, rivalling the best of Offenbach.
- 20 Although Vézina owned his own publishing firm, his operettas were never published. All were premiered in Quebec City's Theatre Auditorium by the Société symphonique de Québec under the composer's baton, with soloists and chorus from Laval University.
- 21 *La Brise*. "The Quebec Yacht Club Waltz", orchestra (band), 1886. *Fantaisie caractéristique*. Band, 1883. Ms.
- 22 Contrary to Morin's claim, Jean-Baptiste Labelle did not undertake his musical training in Europe. The Austrian pianist Leopold von Meyer granted him lessons while on tour in North America (1845-47), while Liszt's most noted pianistic rival, the famous "long-fingered" virtuoso Sigismund Thalberg (1812-71), tutored him in

- Boston between December 1856 and January 1857. In the interim, Labelle became organist of Montreal's Notre-Dame Church, remaining in the position for over forty years (1849-91). See *EMC*, pp. 703-04, and Kallmann, pp. 96-97.
- 23 Labelle composed in several genres, from the popular ballad or piano piece to larger cantata and operetta forms. Notable among his works was the pre-*O Canada* patriotic anthem, *O Canada, mon pays, mes amours* (c. 1868. Text: Georges-Etienne Cartier. J. G. Yon, c. 1906.), *Cantate: La Confédération* (1868. Text: Auguste Achintre. Boucher, c. 1868.), and the *Cantate aux zouaves pontificaux* (1886. Text: Alphonse Bellemare. Ms.), written for the departure of the Papal Zouaves regiment to Rome in 1886.
- 24 The finest accomplishment of organist and teacher Alphonse Lavallée-Smith (Morin's "1875-1914" is likely based on his recollection), a second cousin to Calixa Lavallée, was the Montreal Conservatoire national de musique. Founded in 1905 and directed by Smith until his death, the Conservatoire taught music, diction, elocution, drawing and painting and granted diplomas in his day. Consult *EMC*, p. 729, for further biographical data.
- 25 Aside from a number of art songs, organ pieces and sacred vocal works, Smith's primary compositions were the *Requiem Mass* (first heard at his funeral) and *Gisèle* (c. 1911. Libretto: Honoré Thibault. Edition La Lyre, 1924.), a one-act opéra comique extant only in rehearsal piano-vocal score. The first fully-staged performance of *Gisèle* took place at the Montreal Monument national on 23 October 1924: unlike Morin, *La Presse* enthusiastically praised the singer's efforts, stating that the work "has achieved a triumphant success.... Let us joyfully applaud the birth on stage of a new, smart and witty work of light and lively music written by one of our own." (*CMH*, vol. 10, p. xviii.)
- 26 The anglophone writer Daniel J. Logan echoes Morin's assessment in a *Canadian Magazine* article predating *Papiers de musique*: "Lavallée must be regarded as the first native-born Canadian creative composer—first in time, in genius, in versatility of achievement and in meritorious musicianship." (Logan, "Canadian Creative Composers". *Canadian Magazine*, 1913, p. 489.) Lavallée's life and works have received extensive treatment and tribute in Canadian music sources, beyond the scope of the present edition. See *EMC*, pp. 727-29, and Kallmann, pp. 132-43 and 239-41.
- 27 In the history of Montreal musical life, the names Charles Wugk Sabatier (1820-62; Morin consistently writes "Sabattier") and Paul Letondal (1831-94) frequently appear in tandem. Both French-born and strongly anti-Bonapartist, the piano virtuoso and composer Sabatier and Letondal, a Kalkbrenner pupil and distinguished pedagogue, fled political strife in Europe and settled in Montreal at mid-century. These men pioneered the music profession in

Canada and, through outstanding keyboard instruction, established a base for cultural progress in Montreal.

- 28 A public subscription concert organized by friend and sponsor Léon Derome, with the assistance of over one-hundred performers, enabled Lavallée to spend 1873-75 in Paris (Morin's "1857" dating is the product of transposed numbers). He studied piano with Marmontel, and harmony and composition with Gounod classmate Emanuel Bazin and Adrien Boieldieu. See *EMC*, p. 727, and Kallmann, pp. 135-36.
- 29 Lavallée was one of the most versatile of Canadian composers, equally adept at light and serious, sacred and secular music according to immediate needs. Many of his piano works have been lost or destroyed: the character piece, *Le Papillon/The Butterfly*, op. 18 (n.d.. Eveillard, c. 1874. *CMH*, vol. 1), is among the few that survive in some twenty editions. Revealing a vital and appealing melodic gift, although derivative in harmonic language, *Le Papillon* was placed on the study list of the Paris Conservatoire shortly after its release.
- 30 It appears that Morin was speaking of the Polish concert pianist Moritz Moszkowski (1854-1925), who retired to Paris in 1897 after a distinguished career. A minor composer of both small and large forms, Moszkowski's creations were generally disregarded by critics despite their public popularity and frequent performances by fellow pianists.
- 31 *Sonata*. Violin, piano, 1890. Ms. lost.
Thirty studies for piano, c. 1874, including *Le Papillon/The Butterfly*, op. 18 (see Note 29).
- 32 The third of Lavallée's three light operas, *La Veuve/The Widow* (Opéra-comique, c. 1880. Libretto: Frank H. Nelson. Piano-vocal score, Boston: J.M. Russell, 1881), was written in the year which saw the composition and premiere of *O Canada* and Lavallée's departure to the United States. The lively score comprises an overture and thirty numbers, a well-paced and fully-developed example of the Romantic operetta genre in the tradition of Donizetti, Bizet and Offenbach which treats their conventions with expertise and charm. *La Veuve/The Widow* premiered in Springfield, IL (25 March 1882) to widespread critical acclaim. See also "The Widow", *EMC*, p. 1402, and Cooper, *CMH*, vol. 10, p. xv.
- 33 *Tu es Petrus/Glory, Blessing, Praise and Honour*. Offertorium, soprano, bass, chorus, orchestra, c. 1883. White and Smith, 1883. The *Cantata* (1879. Ms. lost), composed to commemorate the Quebec City visit of Canadian Governor-General the Marquis of Lorne, required three-hundred North American musicians for its June 1879 debut. The work's climax—and hence Morin's "an earnest effort to make use of everything possible"—was a simultaneous rendition of *God Save the Queen*, *Vive la canadienne* and *Comin'*

thro' the Rye, a feat of contrapuntal writing which created a sensation.

- 34 Alexis Contant was the first notable composer in Canada to receive his full musical training from Canadian-born teachers. Largely self-taught through necessity rather than by choice, he furthered his compositional knowledge in the study and analysis of those men who would form his strongest influences: Gounod, Saint-Saëns, Massenet and Franck. He became organist at Montreal's St. Jean-Baptiste Church in 1885, a position held until his death; however, his duties as pianist, accompanist and piano instructor at several Montreal-area colleges and convents commanded the largest share of his time and energies. See *EMC*, pp. 313-14, and Kallmann, pp. 244-45, regarding the details of Contant's life and works.
- 35 Morin's chronology of the Contant educational background is vague and somewhat misleading. His first teacher was the Montreal organist and pianist Joseph A. Fowler (1845-1917) who coached him to a concert debut at age thirteen. Calixa Lavallée assumed the boy's instruction upon his 1875 return to Montreal. Anxious to learn more, Contant joined Lavallée in Boston (January 1883) to resume his studies in harmony, counterpoint and composition. His contact with Guillaume Couture was merely fleeting: several consultations in June 1883 yielded serious disagreements and a terse parting of ways.
- 36 The Contant oeuvre comprises numerous masses, salon pieces for piano and chamber works and remains primarily in manuscript. Favouring Gounod, Dubois and Saint-Saëns in structure and aesthetic and Fauré in melodic elegance, these works, and particularly the oratorios, nevertheless exhibit a vitality and aggressiveness rarely found in turn-of-the-century Canadian composition. Helmut Kallmann defends Contant in this respect as a pioneer whose means could not always match his vision. See Kallmann, p. 245.
- 37 The oratorio *Caïn* (SSTBB, chorus, orchestra, 1904-05. Text: Brother Symphorien (Christian Brothers). Ms.) was inspired by the biblical story of Cain and Abel and constructed on three parts: "La Haine", "Le Sang" and "La Promesse". Considered the first of its genre written and performed in Canada, the work received its premiere with a 250-voice choir and 45-piece orchestra at the Montreal Monument national (12 November 1905) in the presence of Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier. *Caïn*, according to Romain Gour, "shows striking polyphonic contrasts in the manner of Verdi or Berlioz. A certain influence of Wagner can be found, too, and a very strong predisposition toward opera." (Gour, *Qui?*, December 1953) See also "Caïn", *EMC*, p. 183.
- 38 *Les Deux Ames* (Tenor, baritone, narrator, chorus, orchestra, 1907-09. Text: Henri Roullaud. Ms.), often labelled a symphonic poem but actually Contant's second oratorio, employs an allegorical

story of two lonely souls who wander about the world falling prey to temptations of good and evil. Contant submitted the piece to conductor Walter Damrosch prior to its 1913 premiere, who in turn expressed his admiration in a letter to the composer dated 10 March 1910. However, George Proctor remarks that "for the most part polyphonic interest is lacking.... The orchestration is very much like a transcription of an organ work." (Proctor, p. 9). See "Les Deux Ames", *EMC*, p. 363.

GUILLAUME COUTURE

For musicographers of the future, Guillaume Couture (1851-1915) will be the first great musician in the history of Canadian music. Nevertheless, we anxiously wonder if his reputation, instead of growing, has not diminished. It seems that he is somewhat forgotten and the rare performances of his principal work, *Jean le Précurseur*,¹ have not spread his name among the public as could have been hoped. On the other hand, the increasing number of those claiming to be beneficiaries of his teaching proves at the very least that a little fame and prestige has become attached to his name.

It is in the nature of things that musicians, just as other artists, meet such a decline after their death, sometimes followed by a return of fame. Time classifies the works and assists in setting the record straight. Those that survive the test of time then fall into their rightful place and take on all of their significance. The others that die for the second time no longer interest anyone. The works of Guillaume Couture will not live on, but his name will remain in the history of Canadian music because he was a key figure, because he did something, because he exercised an influence and developed excellent students.²

Couture was indeed a distinguished musician, the most educated, intelligent and cultured of his day. He was even the first great teacher in our country. Moreover, he was trained in good hands. He carried on the post of choirmaster at St. Clotilde in Paris for several years, in the days when César Franck was at the great organs, and he fulfilled the same duties at the Montreal Cathedral a bit later.³ His activity also

spread into the orchestral domain. He founded and conducted some in Montreal and his confident and precise leadership is remembered,⁴ like the sarcastic remarks he liked to use against mediocre amateurs.⁵

He always revered his teacher, Théodore Dubois, and it is close by him, from 1870 to 1875, that he consolidated his passion for harmony. He undertook this science as both the goal and pleasure of his life. But a dogmatic pleasure from which he could never free himself, and which was as much his weakness as his strength. Above all, he saw harmonic rules in music that could not be abandoned without risk. Couture was endowed with a particularly intellectual sensitivity.

Possessing a complete craft, though not very blessed in terms of creative imagination, his was a composer's work, but not a creative musician's. The art of composition, albeit inspired, could not fill in certain weaknesses of imagination. Thus, on the strength of all this knowledge for which we so widely recognize him, Couture certainly left interesting works, but characterless and insignificant in their aesthetic. Yet it must be said again, while this work does not have all the imaginative value that we would wish it had, it demonstrates serious knowledge of compositional dictates which were uncommon in Canada.

A work such as *Jean le Précurseur* is teeming with excellent harmonic realizations, well-balanced choirs are found therein, notably that which completes the first part, in the form of a fugue.⁶ The second part is happy enough in that it borrows from themes of the liturgy, but it is in the third part, called secular, that the author fails. The Feast, Salome's Dances, Antipas' air: "Délices, Voluptés!" so many failures. No, Couture was not inspired there. He was more so in the first parts, of a

religious character. Perhaps his greatest inspiration is his religious music, and notably his *Requiem*,¹ but it is most certainly not his *Rêverie* for orchestra which sentimentally wanders in the direction of Saint-Saëns, while eyeing towards Wagner.¹

But all of these works are quiet in a way that could well be disastrous for them. This obstinate silence in which we keep them will give them a flavour that our descendants of 1950, with other requirements than us, will perhaps appraise without kindness. Will they only acknowledge that this music, with its weaknesses and self-evident qualities, was worth the trouble of being studied and heard in its day?

It grieves me to make such a judgement on the work of a musician who deserves the esteem and respect of all. While the works are disappointing, the man and artist never was. Although he failed to put his own music to the test of the sound judgement that he applied to the music of others, Couture was an entirely superior mind. We must admire him because of his tenacious will to create music, because of the example of spirit he embodied, because of the eminent teacher that he was. For one of his best claims to fame is there, and in this domain, he has not been replaced. While the current musical movement in our province does not depend on his works, it depends at any rate on his stature as a teacher.

He died without having heard his masterwork, *Jean le Précurseur*, which was only performed for the first time in 1923, thanks to the devotion and admiration of his family and several friends.¹ This posthumous premiere was a deserved, but brief triumph. The general public and the entire press celebrated it, only to let it fall more heavily

still into oblivion. And yet Couture, better than any other musician of his day, deserves not to have his name forgotten.

NOTES

Source

"Les Compositeurs canadiens: M. Guillaume Couture". *La Patrie*, vol. 48, no. 39, 10 April 1926, p. 40.

- 1 *Jean le Précurseur*. Oratorio for twelve solo voices, choir and orchestra, 1907-09. Paris: C. Joubert, 1914.
- 2 With characteristic persistence, Guillaume Couture set about the musical training and reconstruction he believed necessary in late nineteenth-century Montreal, applying his full skills as teacher, critic, orchestra conductor and choir director to the task. As an ardent proponent of renewal in Canadian music, he had little time for his own composition: his output is slight and largely comprises sacred choral works. The serious character of this music met with neglect from commercial publishers who sought lighter fare at the time, a phenomenon which has precluded widespread dissemination and acceptance of the Couture oeuvre. Consult the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, pp. 324-25, and Ford, pp. 64 and 76-77, for complete biographies.
- 3 As a result of the St. Clothilde Church position, succeeding teacher Théodore Dubois in 1877, Couture turned definitively to sacred (specifically, choral) composition. His works of this period exhibit tendencies of the Niedermeyer school in their compliance with the ideals of sixteenth- to eighteenth-century church music. Though esteemed by his Parisian colleagues—Delibes, d'Indy, Dubois, Fauré, Franck, Massenet and Saint-Saëns—and secure in a posting which assured future success and prestige, Couture nevertheless chose to return to his native Montreal musical milieu. He settled at Montreal's St. Jacques Cathedral in 1893, where he remained until his death.

- 4 Couture organized and conducted the Société des symphonistes (1878-80) and the Montreal Philharmonic Society (1880-98), a time in which he acquainted his public with oratorios of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Mendelssohn and championed Wagner through performances of *Tännhäuser* and *The Flying Dutchman*. Among other noteworthy credits, he founded the first Montreal Symphony Orchestra, serving as its conductor for two seasons. See Ford, p. 76.
- 5 Helmut Kallmann writes of Couture's controversial role as critic for the *Revue de Montréal* (1877), *La Patrie* (c. 1879-84) and the *Montreal Daily Star* (1889-90): "Having adopted the musical standards of Paris, Couture was an outspoken critic of mediocrity and charlatanism. His acrid pen made enemies and involved him more than once in newspaper polemics. But Couture rose far above the negativism of simply attacking musical ignorance. He was able to raise the musical standards of Montreal from a provincial to a cosmopolitan level." (Kallmann, *A History of Music in Canada 1534-1914*, p. 130.) See also Morin's article, "Music Criticism Fifty Years Ago", regarding Couture's critical career.
- 6 Inspired by the biblical story of John the Baptist, Couture's ambitious three-part oratorio *Jean le Précurseur* ("The Nativity", "The Sermon", "The Martyrdom"; 1907-09) favours the style of Dubois whose music, like that of Gounod, is characterized by chromatic harmonies and sentimental melodies. Despite weaknesses of melodic and harmonic invention and a lack of dramatic flair to which Morin alludes, the work reveals Couture as an outstanding technician. His contrapuntal facility is most apparent in the two choral fugues of "The Nativity".
- 7 Couture's *Messe de requiem* (c. 1904. Ms.), originally scored for soli, chorus and organ, was later revised and orchestrated by the composer (1913). Achieving a certain dignity through its harmonic colouration and fluid interweaving of the vocal lines, this work received its final performance at Couture's own funeral in 1915.
- 8 The *Rêverie*, op. 2 (c. 1875. Paris: Girod, 1875.) stands as Couture's sole orchestral composition and the first Canadian score of this genre to attain publication. Premiered by the Parisian Société nationale de musique under Edouard Colonne (15 May 1875), *Rêverie* was heard alongside works by the leading composers of the day: Duparc, Fauré, Franck and Lalo. Kallmann concurs with Morin's assessment in his *Canadian Musical Heritage* volume, "Music for Orchestra I": "Its opening melody, full of romantic longing, dominates the structure and with its even rhythm and regular phrase lengths may tire some listeners. However, the contrast between this tune and the accompaniment figures...provides contrapuntal and rhythmic interest.... skillful orchestral writing." (p. viii)

- 9 The *Jean de Précurseur* premiere had been planned for November 1914 but was postponed with the onset of World War I. There seems to have been little initiative to reschedule the performance in the interim, such that the oratorio was not heard until 6 February 1923 at the Saint-Denis Theatre in Montreal. See "Jean le Précurseur", in *EMC*, pp. 650-51.

ACHILLE FORTIER

Mr. Achille Fortier (born in 1864) is virtually unknown to the public.¹ A few musicians and friends know that he has worked for quite a long time already on compositions that stand up to and endure scrupulous study, but these works have only very rarely appeared on the programmes of our concerts. Only those who know them were able to pull them out of his boxes for, if I am not mistaken, none of them have been published.

Mr. Achille Fortier worked at one time in Montreal with Guillaume Couture and Dominique Ducharme,² before leaving to study in France. He owes the foundation of his music education to Guillaume Couture. He is indebted to him for a little of this compositional correction which, contrived in Couture, takes on a supple and softened character in him. But Mr. Fortier is closer to us. In Dubois' class in Paris, which was definitely a must at that time, he had Albéric Magnard, Guy Ropartz, Galeotti, Risler, Victor Staub, Charles Silver, etc. as "harmony camarades".³ A bit later, in Guiraud's class, he encountered these same "mature" friends again for composition studies and is seen seated beside Paul Dukas, Bachelet, etc.⁴ Moreover, André Gédalge prepared him for the entrance exam to the composition class, and it is known that not long after, at the time of a midterm examination, a fugue of the young Canadian Fortier caught the ear of César Franck.⁵ That earned him admission as an official, regular student in Guiraud's composition class, his foreign nationality alone preventing him from aspiring to the *Prix de Rome*. Mr. Fortier is thus the first Canadian to be admitted as a regular

student (and not only an auditor) in a composition class at the Paris Conservatoire.

Once his studies were completed, as he says himself, he returned to Montreal in 1890. A few years later, an entire concert was devoted to the premiere of his works, an unprecedented event in Canada.⁶ Excerpts from a mass were heard, some organ pieces, passages for piano, melodies, etc., works destroyed in part by the author. He taught previously, notably at the Nazareth Institute where he was entrusted with singing and harmony classes.⁷ His free time was spent on composition. From that period, two masses must be remembered, of which only the second remains, premiered at Notre-Dame in 1896,⁸ several motets,⁹ piano pieces, melodies for voice and piano, a *Marche Solennelle* and a waltz for orchestra, these last works still extant.

A *Méditation* for cello and piano, two melodies for voice and piano, *Philosophie* (on a poem by Armand Silvestre) and *Mon Bouquet* (on a poem by Louis Frechette)¹⁰ show us a young composer leaving school, around 1890-92, still impressed by the official teaching of fugue, harmony and counterpoint and creating brilliant displays from such a fine stock of knowledge in spite of himself. And yet, these works contain pages in which the inspiration is cheerful and fresh.

It is curious to note that at the end of a class such as that of Guiraud, quite free and frequented by musicians like Debussy and Paul Dukas, Mr. Fortier had not been even mildly affected by this musical Impressionism that started to break at that time. On the contrary, it would be easier to ally him—the search for artistic paternity is an obsession of criticism—to Chausson, to Magnard to some extent, even to

Gedalge and Duparc, in that these musicians align themselves with Romanticism.¹¹ But the point at which Mr. Fortier connects with Romanticism is this melodic contour, this vaguely Schumannesque spirit that characterizes some of his melodies and clearly gives them the emotion and charm to which we are sensitive. Let us not be mistaken though. If Mr. Fortier is a Romantic, he is a Romantic by refinement, weakly characterized. His music does not know the excesses of the great models of the genre. He is a Romantic of today who expresses himself with the aid of a clear language, lithe and elegant writing, and uses forms suitable for the expression of his ideas.

For a long time Mr. Fortier steered clear of music. I mean that he did not officially profess it. But he always thought about it and, in the meantime, his style assumed a new confidence, without having lost any of its fluidity. His writing lightened and while it was not confined to the expression of the essentials, we are conscious of an inclination towards economy and reserve that are the mark of a composer in possession of a sound craft. Of this period, we know of melodies for voice and piano which are worthy of attention: *Orgueil*, *Mon Secret*, *Marguerites*, *Impromptu* and *When Love is Lost*. But we could quarrel here with the author's prosody, which is not always fortuitous.¹² It will no doubt be said that he can have his reasons for making such use of words, that it is a question of taste and habit, that the dictates of prosody are not inviolable, etc. Nevertheless, in a time when musicians such as Fauré and Debussy, to mention only those, have set the usual rules of the game as it were, the taste for good prosody can appear legitimate.

But all of that does not prevent *Marguerites* from being a work whose bearing, soundness of form and balance can confer enviable fame on its author. While *When Love is Lost* is a more detailed work, more complete in terms of craft and where the prosody is clearly better, it does not possess the charming spontaneity and soft accent which characterizes *Marguerites* and even *Mon Secret*, both on poetry by Gonzalves Désaulniers. Here, the artist is best discovered and the music is more agreeable. There, the composer and harmonist have a greater share, and a little heaviness impedes the pleasure.

Mr. Fortier's writing in these melodies is somewhat reminiscent of Fauré's, less by the fluency as by the will it exhibits in modulating to the most distant keys using the most astonishing shortcuts. In this regard, these last works seem to inaugurate a new style in their author, in which a certain diatonicism is abandoned in favour of chromaticism, still unclear in its presentation but interesting, even if the light and usual clarity must be sacrificed. But in my opinion, this system marks a regression, a needless experience, instead of a step forward. At any rate, from Mr. Fortier on, it seems that Canadian musicians have an increasingly extensive vocabulary and that nothing will prevent them, in the future, from expressing themselves in the language of their time. Moreover, the proof of it is already made.

NOTES

Source

"Les Compositeurs canadiens: M. Achille Fortier". *La Patrie*, vol. 48, no. 51, 24 April 1926, p. 40.

- 1 Morin's assessment of friend and colleague Achille Fortier (1864-1939) represents the most complete source of information available pertaining to the composer and his works. Very little has been documented in standard Canadian music references and none of these, in particular, attempts an inventory of the Fortier output including dates of composition and publication data. Although some of his manuscripts were destroyed by fire, more than thirty original scores (sacred music, arrangements, secular songs and choral works) were deposited at the Montreal Archives nationales du Québec. See the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, pp. 489-90.
- 2 Dominique Ducharme (1840-99), a former pupil of Marmontel and Bazin at the Paris Conservatoire, was primarily a teacher of piano in Montreal. Deeply influenced by an encounter with Paderewski in the 1880s, Ducharme schooled Fortier and other pupils in methods of piano technique characteristic of the Viennese school. Fortier also studied composition with Guillaume Couture.
- 3 Fortier and classmates Magnard (1865-1914), Ropartz (1864-1955), Cesare Galeotti (1872-1929), Edouard Risler (1873-1929), Staub (n.d.) and Silver (1868-1949) undertook Théodore Dubois' harmony class and compositional study with Jules Massenet at the Paris Conservatoire in 1885. Their common bond was an admiration of Franck: each had formative exposure to the French organist and teacher which determined their future course as musicians.
- 4 Fortier attended the regular composition lectures of American-born Conservatoire professor Ernest Guiraud (1837-92) in 1888, the first Canadian to do so. A formidable and demanding teacher, Guiraud's noted pupils included Debussy, Dukas and Alfred Bachelet (1864-1944), the Parisian composer and conductor of opera.
- 5 To gain acceptance into Guiraud's class, Fortier was required to submit a fugue and a piece for women's voices and orchestra, entitled *Printemps*. It was the fugue, written for the candidacy examination, which attracted the crucial attention and support of Franck. See also "Solfège", Note 1, regarding André Gédalge.

- 6 The vocal and instrumental concert of Fortier's compositions, presented in 1893, was conducted by Guillaume Couture. As Morin suggests, few of the pieces heard on this occasion are extant.
- 7 Considered the earliest conservatory in Montreal, the Institut Nazareth (est. 1861 by the Grey Nuns) boasted a general curriculum of which music was an integral part, later developing into an autonomous school of music. The newspapers of the day reveal the influence of the school over Montreal's cultural life, describing annual concerts which introduced both first-rate performing talent and important new works to the public. Fortier was tenured as an Institut instructor from 1890-92.
- 8 Fortier conducted the premiere of his second mass for four male voices, organ and orchestra on 22 November 1896, suggesting a completion date of c. late 1895/early 1896 for the work.
- 9 In his *Canadian Musical Heritage* volume, "Sacred Choral Music II", Clifford Ford characterizes the Fortier motets by their rich and aggressive harmonic language and imaginative accompanimental patterns (p. xiv). Fortier was certainly aware of "modernist" trends in French music, and especially those of Fauré, through his teacher Couture.
- 10 Armande Silvestre and Louis Frechette were preeminent French-Canadian poets of the nineteenth century. The latter made literary history when his collection *Les Fleurs boréales* ("The Northern Flowers"; 1879), from which the poem "Mon Bouquet" is taken, was awarded the French Academy's 1880 *Prix Montyon*, the first such honour bestowed upon the work of a Canadian.
- 11 Resembling most French musicians of their time, the music of Ernest Chausson (1855-99), Magnard, Gédalge and Henri Duparc (1848-1933) was clearly influenced by Wagner and "Franckism". From the former, these men inherited a spontaneously emotional and dramatic language—tense in its chromaticism and somewhat flamboyant in its melodic expansion—which led critics to condemn them as vague, incomprehensible, even harmful. However, the French spirit in music as embodied by Franck abounded in the elegance, clarity and brilliance of their "pure form" structural plan. See "Ernest Chausson", in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 4, p. 183; *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, p. 319.
- 12 Writing on the issue of Fortier's prosody in the *Canadian Musical Heritage* (vol. 7), Lucien Poirier defends the composer as "one of a group who at the end of the nineteenth century, gradually transcended mere attention to prosody in order to assign a more significant role to the piano in tone painting.... Those are fine examples of an art which took a long time to be implanted in Canada: the art of the *mélodie* [art song]." (p. x)

RODOLPHE MATHIEU

Achille Fortier once wrote and told me that "judging a contemporary is always perilous."¹ The warning was wise, but I already know that judging is rather dangerous, even when it is a question of works or things tested by time, so great is the share of subjectivism which enters into and prescribes our judgement. But a review is not necessarily a judgement without recourse and, at any rate, it seems to me that the work of Rodolphe Mathieu has the strength to resist these kinds of analyses that we generally take for judgements.

It is revealing that among the musicians of his generation, Rodolphe Mathieu would be at the same time the most attacked and least understood.² And the less his music is known, the more vehemently it is assailed. This composer is reproached for not creating music like Mr. "Everybody" and for not being as mercilessly clear as so many amateurs are. Precisely, his personality is reproached. Here is a composer who has his own way of doing things and, instead of extolling him for it, he is indicted, as for a flaw. This is because his music disrupts the habits of our public and, what is less forgiveable, those of our musicians. To understand this capricious music, one needs at the very least a familiarity with today's musical language and a cultivation which ordinary listeners do not possess, nor all musicians. The latter hold it against the young audacious one that he caught them in their lethargy. It dispenses them from making the effort to understand the meaning and true value of his music.

Rodolphe Mathieu, until he had gone to study in France, was what we might call a self-taught man. He discovered music. And this is not said in a derogatory sense. It can even demonstrate that he possesses the natural talents of a musician, that he is a born musician and not made, and that his musical instinct will always prevent him from taking what is conventionally called school exercises for pure musical expression. None of his works reveal the task of harmony, and even the least happily written, the least favourable of form, sing naturally.

In Paris, he first studied at the *Schola cantorum* with Vincent d'Indy, more specifically musical forms. A bit later, he undertook composition and orchestration with Louis Aubert.³ He did "his" harmony, "his" counterpoint, "his" fugue of course, as did everyone. It is in Paris of 1920 that he wrote his *Quatuor à cordes*, a work both full of virtues and thoroughly disconcerting, until then one of the most interesting and least complete of the composer.⁴ One of the most interesting in substance, thought and the wealth of materials and one of the least clear in form and organization of parts. The *Trio* for piano and strings which immediately follows the *Quatuor* is a work of greater breadth, divided into three parts in Classical form. In my opinion, it is the first truly composed work of the young author, one which confers indisputable rights on him for the attention of musicians.⁵ The same melodic contour for which he is recognizable is encountered therein, which already existed in substance in the *Préludes pour piano* of 1915,⁶ but is of a clearer expression, a better organized and more precise writing here. The troubled and bulky first part entitled *Discussion* is redeemed by the elegant, spacious and undulating writing of the second, *Réflexion*, and

better still, by the bearing of the *Pantomime* which acts as a Scherzo-Finale here, developed in first-movement sonata form.

In search of pure timbre, and although illustrious and definitive examples could not stop him from it, he tried his hand at an inordinately difficult genre: solo violin. Far from discouraging him, the young audacious one found incentive in the Bach *Suites*, and while his *Douze monologues* were not a success, they at least demonstrate the desire to submit himself to a firm discipline.⁷ They are pretentiously adorned with titles that clarify the meaning for the hesitant listener: *Orgueil, Timidité, Volontaire, Hardi, Voluptueux, Vulgaire, Noble, Léger, Pondéré, Irascible, Mélancolique* and *Joyeux*. But another combination enticed him: the marriage of violin and cello, consummated so often before. Maurice Ravel's *Sonata*, the inaccessible summit, did not intimidate our young man.⁸ Moreover, no scepticism stopped him, and with his almost disorderly taste for musical conversation, he created the proud and monotonous *Dialogues* between these two instruments.⁹

Among these gratuitous and useless games, he wrote a beautiful poem for voice, violin and orchestra in 1924, whose text, *Harmonie du soir*, was borrowed from Baudelaire.¹⁰ Here we find the most striking example of the author's melodic design, accomplished in nimble leaps followed by conjunct, chromatic and enervating motion. The melody lands periodically on the starting notes, altered by a semitone lower or higher, and all of this is animated, whimsical, subtle and a bit hesitant. Baudelaire's poem moves here with little ease in a somewhat lax musical prosody for the author of *Fleurs du mal*.¹¹

A *Symphonie-ballet* with choir develops this style further.¹² The first part, "Le Réveil des fleurs", written for orchestra and four women's voices, divided sopranos and contraltos, leads to a Scherzo for orchestra alone, whereas the third part unites men's and women's voices with the orchestra in a "Dialogue du vent et des fleurs". The symbols are intentionally puerile here, without a doubt, and this need for text, of which Mr. Mathieu is the author besides, shows a musician eager to escape others' clichés and anxious to rely on himself. He still feels the need to sing the *Saisons* and it matters little to him that the words he uses are innocently coordinated.¹³ Moreover, it does not prevent a certain vigour from being flaunted in *Hiver*, a dramatic poem exalting the storms of the Canadian winter and the return to springtime. And while the composer is a good painter, we conclude from it that summer is calm and gentle in Canada, for his *Eté* sings with peace, sweetness and sensual delight of a nature which finally puts the harsh trials of winter to rest. The weaknesses of the texts and his touching childishness do not hinder the dynamic strength of the music nor its nonchalances.

After that, enough of symbols and literature, the musician returned to pure music and even to the piano, abandoned ever since the *Préludes* and a breathless *Chevauchée* of 1910.¹⁴ In the warm and generous themes, a one-part *Sonate pour piano* indicates a fiery disposition which can become refined and sensitive, even a little affected.¹⁵ In spite of a mild vagueness in form, a few lengthy passages and waste, this *Sonate* is of a magnificent élan. Among other favourable things, it contains a remarkably measured, powerful and solid crescendo, which leads to a conclusion not lacking in grandeur. But a greater control asserts itself

in the *Sonata* for piano and violin, still marred by vapidness yet elegant, supple and more capricious.¹⁶ An already sensitive rhythmic impulse establishes itself with more indulgence in the *Finale* of the *Trio* and in the *Sonata* for piano, and be it reminiscences of waltzes, charlestons or simply jazz, he brings out an impression of life fairly close to our current tastes. Only the imprecise forms prevent this rich material from agreeing with the present trends of music and those of the author, which still need to be clarified.

As for the musician's harmonic system, it is atonal, as we say in trade jargon. It depends strictly upon his melodic system, which has a disturbing chromatic flexibility that comes and goes without ever bothering to resolve itself in accordance with the accustomed dictates, nor even at that to follow the straight and narrow paths, incompatible with chromaticism in this case.¹⁷ A natural system in that it does not irritate the nature of its author whatsoever. But a system full of dangers in that it foregoes the magnificent glow and vivid manifestations of the tonal system. While the atonal system is full of richness and possibilities, descended from Wagner and Franck, from which Schoenberg made his credo, used for a time by Scriabin and still used by many musicians, it is no less a contradictory and indistinct system of *grisaille*,¹⁸ where sonorous energy and triumphant assertion are excluded. This system lacks structure. But Rodolphe Mathieu occasionally escapes from it and without committing a tonal sin, he knows how to suddenly settle on perfect concords at certain encumbered bends. But all systems are good if they are mastered.

While the music of Rodolphe Mathieu sang in a fairly personal way right from the start, descended, for that matter, much more from Wagner and Scriabin than French musicians, it has begun to function today according to a rhythm that is his alone. We trust that it will not lose any of its character in ridding itself of certain unwieldy decorative elements that add nothing to the style and remove the strength of expression and clarity from it. For decoration is not strictly style, no more in music than in architecture. Upon stripping it bare, his writing will improve in precision and power of expression. He will also have to shake off a certain mannerism and fuss perceptible in the rhythm and melody, which thwarts his stylistic assurance. He will have to master the forms and discipline his inspiration, in a word, choose better, know where to stop himself.

At any rate, composers who speak the language of their time with ease are few in Canada. The merit of the most natural of our musicians is in having penetrated the secret from the day in which he thought of composition. The music is "modern" not only in its outward appearance, but also in its spirit, and it is most certainly a natural way of being.¹⁹ We know that Rodolphe Mathieu, musician of nature, listens to his temperament above all else and that will always prevent him from falling into ordinary pastiche where so many others, less strong and independent, have atrophied. After him, it will become embarrassing to write music in Canada in the style of Francis Thomé or Maurice Pesse.²⁰ I mean that it will be ludicrous to recount sentimental nonsense throughout one's life.

NOTES

Source

"Les Compositeurs canadiens: M. Rodolphe Mathieu". *La Patrie*, vol. 48, no. 57, 1 May 1926, p. 41.

- 1 Morin and Fortier engaged in discussions through correspondence of the music criticism profession and the state of Canadian music in their day. Fortier's comment was likely in reference to his experiences as judge of the 1928 CPR Festival's E. W. Beatty Competition. See "Claude Champagne", Note 6.
- 2 An early twentieth-century pioneer of Canadian contemporary music, the compositions of Rodolphe Mathieu (1890-1962) reflect three preponderant currents of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries: the Debussyian revolution in aesthetics and musical language, the wave of Romanticism through Wagner and, later, the bold experimentalism of Schoenberg and Berg. One senses a determination in Mathieu to break boundaries, to push chromaticism to its limit and to pursue a quasi-serialist path in his work. The novelty of such methods inevitably created a barrier for audiences and critics alike who, with the notable exception of Morin, were not prepared to understand its musical idiom despite its immediate emotional impact. Consult the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, pp. 818-19 and MacMillan and Beckwith, pp. 146-49, for further biographical data.
- 3 Mathieu pursued his formal training in Paris (1920-27) with financial aid from friends and a modest grant from the Quebec government, the first awarded to a composer. On Morin's advice he approached Albert Roussel for lessons, and was in turn referred to d'Indy's *Schola cantorum*. Aside from this seminal contact with Roussel, d'Indy and Aubert, culminating in the composition of his most significant chamber works, Mathieu studied orchestral conducting with Vladimir Golschmann at the Collège de France.
- 4 Performed on 2 April 1921 by the Krettly Quartet as *Pièce pour quatuor à cordes*, Mathieu's string quartet (1920. Ms.) employs a chromatic melodic line in counterpoint among the instruments. It was the first of his works composed in a post-Wagnerian vein approaching that of Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* (1899).
- 5 Whereas Mathieu's previous compositions had moved towards freedom from tonality, the *Trio* for piano, violin and cello (1921. *Canadian Musical Heritage*, Vol. 11, 1990) marked the realization of his personal approach to the new European musical ideas: a significant departure into the pre-serialist tendencies of systematic

chromaticism. Standing in contrast to other important trios of the day, including those by Ravel (1915), Guy Ropartz (1918), Pierné (1922) and Fauré (1922-23), Mathieu's trio unfolds in a process of continuous variation. Morin was the first to analyze the adventurous qualities and considerable achievement represented by the work, some fifty years prior to its Canadian premiere (Montreal Pro-Musica Society, 23 February 1975) and widespread critical acclaim. See MacMillan and Beckwith, pp. 146-47, and Gilles Potvin, "Des Canadiens à Pro-Musica". *Le Devoir*, 25 February 1975, p. 12.

- 6 The brief and witty *Trois préludes* ("1. Sur un nom", "2. Vague...", "3. J'écoute une muse qui me fuit"; Piano, 1912-15. Paris: H. Hérelle et cie, 1921. *CMH*, vol. 6, 1986), perhaps Canada's first atonal composition, was dedicated to and premiered by Morin. Mathieu scholar Juliette Bourassa notes the strong flavour of Debussy and Wagner permeating Preludes 1 and 2, yet a unique syntax for 1915 in the third, foreshadowing Webern's *Klangfarbenmelodie* technique: "The third prelude is not as overstudied or laboured as the other two. It comes across as a luminous, shimmering improvisation..." (Juliette Bourassa. "Rodolphe Mathieu, musicien canadien (1890-1962)". Unpublished PhD. Thesis, Université Laval, 1972, p. 58).

- 7 *Douze études modernes: Monologues pour violon seul*. Violin, 1924. Ms. It is not clear to which of Bach's *Suites* Morin was referring, nor what connection he hoped to demonstrate between the Bach and Mathieu compositions.

- 8 As Ravel's nearest foray into modernism, the *Sonata* for violin and cello (1920-22) represented a new phase in which the isolation of minimal musical elements ("*dépouillement*") was carried to an extreme and his harmonic fascination disregarded. Ravel pupil, friend and biographer Alexis Roland-Manuel writes (hence Morin's pronouncement, "inaccessible summit"), "This remarkable sonata, bristling with virtuosity and a lyricism which spits like an angry cat, is one of the most significant—and the least flattering—works in Ravel's new manner." See Robert Maycock, Liner notes to *French Music for Violin and Cello* (Chandos ABRD 1121).

- 9 Of the *Vingt-deux dialogues* for violin and cello (c. 1924. Ms.), only eight are extant. Mathieu meticulously maintained his papers throughout his life, witnessed in his extensive archives now held by the National Library of Canada; it is reasonable to speculate that the *Dialogues* were never completed.

- 10 The vocal work *Harmonie du soir* (Soprano/tenor, violin, orchestra, 1924. Ms.), first performed by Paris' Orchestre Lamoureux in 1925, signalled Mathieu's return to the musical idiom of Debussy and the Wagnerian aesthetic.

- 11 A precursor of the symbolist movement and the most influential of the modern poets, Charles Baudelaire (1821-67) was best known for his sole collection of verse, *Fleurs du mal* ("Flowers of Evil", 1857). As a result of its publication, he was indicted on offenses to public morals and six poems were censored from the French editions of the book.
- 12 Mathieu completed only two movements of a projected four in his *Symphonie-ballet avec chœurs* (Choir, orchestra, 1927. Ms.). Morin speaks of the first, entitled "Le Réveil des fleurs", and the third, "Dialogue du vent et des fleurs".
- 13 *Saisons canadiennes* ("I-Printemps", "II-Eté", "III-Automne", "IV-Hiver"; Bass voice, cello, piano, before 1927. Ms.), with both text and music penned by Mathieu, typifies late nineteenth-century stylization and stands as the only work in the composer's output which might properly be termed a song cycle.
- 14 *Chevauchée* was actually completed in 1911, contrary to Morin's claim of 1910. As one who maintained close contact with Mathieu and who came to play the early piano miniature frequently in concert, Morin may well have seen the work in its germinal stages of composition, resulting in the error. Mathieu was deeply impressed with the music of Scriabin as introduced to him by Alfred Laliberté at the time: the influence of the Russian composer's syntax may be discerned in this composition.
- 15 A more substantial work than *Chevauchée* to which it is often compared, Mathieu's *Sonate pour piano* (1927. CMH, Vol. 6, 1986.) is again modelled on Scriabin's one-movement structures of the early-twentieth century with continual development of two themes. Intensely chromatic, its interest lies in a lively and lyrical quality and the craftsmanship that is evident henceforth in Mathieu's writing. The *Sonate* is a rare work which exploits rhythm.
- 16 The first work written upon Mathieu's return from Paris was the lengthy one-movement *Sonate pour violon et piano* (1928. Ms.), dedicated to his future wife, pupil and violinist Mimi Gagnon. Premiered with the composer himself at the piano, this composition is constructed on a single theme. Its atmosphere as much as its language approaches Berg of 1910-20.
- 17 In his search for a fresh scalic organization, Mathieu's exploration of the pre-serialist vein led him to a process subsequently termed "complementarity". This solution established the resolution of melodic lines or harmonic progressions through the exhaustion of the twelve-tone series, a clearly serial melodic outline. It has been suggested, although not proven, that Mathieu might have been influenced in this by Scriabin's theory of the attraction of unstable harmonies by stable ones. See *EMC*, pp. 818-19, and MacMillan and Beckwith, pp. 146-47.

- 18 The French term *grisaille* is derived from *grisailier*, literally meaning "to turn grey". In the context of Morin's remarks of atonality, the word may best be defined as "a sad and monotonous (uniform) atmosphere".
- 19 Morin, unlike many of his contemporaries, used the word "modern" for praise, not condemnation. He was perhaps the only contemporaneous critic who staunchly defended Mathieu and his music in print.
- 20 The oeuvre of late nineteenth-century French composers Francis Thomé and Maurice Pesse has fallen into obscurity. David Charlton, writing in *Grove's*, asserts of their idiom, "They betray no originality of harmony and melody, and are a depressing example of musical commercialism. Possibly their worst feature, apart from their fundamental sentimentality, is their slavish adherence to four-bar phrases." ("Francis Thomé", *Grove's*, Vol. 18, p. 783.)

CLAUDE CHAMPAGNE

Claude Champagne had a lengthy educational stay in France. After having studied composition for seven years in Paris, it seemed natural that he return to ply the musician's trade in his country. He left Paris after attaining infinitely flattering successes there for himself as for us, the crowning achievement of the studies and research he undertook.¹

At one time, the newspapers told us that the Pasedeloup Orchestra had put a *Suite canadienne* for choir and orchestra by this young Canadian composer on one of its regular programmes (October 20, 1928). Being quite far from the Champs-Élysées theatre where this premiere took place, we did not know how well this charming music was received by the Parisian public and critics. Nevertheless, it has been pleasing for us to know that the great Paris orchestras, personified by Pasedeloup, would open their doors wide to Canadian music.² I really believe that this is the first time a large Paris orchestra has offered our music hospitality in this way. For the Parisian premiere of another symphonic work by Claude Champagne, *Hercule et Omphale*, did not appear in the official concert series of said orchestra, although performed by the musicians of the Conservatoire Orchestra and conducted by Juan Manen.³ Neither, respectively, did this *mélodie* for voice and orchestra by Rodolphe Mathieu, which was given at the Concerts of Mrs. Bériza.⁴ Let us therefore hope that the gesture of Rhené-Baton is repeated elsewhere and that our composers will offer the Parisian conductors numerous and substantial occasions to champion our colours there.

These colours are particularly French in Claude Champagne's *Suite canadienne*. They are French by the source of inspiration as much as the musician's technique.⁵ This is the place to recall that the *Suite* is an examination piece on a theme indebted to Canadian folklore, and that it was awarded a prize at the Beatty Competition in the spring of 1928.⁶ But the Canadian songs chosen for the occasion came from France, and the French folklorists found an accustomed fragrance therein. The craft of the musician also has a French source, Claude Champagne having gone through the Paris Conservatoire with the great teacher André Gédalge and later with Raoul Laparra.⁷ It is near Gédalge that he consolidated his craft and clarified his style in terms of a delicacy and elegance uncommon in our country.

At the time of the premiere of his poem, *Hercule et Omphale*, Parisian critics had already observed interesting ideas and a clear and agreeable orchestration in the young musician. This time, they considered his craft definitively acquired and spoke highly of the happy balance of the orchestra and choirs, in which everything sounds well and each instrument and voice plays clearly.

It is often fashionable to prepare folklore in odourless and indigestible stews. Mr. Champagne, as a man of taste, knew how to avoid the usual fault of amassing weighty and ludicrous harmonizations, in which a harmonic curse is made of every note of the song. His counterpoint does not have these pungencies and his style is fluid and free. The orchestra does not play the sole and timid role of accompanist in this *Suite*, but that of a symphonic complement independent of the choral part. In a word: whatever the prescribed motif, it is composition.

A short work, it is true. A larger-scale work would have been reproached for being too long and we agree with the composer that his pace is good. Moreover, we know how incurable the tedium of certain overly long and half-hearted works is, and we must be grateful to this one for being quite the opposite of a boring thing and of such perfect proportions. For proof of this, I only require the third part, drawn from the air, *Et Moi je m'en passe*, and the fourth, taken from *Le Fils du roi s'en va chassant*, both of an exquisite rhythmic and harmonic charm.⁹ It lasts indeed just long enough to give us an appetite.

Before this *Suite*, Claude Champagne had written other works, of course. The disciplined craft of this musician got his hand in, as it is said. In *Filigrane* and a *Prélude* for piano of 1918, this refined and elegant style which belongs exclusively to the author of *Suite canadienne* has already become apparent.⁹ A symphonic poem from that time, revised and performed in Paris in 1926, shows even more precision in his style.¹⁰ There is also a *Suite espagnole* for orchestra, *Six petites pièces* for string orchestra and a *Scherzo symphonique*, this latter work not yet revealed to the public.¹¹

In 1929, Mr. Claude Champagne drew a *Pièce en forme de habanera* for violin and piano from a part of his *Suite espagnole* for orchestra.¹² It is a spicy work which stretches out most naturally in an admirably balanced rhythm, warm music in perfect measure. A violinist himself, he feels at ease in the writings for violin. In this regard, the entirely rustic *Danse villageoise* contains a cadence of rare skill and completely in the manner—stylized, of course—of fiddlers.¹³ Claude Champagne, just as James Callihou, attaches great importance to dance rhythms. He is thus

within a perpetual Classical, Romantic and modern tradition. "Music must be dance", he would say most gently. Such a theory is infinitely tenable and the greatest musicians of all time have sacrificed to the god of dance.

The rhythm of this music is clear like the language itself and also the harmony. The atonalism and abandon of a Mathieu could not suit a musician like Champagne, who needs discipline and precision and whose harmony dislikes dithering and putting on airs. Champagne likes plain and simple pitches, vivid and unequivocal colours. He creates difficulties for the sole pleasure of overcoming them: a conscientious craft that leaves an indifferent, unmoved Mathieu close to the wilds. He seeks pure design in the way in which today's young musicians hear it, and nothing keeps him in the spirit as much as being natural. He is natural and uncomplicated to the point of not retreating on occasion from the most simple and even trifling ideas. And make no mistake: while clichés and commonplaces have always been fashionable in our country and have long constituted the clearest of our composers' originality, there is nothing of the sort in a Claude Champagne. If certain well-known, safe tricks smile on us in passing in his work, it is deliberate. A fine cadence and happy modulation, so inevitable they may be, are certainly timeless and can be as beautiful today as they were yesterday. There is a good way of doing things, there as elsewhere, and Claude Champagne possesses this way to a rare degree.

The work of Claude Champagne is neither formidable nor grandiloquent, and we know that to be viable, a work of art has no need for those elements. That of our author reveals a talent made first and

foremost of delicacy, subtlety and charm. It is a polished, rounded and infinitely civilized art which strives for beautiful design, fine forms, precision and concision. No waste, no flaws, no hesitation ever encumber the style of this musician, one of the most educated and level-headed of his generation."

NOTES

Sources

"Les Compositeurs canadiens: M. Claude Champagne". *La Patrie*, vol. 48, no. 198, 16 October 1926, p. 38.

"Le Retour de M. Claude Champagne". *La Patrie*, vol. 50, no. 243, 7 December 1928, p. 37.

"Nouveau visage de la musique canadienne". *La Patrie*, vol. 51, no. 24, 23 March 1929, p. 34.

- 1 Spanning 1921-28, the Parisian journey of Claude Champagne (1891-1965) afforded him full immersion in a rich musical tradition that was not available in Canada. In acquiring the essentials of his craft there, his compositional talents quickly developed and matured. Champagne was an active contributor to the Paris Conservatoire, Schola Cantorum and Concerts Babiâiens and took on cataloguing tasks for the Public Archives of Canada. Consult the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, pp. 244-46, and MacMillan and Beckwith, pp. 41-46, for complete biographical sketches.
- 2 Founded by Jules-Etienne Padeloup as Concerts populaires de musique classique (1861), this Parisian symphonic society was a forum for music of the Classical and Romantic eras and intended for those who would not otherwise hear it. Padeloup gave an important place to contemporary French composers and performed works of German symphonists then unknown in France. Revived as Concerts Padeloup in 1920 by Rhené-Baton, its principal conductor

- (1916-32), this philosophy was extended to incorporate selected Canadian works.
- 3 The manuscript of Champagne's early symphonic poem *Hercule et Omphale* (Orchestra, 1918. Berandol/BMI Canada.) so impressed his teacher, Alfred Laliberté, that he funded the full course of Champagne's study in Paris. A work representing two opposing ideas (strength vs. charm) by two contrasting musical themes, *Hercule et Omphale* debuted in Paris on 31 March 1926, performed by the Orchestre symphonique des artistes du Conservatoire. The Barcelona-born composer Juan Manen (1883-1971) served as guest conductor for the occasion.
 - 4 Morin is alluding to the vocal miniature, *Un Peu d'ombre* (1913. Canadian Music Centre.), sung in 1924 by Marguerite Bériza at Paris' Concerts Lamoureux.
 - 5 Based on four French-Canadian folksongs, Champagne's *Suite canadienne* (SATB, small orchestra, 1927. Cello, piano, Durand 1929.) won first prize at the 1928 CPR Festival, subsequently the first Canadian orchestral score to attain international recognition. George Proctor notes, "This well-constructed work employs a modal approach in modern dress, a style which is not surprising in view of the fact that Champagne spent most of the 1920s in the centre of neoclassicism, Paris.... [It is] characterized by a strong lyrical sense, clarity of texture and a sure contrapuntal technique" (p. 21).
 - 6 The E. W. Beatty Competition, named after the president of Canadian Pacific Railway, was established in 1927 in conjunction with the CPR Festivals of the late 1920s. Offering three-thousand dollars in prize money for compositions based on French-Canadian folksongs, the winning works of Champagne, Alfred Whitehead, George Bowles and Ernest MacMillan were heard at the May 1928 Festival in Quebec City. Achille Fortier, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Paul Vidal were among the judges.
 - 7 Champagne underwent rigorous training in counterpoint and fugue with the highly-respected Conservatoire professor, André Gédalge. He continued with Gédalge's successor, Charles Koechlin, and completed his formal training in the composition and orchestration classes of former Fauré and Diémer protégé, Raoul Laparra (1876-1943). The pervasive influence of these teachers accounts for the French flavour of the Champagne oeuvre.
 - 8 "Et Moi je m'en passe" and "Le Fils du roi s'en va chassant" represent two of four French-Canadian folksongs from which Champagne derived his *Suite canadienne*.
 - 9 Debuted by Morin on 3 December 1918, Champagne's *Prélude et filigrane* (Piano, 1918. BMI Canada, 1960. *CMH*, Vol. 6, 1986.) offers an early indication that Canadian composers were aware of recent European developments. His combination of augmented fourths,

- minor ninths and non-functional chord progressions creates an atmosphere of mysticism which may be traced to prior exposure to Scriabin acquired through Laliberté. Such colouristic features were uncommon in Canadian music of this time. See Proctor, pp. 6 & 22.
- 10 *Hercule et Omphale* (1918. Revised 1926).
- 11 These works do not appear in standard Champagne inventories: one may speculate from their position in Morin's chronology that they were composed in the Paris years. Perhaps Champagne lost the pieces en route to Canada in 1928 or entrusted them to one of many Parisian teachers, colleagues and friends. Morin's evident familiarity is undoubtedly the product of a strong personal and professional association with Champagne both in Paris and Montreal.
- 12 *Habanera* (1929. Ms.), a diminutive piece for violin and piano, received its first performance by Morin and Quebecois violinist Annette Lasalle-Leduc in Montreal, 19 March 1929. Morin's review of this concert is featured in "Nouveau visage de la musique Canadienne" (see above).
- 13 The popular miniature *Danse villageoise* (Violin, piano, 1929. Berandol, 1949), subsequently arranged by Champagne for string quartet (c. 1936. Ms.), string orchestra (n.d. BMI Canada, 1961) and full orchestra (After 1954. Berandol, 1974.), captures the spirit of the French-Canadian country dance. Montreal critic Andrée Desautels suggests that "the two elements which are blended in the work seem to symbolize the composer's French and Irish background." ("The History of Canadian Composition", in *Aspects of Music in Canada*, p. 106.) Morin's comment regarding stylization is in reference to the fact that the *Danse* is French in its clarity and elegance. See also MacMillan and Beckwith, p. 43.
- 14 Morin's assessment is the first among the Canadian press corps to fully recognize and promote the talent and significance of Champagne within the unfolding course of Canada's musical history. His insight is confirmed by Champagne scholar Louise Bail-Milot who, in retrospect, asserts, "[Champagne's] works from the years 1918-30 [*Suite canadienne*, *Prélude et filigrane*, *Habanera* and *Danse villageoise*] are but passing fragrances; it is his later mature works that bear the mark of the composer." Louise Bail-Milot. "L'Oeuvre et les procédés chez Claude Champagne". Unpubl. M.Mus. Thesis, University of Paris (Sorbonne), 1972, p. 58.)

GEORGES-EMILE TANGUAY

From time immemorial, Canadian musicians have gone to France to perfect their musical education. It seems quite natural to Canadians to seek the necessary complement to any good education in this hospitable and rich country. Moreover, Canadians of French origin are at home in France, and their acclimatization is swifter and more innate in this country of the same language and race than it would be, for example, in Germany or even England.

For fifteen years, not only scholarship holders from different sources have been going to France to study music. A good number of independents have gone there, who must also be dealt with if we want to have an overall, complete picture of the young Canadian music movement. Mr. Georges-Emile Tanguay is one of them.¹

He began his musical studies early, initially in Quebec with Mr. Arthur Bernier² and then in Montreal with Mr. Arthur Letondal, who trained many students, among them the outstanding pianist Germaine Malépart.³ In 1912, already a good organist, he set off for Paris where he practised harmony with Félix Fourdrain and organ and piano with Louis Vierne. His improvisational aptitude quickly led him to write music. His first attempts were successful and he was immediately published by Durand in Paris.⁴ Then several short pieces for piano appeared, a *Minuet*, a *Scherzo-Valse* and a *Sarabande* that reveal true gifts. A few passages of religious music must be added to the works of that time, notably an *O Salutaris* for baritone and a *Cor Jesu* for four mixed voices.⁵

Returning to Canada in 1914, and organist at the Immaculate-Conception,⁶ he completed a *Pavane* for piano, begun in Paris, which was published by Ditson of Boston.⁷ Around 1915, he also published a nicely written *Prière* for organ at Boston,⁸ and wrote a *Romance* for violin and orchestra, hitherto unpublished.⁹

But he did not consider his studies finished and left for New York in 1918, where he worked with Pietro Yon and Gaston Dethier.¹⁰ At the end of the war, he went again to study in Paris, with Georges Caussade.¹¹ To this teacher, with whom he trained for several years, he owes this thorough knowledge of harmony which, in turn, made him a specialist of the science. Mr. Tanguay has certainly explored all known and unknown harmonic paths.

In the meantime, he went to the *Schola cantorum* in Paris, where he took the Chorale and Motet classes of Vincent d'Indy. He rewrote and published (with Roudanez in Paris) *Trois pièces brèves* for piano: *Danseuses devant Aphrodite* (for large orchestra as well), *Apaisement* (for double quintet and harp), *Hommage à Couperin* (for string quintet, clarinet and bassoon).¹² In 1924, at the time of a competition organized by the Belgo-Canadian publishing house,¹³ he presented a *Lied* for great organ which, although ranked first, did not receive a prize, unprecedented in a music competition in Canada. It is a serious and more developed work than its predecessors, in which the same delicate lyricism that distinguishes the style of this musician is found.¹⁴

This style is always refined and unobtrusive. Moreover, Mr. Tanguay's writing is not recognizable by external signs, for neither its melody nor its harmony, consonant even in innovation, are peculiar to

him.¹⁵ But it is through the lyricism, a certain fragrance, an atmosphere of timidity and tenderness that the composer is acknowledged. Brutality, be it rhythmic or harmonic, is not present in this music which, while having a clear conception and expressing itself by the most precise means, most often contents itself with indicating character or emotion. These delicate allusions are charming and if the word *musical* truly has meaning, the music of this musician is it to the very core. Little pieces like *Air de ballet* and the *Pavane* for piano, the latter already of more serious proportions, like the *Romance* for piano and violin, exude music itself.¹⁶ All of it is of an easy, pleasant, spontaneous and well-sounding conception, imbued with a charm to which we could not be insensitive. This music with caressing contours sings without worrying a great deal that the heart shows less and less in the music. It sings without seeking to resolve any problem of style and demonstrates that personality does not only fit into external signs and that sensitivity, all in all, is timeless.

But large forms are not suitable for such a temperament and this is what makes the *Lied* for organ, "in three compartments" (one does not go through the Schola with impunity!), a slightly irresolute, imprecise and difficult work that does not escape a certain scholasticism.¹⁷ The rhetoric hampers sensitivity here, which gets bogged down in the complexities of a thematic development that is unnatural to the author, and the proof seems in place that Mr. Tanguay was not born for scholarly music and great displays. For that, he lacks strength, certainty and expertise.

But we know that a sure instinct always guides Mr. Tanguay and that he knows to confine himself to that in which he excels. We regret that a great timidity, a dangerous timidity—others will say pride—

prevents him from writing as much as he should, for the pleasure of those who like his style, as for the enrichment of Canadian music.

NOTES

Sources

"Georges-Emile Tanguay". *La Patrie*, vol. 48, no. 180, 25 September 1926, p. 36.

"Nouveau visage de la musique canadienne". *La Patrie*, vol. 51, no. 24, 23 March 1929, p. 34.

- 1 For further information regarding Georges-Emile Tanguay (1893-1964), consult the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, p. 1274; Beckwith and MacMillan, pp. 218-19; Kallmann, pp. 222-23.
- 2 A pupil of Gustave Gagnon and the Parisian Alexandre Guilmant, Joseph-Arthur Bernier (1877-1944) served as organist at Quebec City's St. Sauveur Church (1892-1908) and Notre-Dame-de-Jacques-Cartier (1908-17) in the time in which Tanguay was his student.
- 3 The Paris-trained Arthur Letondal (1869-1956), cousin of Henri Gagnon and one of Morin's earliest instructors, enjoyed a lengthy career as organist and accompanist. He was an equally gifted teacher who tutored eight winners of the *Prix d'Europe* over thirty-five years. Morin's citation of Letondal pupil Germaine Malépart results from their common training (Malépart also went on to study with Isidor Philipp and gave recitals at Paris' Salle Gaveau and Salle Pleyel) and her Montreal performance which he reviewed (*La Patrie*, 14 December 1926).
- 4 Representing Tanguay's earliest compositional efforts, the Durand publications include *Souvenir* (cello, piano), *Air de ballet*, *Scherzo-Valse* and *Minuet* (piano), all penned in 1912 and released in 1913-14.
- 5 *O Salutaris*. Baritone, SATB, 1912. *Passe-temps*, 1912. Belair, 1916. *Cor Jesu*. SATB, 1912. *Passe-temps*, 1912. *L'Action catholique*, n.d.

- 6 Morin's chronology of the Tanguay appointment to Montreal's Immaculée-Conception Church is not accurate. As presented, it appears that he assumed the organist position in 1914; in fact, this did not transpire until his return from extensive studies in Paris (1925). His association with this parish lasted over twenty years.
- 7 *Pavane*. Piano, 1914. Boston: Oliver Ditson Co., 1921. *CMH*, Vol. 6, 1986. Also arranged for mid-size orchestra in 1925 and performed by the Orchestre metropolitain (CBC SMCD-5090).
- 8 Originally titled *Offertoire* in manuscript, *Prière* for organ (Ditson, 1921. *CMH*, Vol. 4, 1985.) has been variously dated from 1915 to ca. 1918. The work was completed prior to 28 April 1918, the date it received concert performance by Ernest Langlois at Montreal's Church of Saint-Enfant-Jésus (see Morin, "Musique d'orgue". *Le Nigog* 1 (May 1918)). Inasmuch as Tanguay and Morin became friends in Paris, 1912-14, Morin's attribution is likely correct.
- 9 *Romance*. Violin, harp, orchestra, 1915. Ms. Also violin, piano, c. 1920. Ms.
- 10 The Italian-born Pietro Yon (1886-1943) emigrated to New York in 1907, serving as organist at the Church of St. Francis Xavier for twenty years. Tanguay undertook organ studies (ca. 1918-20) with Yon and Gaston Dethier (1875-1958), a Belgian child prodigy at the organ and Yon's predecessor at the Xavier parish.
- 11 Tanguay returned to Paris in 1920 and was tutored by Edouard Mignan (1884-1969; organ), Georges Caussade (1873-1936; harmony and counterpoint) and Simone Plé-Caussade (1897-1985; piano) over a five-year period.
- 12 *Trois pièces brèves pour piano*: "I-Hommage à Couperin", "II-Apaiselement", "III-Danseuses devant Aphrodite", c. 1920. Paris: B. Roudanez, 1921. *CMH*, Vol. 6, 1986. Noted by Elaine Keillor in *CMH* for its "obvious Debussyian influences", this work was previously released in three separate arrangements for orchestra and chamber ensembles, as cited by Morin (c. 1920. Roudanez, 1920).
- 13 It is unclear to which competition Morin might be referring. Montreal's L'Édition Belgo-Canadienne publishing house was not established until 1925, although its founder, the Belgian horn player Louis Michiels, taught in Montreal from 1914. Subsequently acquired by Ed. Archambault in 1929, no records of such competitions organized by the firm are available. See Morin, "La Maison d'Édition Belgo-Canadienne". *La Patrie*, 7 July 1928.

- 14 *Lied*. 1924. Ms. Also arranged for string quartet (c. 1930. Ms.) and string orchestra (1947). Of the latter, George Proctor remarks, "In four-part texture with long flowing lines, it contains more evidence of contrapuntal art than many other short pieces of this period." (p. 45)
- 15 Keith MacMillan and John Beckwith write, "Tanguay's works are finely constructed in a conventional style that illustrates his devotion to the [nineteenth-century] French school from which he comes." (p. 218)
- 16 See Notes 4, 7 and 9 respectively.
- 17 See Note 14.

HENRI GAGNON

Ten, fifteen, twenty years ago... is it possible? It was in the days of the old Quebec Basilica before the terrible fire,¹ in the days of the old great organs which also had—I am well aware of it, if only to have played them—their charm and infinitely rare qualities. My teacher Gustave Gagnon was still the Basilica organist, a post that he held for over forty years. It is in this Basilica that the first beautiful music, the first fine services with great displays of choir, organ and orchestra were revealed to me. Things have always been done lavishly in this Quebec Cathedral. The services have a style there, a quality and splendour that are rarely found elsewhere.

Henri Gagnon, son of Gustave Gagnon, returned from France around 1909, where he had drawn an invaluable and extensive education near Widor and Gigout.² The Basilica, where he often played, then became for me the temple of the happiest musical revelations. Whether in concert or in the services, this young organist introduced more than one listener to the great organ music. Henri Gagnon possessed the secret to the great works of Bach, Handel, Guilmant, Franck, Widor, Gigout and many others. The *Romane* and *Gothique* Symphonies, these two Widor masterpieces most often considered impenetrable here, Henri Gagnon knew from 1910 how to make us understand and instantly love them.³ His repertoire indeed seemed dry to many, but the will of the young organist never weakened. Sure of his craft and knowing he was on the true path, he could fight against the unwillingness to understand of some and resist the misplaced admiration of a few others. But while he already displayed a wise and

sensible nature and a reflective spirit, he fundamentally had a very keen sensitivity, exposed to the common annoyances of his profession. This timid and sensitive, generous and noble young man, but of an apparently cold, indifferent and detached spirit, happened to considerably disrupt the musical customs of the old capital round about 1910.⁴ We did not suspect it the day he was seen landing from Europe, unassuming and reserved.

At that time, a bit of everything was played in the churches. Among the things perfectly suitable to the place and services, we heard things which would have best suited the theatre. Not being one of those who could compromise in such a situation, Henri Gagnon had to declare war on these improprieties. He always thought, as is fitting moreover, that church music must have a religious character, whether it is that which is sung or played at the organ. He had to fight a few years before it was understood around him that so-called religious music, that which is appropriate to the church and the services, is not necessarily more tedious, dull, or indigestible than a certain other known as secular, which certainly had too lengthy a stay in the church. The edicts of Pius X concerning church music were to prove the young organist entirely right, grumpy and too pure according to some, barely orthodox according to others.⁵

In 1915 he was appointed incumbent organist of the Basilica, his father having retired. The reforms imposed by the Pope were enforced to some extent throughout the great churches of the world. The Quebec Basilica was not slow in adopting the new code and they happened to have an organist converted in advance to the new directions and

eminently qualified to see such a reform through. Time and experience having only enhanced and matured the craft he already possessed, Henri Gagnon became one of the most fervent Gregorian music specialists in Canada from that time forward. He did not compromise. He did not embellish from the forbidden side. His plainchant accompaniments are models of sobriety, propriety, fluidity and elegance. Thanks to him, thanks also to a competent choirmaster who was a specialist in this genre, the great Gregorian recitatives are now true hymns at the Quebec Basilica. The corresponding improvisations are of the same order, and the pieces heard, whether at the processional, offertory or recessional, are always chosen with the concern for never straying from the rule. And while these works have a religious character and sentiment, they are always musically sound as well.

A musician of this value could not not be a composer at the same time. The Canadian public is acquainted with a few of these melodies for voice and piano, and notably the charming and so simple *Rondel de Thibaut de Champaigne*, that the tenor Johnson has sung and always sings across America with success.⁶ There is also, among other piano pieces, a pretty, well-structured and clear-sounding *Mazurka*.⁷

Henri Gagnon could have been a remarkable concert organist. He had and always will have marvellous gifts for it. He has given concerts throughout Canada, the United States and France, and was very much at ease with it. Opportunities for him to prove it have not been lacking and I know, several of us know how successful they were. He plays the organ with the surest virtuosity, style and taste.

We are allowed to regret that artists having extraordinary gifts for the concert do not fully devote themselves to it. But things must indeed be taken as they are and if Henri Gagnon did not dedicate himself exclusively to this game, it is likely that he wanted it that way. For circumstances, chance does not always determine fate. At any rate, knowing that he had all the necessary qualities to succeed in this difficult and treacherous occupation is enough. If he preferred the more peaceful life of his organ console at the Quebec Basilica to the hazardous and extroverted life of virtuosi, it has not prevented him from achieving fine things, albeit in the shadow of a cathedral.

NOTES

Source

"Un Grand organiste canadien: Henri Gagnon". *La Patrie*, vol. 49, no. 220, 12 November 1927, p. 36.

- 1 The Sainte-Anne de Beaupré Basilica suffered extensive damage in a 1912 fire.
- 2 Eugène Gigout (1844–1925) tutored Gagnon in the subjects which would later form the basis of his repute in Quebecois musical circles: organ, plainchant, improvisation and harmony. Gagnon also undertook organ studies with Charles-Marie Widor (1844–1937). Succeeding his father Gustave in 1915, he served as the Basilica's principal organist until 1961. See *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, p. 509, and Kallmann, *Catalogue of Canadian Composers*, p. 115, for further biographical detail.

- 3 Widor created the "organ symphony", a piece which treats the organ as a self-contained orchestra. His last two of this genre paraphrase liturgical chants: the "Puer natus est" was used in the *Symphonie gothique*, op. 70 (Mainz, 1895) and the "Haec Dies" in the *Symphonie romane*, op. 73 (1900). Exerting great demands upon their performer, these works were rarely played in Gagnon's day. His success with the symphonies was undoubtedly the product of intensive study with Widor himself.
- 4 Morin affectionately addresses Paris as "the old capital". Gagnon had studied there (1907-10) with the reputed Parisian teachers Amédée Gastoué, Gigout, Isidor Philipp (also one of Morin's instructors) and Widor.
- 5 One of the most important decrees on church music since the Council of Trent, Pope Pius' *Motu proprio* (1903) set down in law stylistic ideals for sacred works and banned that which did not conform. Among the reforms in this "new church style" were the abolition of theatrical ("worldly") music, the suppression of orchestral instruments, restrictions on the organ's role, the replacement of women with boys in choirs and the restoration of Gregorian chant and the polyphonic ideals of Palestrina.
- 6 Gagnon's most popular vocal composition, *Rondel de Thibault de Champaigne* (1916), received frequent performances by the tenor Edward Johnson (1878-1959). A native of Guelph, Ontario, Johnson debuted at Carnegie Hall (1904), Broadway Theatre (New York, 1908) and Padua's Teatro Verdi (1912) before becoming an American citizen in 1922 and undertaking a thirteen-season engagement with the Metropolitan Opera (1922-35). See *EMC*, p. 662.
- 7 The *Mazurka* (1907), originally scored for piano, was subsequently orchestrated by Maurice Blackburn and recorded with the CBC Montreal Orchestra under Jean-Marie Beaudet (1951).

JAMES CALLIHOU

While James Callihou is the latest discovery of our composers, he is no longer an adolescent as it is generally thought.¹ But making an adolescent of a man born at the end of the nineteenth century is a mild insult. It is a much more serious insult to wish that he were not Canadian. Of Indian origin by his father, French-Canadian by his mother, he might have been born in the vicinity of Montreal. Fate made him to be born near Edmonton and he now lives abroad. Thus he belongs to us through blood and spirit and had he become Patagonian,¹ he would always have to be reclaimed as Canadian. Moreover, it is an exercise of courtesy and it would be in bad taste for us to refuse him that, our musical family only able to gain from welcoming such an engaging personality as his.

Strange man, this James Callihou! Curious artist! Nothing in his youth seemed to destine him for composition. A timidity perhaps, unless it was pride; at any rate, an overly acute critical instinct prevented him for a long time from trying his hand at this perilous exercise of writing music. He was made a pianist of the kind one comes across so often, certainly in personal talent, but in possession of a craft that we sense has never been able to abide by the requirements of the great repertoire. His musical training has been that of a pianist, but composition has always secretly attracted him.

A devotee of intellectual art, James Callihou is strongly averse to these musics which claim to express poetic emotions above all else, feelings at all costs, albeit by the most crude and destitute means. His art tries to be simpler. It is enough for him that music be only

"combinations of notes or arrangements of sounds", and thus he intends to leave psychology in its place. In that, he certainly moves with the times, as he does in writing music which does not get caught up in long and superfluous preparations. All ideas—or melodies or subjects—do not always accomodate these developments that we have thought for too long to be music, and if we acknowledge the fact that simple ideas need simple writing, new ideas need new forms, etc., we are ready to accept this logical art, reduced to the essential elements, which is that of most musicians today.

James Callihou can interest us as much through his ideas on music as through his works. He is particularly of interest to us in that he seeks his inspirations from our soil. This adventurer, who lives sometimes in Europe, sometimes in America, remembers the folklore of his country from which most of his works are inspired. And be very careful, it is not a matter of harmonized melodies with him, which are so thoughtlessly exploited in our country. Instead, he has tried his hand at the composition of songs identical in spirit to those of folklore, and I cannot express how much I admire him for attaching such nutritive value to Indian and Eskimo folklore. This theory is dear to me, that we must try to form the precious amalgam with these diverse elements which will express our spirit better than the ordinary borrowings from melodic Europe to which we are accustomed. James Callihou also seems to champion this and while it is far from being a *fait accompli* in those of his works with which we are acquainted, nothing indicates it will never happen. His *Chants de sacrifice*,³ his *Eskimos*⁴ any more than his *Canadiennes*⁵ do not actually show him to be in possession of the

precious, desired alchemy and his *Aquarium* for piano is still too closely bound to the letter of the folklore.⁶

A mind as lucid as his could not confuse the genres and if it is the Indian he wants to express, he will not do it in the language of Versailles. At the outermost bounds of Alaska, Lully has never been known. But in his *Canadiennes*, a vaguely Ravelian atmosphere is encountered which has the smile of Poulenc and is not unseemly to find therein. As for his many *Eskimos*, whether for voice or piano, they have a Hungarian accent instead, to which Bartók is no stranger and, in less pronounced twists, Stravinsky. There is nothing surprising in that when we know that Stravinsky, Bartók and Ravel are his greatest enthusiasms, and that he undertook his music education in Vienna. Fortuitous influences. At any rate, *Weather Incantation* for piano is already a personal music.

This young musician seeks in his nature a rhythm, a melody and a harmony with pronounced rough edges from which, on occasion and through a stirring harshness, a charming tenderness is not excluded. A music rich in substance which does without thematic developments and contents itself with singing and prolonging the themes. A very short music and multifaceted, a non-modulating music which only avoids monotony by a miracle. But it matters little to us that all of this appears to be a mosaic work. We know all that is absent from this art and that James Callihou has not yet mastered certain techniques. Is it not enough for us that this music is lively, spontaneous, elegant and always simple? Moreover, it would not suit the author to force himself to keep to ordinary rhetoric, and whatever the weakness or overly great fluency of

his current forms, they are self-sufficient and blithely support the exquisite musical material with which they are endowed.

But his lyricism is ineffective and weak. It has no radiance and, in any case, less originality than his strokes of inspiration of rhythm and timbre. In this regard, his piano pieces are teeming with ingenious ideas that go together quite well for not being lyrical. Nevertheless, this music can have a poignant tone and I only require the *Chants de sacrifice* for proof, and this *Berceuse pour un mort* for voice and piano which, in two pages, achieves tragedy by the sole virtue of the rhythm and appropriately outstanding harmonies.'

The art of James Callihou is a bit reminiscent of Poulenc's in that, like Poulenc, he is more sensitive to the picturesque quality of the chords and melodies, to the combinations of rhythms, than to the mysteries of development. He is not yet capable of constructive logic and his art must not be dismantled or understood too much. It must be heard above all and for that, we could never lend too discerning an ear.

An intellectual art, all right, and a classic example of useless art. But definitely an art. A pure art in that it is naturally free from moral, poetic and psychological preoccupations. This art, I will say it once again, tries to play with sound and play fair. This notion is not as limited as we think, since a whole portion of Bach's work (the Bach of the *Allegros*) fully corresponds to it, since the greatest musicians of today conform to it. This clear music tries to be pleasant, dynamic. Above all, it never tries to be profound. Do not go and criticize him for his objective and do not go and reproach the young musician either for having not yet created a masterpiece. Give him time to do it. But in the

meantime, do not pass up the lesson of this art, for it serves our national aspirations just when needed, in that it seeks a musical language suitable for our soil, for our songs and dances of the land.

NOTES

Sources

"James Callihou". *La Patrie*, vol. 51, no. 41, 13 April 1929, p. 34.

- 1 "James Callihou" was Léo-Pol Morin's pseudonym as a composer, a closely-guarded secret from the general public and all but a handful of friends throughout his life and critical career. Any biographical and factual discrepancies between the fictitious Callihou and Morin are deliberate, intended as a guise for contemporaneous readers of *Papiers de musique*.
- 2 A "Patagonian" is a native of the southern parts of Argentina and Chile, east of the Andes. Morin uses this exotic example to prove the point that his music deserves recognition as a vital part of the Canadian musical oeuvre.
- 3 *Trois chants de sacrifice* (n.d.), a work inspired by Inuit and Indian folklore, was later transcribed for choir and two pianos by Morin's friend, the Montreal baritone, choral conductor and teacher Victor Brault (1899-1963).
- 4 Callihou/Morin's *Three Eskimos* for piano (n.d. Ms.) comprises three self-contained sections: "Weather Incantation" (referred to in text), "Dance Song" and "Incantation Dance". He employs Inuit incantations in this work, a medium of music, dance and speech which acts as a record of daily events or to ward off evil spirits in native culture.
- 5 The three-part *Suite canadienne* (Montreal: Ed. Archambault, 1945) premiered as *Trois canadiennes* on 19 March 1929. The "vaguely Ravelian atmosphere" to which Morin later refers accurately characterizes the work: his "Rigaudon" is modelled on the structure of Ravel's "Rigaudon" from *Le Tombeau de Couperin*

(1914-17). Elaine Keillor suggests in *CMH* that in the "Chanson", "he literally took over the folksong 'Les Fers aux pieds', giving it a modal accompaniment,...while the 'Gigue' incorporated elements of folk dance popular in Canada and of the tune, 'Turkey in the Straw'." (p. v)

- 6 There is no indication that *Aquarium* (Piano, n.d.) is extant.
- 7 *Berceuse pour un mort* (n.d.) was inspired by Inuit and Indian song. Like *Trois chants de sacrifice*, the work was later scored for choir and two pianos in an arrangement by Victor Brault. The features Morin cites in connection with the *Berceuse* are identical to those applauded as characteristic of Inuit music in the article below, "Eskimo Folklore".

AMONG THE ENGLISH

We would be amazed to see only French-Canadian musicians represented here. We might think, indeed mistakenly, that only Canadians of French descent devoted themselves to music, and conclude from it that those of English, Scottish or Irish descent abandoned all hope of ever being able to entertain the Sound Muses in crossing the seas. But apart from the fact that these "papers" do not claim to study the work of all Canadian musicians and that they even seem confined to the one province of Quebec,¹ we must also admit that the works of English-Canadian musicians are less widely known to us. Moreover, it has already been seen that the two different cultures clash to the exclusion of one another in our country.

It has become a commonplace to say that while English-Canadian musicians (we must resort to these designations at least to indicate a linguistic difference) are more educated than French-Canadians in matters of music, they have, on the other hand, less spontaneity, imagination and personality. The sentimental innocence of some English music, its "ballad" and "romance" character, are all unknown things in the music of French-Canadians. It is not that this one ignores innocence and it is perhaps a question of two innocences of the same value transposed onto two different planes, one English and the other French.

But English-Canadian music has been talked about just as much as the other for a few years. And it is rather curious to note that it takes its inspiration from folklore much more so than the French-Canadian. Circumstance, I am told. In fact, the movement undertaken by the

Folklore Festivals, trailed round by rail across the country under diverse and lavish patronage, has already yielded favourable reaction among them.² And besides, the prizewinning works at the 1928 Beatty competition are largely signed with English names. And since the majority have been published in Canada and the United States, the overall and complete catalogue of our musical output increases accordingly.

But the same severity that we have exercised in judging certain works of French-Canadian composers must apply here and particularly in the presence of Arthur Cleland Lloyd, whose *Suite canadienne* received the highly-esteemed Beatty grand prize in 1928. On the strength of such an award, we expected to be in the presence of a work if not very clever, at least somewhat original. The said *Suite*, constructed in four parts on four popular Canadian songs, does not reveal any originality. The poverty of orchestration, that of the adopted form and the organization of parts are only excused here by the youth of the composer and a certain and agreeable ability.

Another Canadian musician, George Bowles, has already displayed a more mature talent, but without much more originality, in a *String Quartet* built on Canadian tunes.³ This well-composed *Quartet* takes us back to the days of Mozart, less fine, to Haydn, less powdered, and early Beethoven, as it is said in the treatises. The afflicted shadow of Schumann and that of Mendelssohn, diminished undoubtedly because of the seventh chord of the same name, is seen to pass by furtively. I do not call up these figures here to do disservice to the work, but to prove that we are in good company. The character of the popular songs

suggesting it, it might have been agreeable to the composer to return to the above-mentioned ancestors. As for the scholastic allure of the work, it is not a serious offense. This style is nothing out of the ordinary in Canada and I consider that for lack of complete inventiveness, it is better than the usual jumble.

With Healey Willan, we are also in the presence of a musician capable of composing in accordance with the classical dictates.⁴ In addition to this knowledge of the classics, the *Sonatas* and *Quartets* reveal a skill in writing that is uncommon in Canada.⁵ And while his ballad opera, *L'Ordre du bon temps*,⁶ has shown nothing of the substance that was expected from it, we must bear in mind that a musician has the right not to feel at ease among the set themes of folklore and the feasts dear to Mr. Louvigny de Montigny and this agreeable good eater Poutrincourt.⁷ The gravity and solemnity of this musician finds excellent opportunities to express itself elsewhere without his also having to forcibly excel in the folklore genre.

Many Canadian songs have already been arranged, harmonized, cut again, recast and laid aside by different gravediggers. And while everyone is acquainted with the harmonic knowledge of Achille Fortier and the interest he takes in folklore, while we also know the encumbered, difficult but well-sounding language of Alfred Laliberté,⁸ the simple and sound formulas of Oscar O'Brien,⁹ the refined and tasteful ones of Amédée Tremblay,¹⁰ we must acknowledge the fact that their song arrangements do not circulate nearly enough to distract from all the others, mediocre and weak, that our eyes do not manage to forget. But it seems that the recent publication of a collection of Popular Songs arranged by some of

the above-mentioned musicians, published by Frederick Harris Co. (Oakville, Ontario), will considerably help to redeem the circulating errors.¹¹

The delicate and subtle talent of Ernest MacMillan, the director of the Toronto Conservatory, is not known a great deal in our province.¹² The collection of Songs, in question above, clearly contains some of the most pleasant pages of this musician in the domain of popular song. An infinitely agreeable, spontaneous, flowing, free and spacious music. A music full of taste which feels good. Beautiful music to see as well, of fine lines and harmonious proportions. *Mon doux berger* is of a delightful simplicity; *La Prisonnière à la tour* an exquisite delicacy; *Plus matin que la lune* contains sparkling harmonies, whereas *Voici le printemps* exudes a cheering and gay fragrance.¹³ We are not in the presence of entirely new designs here, nor original ideas, but in our climate the taste with which Mr. MacMillan expresses himself and the elegance of his language are almost equivalent. What is rare in our country is this musician's talent, born in Ontario, educated in part in Europe and whose style would be French through the economy of means, charm and ease of expression. He touches on Canadian folklore with infinite tact, as an artist much more than a specialist.

Thus arranged, these popular songs do not claim to be understandable to a whole nation. They are meant for the concert and there is no doubt that the specialists of this genre find plenty to renew their repertoire therein. The majority even have the advantage of being little known and disseminated, especially those which come from the collection of Marius Barbeau, the indefatigable discoverer.¹⁴ In short,

when we know that *Plus matin que la lune* has already inspired James Callihou for his *Promenade des dauphins*, and that *La Prisonnière à la tour* has inspired his *Sentimentale*, two pieces for piano, we can only have faith in folklore as a source of inspiration.¹⁵ Such a different use as two musicians as foreign to each other as James Callihou and Ernest MacMillan make of our songs—without altering the character—is both satisfying and very promising.

But Ernest MacMillan has not only written songs of this nature. He has broached diverse genres and the *Esquisses* for string quartet, inspired by the songs *A Saint-Malo, beau port de mer* and *Notre Seigneur en pauvre*, are works of an unequalled finesse in Canadian music.¹⁶ And there are also choirs for men's voices,¹⁷ where a great knowledge of vocal resources is found, I mean a sure skill, flawless taste and a fortuitous instinct for vocal balance. *Blanche comme la neige* is exquisite music.

Leo Smith has already been spoken of as a sort of enfant terrible of music in Toronto.¹⁸ I do not know his work very well, but if I must judge by a few songs, I think the harmony he employs in *La Plainte du coureur des bois* has nothing terrible about it,¹⁹ were it not for the disparity of the scale by tones, which glides through it for no major reason, and rather awkwardly at that. Nevertheless, these songs suffice to reveal in Leo Smith a sensitive and gifted musician, in whom a certain discipline and the cultivation and taste of a MacMillan is lacking.

I know nothing of the work of Mr. MacPhee, another young Toronto composer.²⁰ But if we are to believe Paul LeFlem, who was his teacher in Paris, this young man possesses a remarkable talent and it certainly seems that we are in the presence of a fledgling personality here. And

this is really the thing which might best interest and hold us, the promise of a personal talent in a country where, until now, this thing was so sparingly distributed.

There are still musicians such as Whitehead, whose *Chansons populaires* for mixed voices were awarded a prize at the Beatty Competition (1928),¹¹ there is still George M. Brewer, whom an oversized modesty has not stopped from publishing *Three Preludes* for piano, of which at least one, the second, has a nice colour.¹² And there are undoubtedly many others that we are unaware of and whose work is perhaps interesting.

In short, music is not at all idle on the English side, whether it be the land of Arthur Cleland Lloyd in Vancouver, that of Georges Bowles in Winnipeg, that of MacMillan, Willan, Smith, MacPhee in Toronto, or that of Whitehead, Brewer, etc. in Montreal. Do not lose sight of those names and be ready to favourably receive the works they prepare. At any rate, it certainly seems that, with MacMillan, we are already in the presence of a musician from whom we can only expect important works.

NOTES

Sources

"Quelques oeuvres primées au concours E. W. Beatty". *La Patrie*, vol. 50, no. 90, 9 June 1928, p. 38.

"Chansons canadiennes". *La Presse*, vol. 46, no. 58, 21 December 1929, pp. 65, 69.

"Musique canadienne". *La Revue musicale* (Paris), vol. 10, no. 11, December 1929, pp. 176-80.

- 1 Morin's expertise lies primarily in the oeuvre of French-Canadian composers; however, the issue of anglophone leaders and trends in Canadian music is one which he is obliged to examine in order to balance his coverage.
- 2 The CPR Festivals, a series of music and folk-arts festivals held between 1927 and 1931 under the auspices of the Canadian Pacific Railway, were instituted to explore the diversity of Canada's cultural resources. Of particular significance to the development of music in Canada, they represented an early attempt to promote serious composition, with indigenous folk materials as its source, by Canadians. Composers featured at the Festivals included Ernest MacMillan, Healey Willan and Claude Champagne. See the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, pp. 326-27.
- 3 George Bowles' (Morin writes "Georges") *Suite for String Quartet*, a prizewinning work of the 1928 Beatty Competition, was premiered by the Hart House String Quartet at the 1928 CPR Festival in Quebec City.
- 4 A British-born composer, church musician, organist, choir conductor and teacher, Healey Willan (Morin consistently errs in citing "Healy" Willan) was influenced in his creative efforts by Wagner, Brahms, Tchaikovsky and the Britons Parry and Stanford. His compositions number almost eight hundred, including sacred and secular, vocal and instrumental output. See *EMC*, pp. 1405-08, for further detail.
- 5 Few of Willan's chamber works are extant. The *Sonata no. 1 in E minor* for violin and piano (1916. Oakville: F. Harris, ca. 1928) is a popular, three-movement work in late-Romantic tradition, fashioned along the lines of Franck's *Sonata for Violin and Piano* (1886) and marking an expansion of tonality. The four-movement *Sonata no. 2 in E major* (1921. London: Bosworth, ca. 1923) is modelled on Handelian Baroque style, while incorporating a nineteenth-century textural density. Of the quartets, Morin is likely referring to *Poem* and the B and G minor String Quartets, all unfinished and now housed at the National Library of Canada.
- 6 Also known by its English title, *The Order of Good Cheer* (F. Harris, ca. 1928), this work was assembled from French-Canadian and Native North American folksong sources. The libretto, written by Louvigny de Montigny and later translated by John Murray Gibbon, is based on the story of the celebrations at the first permanent settlement of Port Royal in 1605, where music was performed in a cultivated social setting for the first time. The work was premiered on 25 May 1928 as part of the Quebec City CPR Festival.

- 7 Jean de Poutrincourt (1557-1615) served as lieutenant-governor of Acadia, taking command of the Port Royal (Annapolis Royal, N.S.) settlement in 1606. A man of great enterprise whose dream was to found an agricultural colony in the New World—hence Morin's allusion to the "agreeable good eater"—Poutrincourt fostered a love of music and a vibrant cultural life among the colonists. See the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. I, pp. 96-99.
- 8 Composer, pianist and teacher Alfred Laliberté (1882-1952) was a pupil and disciple of Scriabin, later opening studios in Montreal and New York to promote the Russian composer's works through courses and lectures. So abiding was the bond between the two that Scriabin entrusted selected manuscripts to Laliberté. It appears that Morin is intimating this influence, although few of Laliberté's major compositions were finished. See *EMC*, p. 711.
- 9 Oscar O'Brien (1892-1958), a Canadian folklorist, composer, pianist and teacher, maintained indigenous folklore as the central focus of his professional activities. A large portion of his compositional output comprises some four-hundred folksong harmonizations written for the CPR Festivals, of which he was the assistant music director and an active participant. See *EMC*, pp. 956-57.
- 10 In Morin's day, Amédée Tremblay (1876-1949) was a prominent figure in the musical life of Ottawa as an organist, composer and teacher: Oscar O'Brien was one of his pupils. Trained exclusively on Canadian soil, his works attracted the attention of Guillaume Couture and Vincent d'Indy. With Achille Fortier and Alfred Laliberté he was among the first to make concert arrangements of French-Canadian folksongs, hence Morin's comment regarding his compositional formulae. See *EMC*, pp. 1310-11.
- 11 *Vingt-et-une chansons canadiennes/Twenty-one French Canadian Folksongs* (Oakville: F. Harris, 1928), edited by Ernest MacMillan, was one of the anthologies of settings for voice and piano which grew out of the Marius Barbeau-inspired folksong movement of the 1920s. The arrangements by Fortier (5), Laliberté (1), O'Brien (4), MacMillan (9) and Leo Smith (2) are generally simple in their attempt to recapture the modal flavour and narrative style of the original melodies.
- 12 Although little known in Quebec of the 1920s, as Morin claims, Sir Ernest MacMillan (1893-1973) was in fact one of the formative figures in Canadian musical life. He was noted as a champion of Canadian talent and higher standards of taste and accomplishment among music amateurs and professionals alike. His own compositions, exemplified by those found in *Twenty-one French Canadian Folksongs*, initiated perhaps the first significant attempt to instill an indigenous element in Canadian music. A less favourable review of these arrangements appears in Proctor, p. 20. See also *EMC*, pp. 788-91, and Beckwith/MacMillan, pp. 136-40.

- 13 These French-Canadian folksongs are among those arranged by MacMillan for the anthology, *Twenty-one French Canadian Folksongs*. Beyond rather broad comments made by George Proctor in his *Canadian Music of the Twentieth Century*, none of the standard Canadian music references comments upon the nature and quality of MacMillan's settings. It is conceivable that Morin was the first to do so.
- 14 Marius Barbeau and Edward Sapir. *Folk Songs of French Canada*. New Haven, CT, 1925. With Ernest Gagnon's *Chansons populaires du Canada*, this compilation was the first of its kind to bring French-Canadian folksongs to the attention of the musical world, consisting of song transcriptions and commentary passed down through an oral tradition.
- 15 The Callihou/Morin *Promenade des dauphins* and *Sentimentale* (n.d.) were never published. In retrospect, Morin risked disclosure of his "alter ego" in citing for comparison works that remained in manuscript and thus unavailable for general consumption.
- 16 Reviewing Barbeau's *Folk Songs of French Canada*, MacMillan was attracted to two melodies, *Notre Seigneur en pauvre* and *A Saint-Malo*. He arranged these as *Two Sketches for Strings* (London: Oxford University Press, 1928) for performance by the Hart House String Quartet at the 1927 CPR Festival in Quebec City. His treatment shows considerable skill while acceding to the expressivity of the songs. *Two Sketches* represents the first recording devoted to one Canadian composer to be distributed on an international scale (Deutsche Grammophon, 1967).
- 17 Morin is alluding to four arrangements for the voicing TTBB set by MacMillan in 1928: *Au Cabaret*, *Blanche comme la neige*, *C'est la belle Françoise* and *Dans tous les cantons*. These settings are quite imaginative, especially his *Blanche comme la neige*, which is through-composed and considerably more extended than most choral arrangements of folksongs.
- 18 The British-born composer, cellist, writer and teacher Leo Smith (1881-1952) emigrated to Canada in 1910. Serving on the faculties of the Toronto Conservatory of Music (1911-52) and University of Toronto (1927-50), Smith was the author of several historical and theoretical textbooks which influenced a large number of young professionals. Morin's "enfant terrible" expression is a reference to a literary gift which led Smith to become Contributing Editor to the *Conservatory Quarterly Review* from 1918-35. His column was often cause for discussion among its readers for its assessments of Toronto musical life. See *EMC*, pp. 1227-28.

- 19 *La Plainte du coureur des bois* was one of two settings of Canadian folksong contributed by Smith to *Twenty-one French Canadian Folksongs*.
- 20 Morin's citation of Colin MacPhee as a Toronto composer is somewhat misleading. The Canadian-born MacPhee (1900-64), a noted composer, ethnomusicologist, pianist and writer, became a naturalized citizen of the United States at an early age and thus his entire professional career was undertaken outside of Canada. His sole contact with Toronto thereafter entailed three years of piano study (1921-24), during which time he performed his *Concerto no. 2* with the newly-founded Toronto Symphony Orchestra. As Toronto did not readily accept the exotic quality of his composition, subsequent study and professional endeavour took him to Paris, New York, Bali and Java. See *EMC*, pp. 838-39.
- 21 Born in Peterborough, England, Alfred Whitehead (1887-1974) became the acknowledged leader of Protestant church music in 1920s Montreal. His four choral settings of Canadian folksongs, the first of their kind in Canada, were arranged for a cappella mixed voices and published collectively as *Chansons populaires* (Boston Music Co., 1928). These employ a thick, heavy texture reminiscent of similar settings by Brahms. See *EMC*, pp. 1400-01, and Proctor, p. 20, for further detail.
- 22 A biographical sketch of the Montreal organist, teacher and composer George Brewer (1889-1947) may be found in *EMC*, p. 160. Regarding Morin's reference to the "nice colour" of his *Trois préludes pour piano* (Montreal: L'Édition Belgo-Canadienne, 1927), Elaine Keillor, in *CMH*, notes a pervasive Debussyian influence in the work. (p. vi)

CANADIAN FOLKLORE

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Since Canada is always in the middle of colonization from a musical point of view, its history must necessarily merge with that of different countries which have sustained and still sustain it. No one could forget that France was the great instigator in the first days of the colony, and that they gave us our folklore at the same time as the first settlers, who preserved and then varied it infinitely according to the place and circumstances.

This folklore is thus French and it finds its origins in part in the songs of the troubadours of France. But in practice, it has undergone a certain transformation in Canada, as much in terms of the lyrics as the melodies. And such songs as are found in France are sung in Canada on absolutely different tunes of Canadian inspiration.¹ The text is quite often expurgated of this piquant bawdiness that gives them such a distinct flavour in France. Yet, in spite of these scrupulous, pious and drastic cuts, they can still be heard in their original spicy versions. For it should not be assumed that, from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Canadian peasant has expurgated this crudeness and bawdiness from his language and spirit which represents one of the characteristics of his race.

On this subject, Ernest Gagnon observes in his book *Les Chansons populaires* that "several of our songs are sung in France with lascivious

variants that we do not know". And he adds: "Hence it evidently follows that some work for expurgation was performed at some point in time or perhaps imperceptibly. Those who know the history of the early days of the colony—when only exemplary men were permitted to emigrate to Canada and, according to the chronicles of the time, those whose virtue was somewhat dubious seemed cleansed by the crossing; when the whole fledgling colony resembled a vast religious community and the Huron missions recalled the age of faith of the early Church—those ones, I say, will understand that one would never have dared to sing obscene verses before his brethren in this era, and that the people could of themselves introduce variants into certain songs which have remained for us, releasing them from all immortality."¹

Although this might be a naïve and charming idea, I resist this legend that would have the early settlers, those whose virtue was somewhat dubious, being purged in crossing the Atlantic. I have my suspicions about such a legend in which bawdiness becomes obscenity, verses of love become lascivious things or immoralities and I still believe that the Canadian *habitant* was insensitive to the salty water. He never feared tough words and, in terms of language and customs, he was still in the early days of the colony as well as the eighteenth century, like the French provincial countryman of the same time. Expurgation certainly exists and it is unfortunate. Vigorous songs have been sentimentalized and softened in removing the original salt. But this is not the more or less conscious work of the peasants. It definitely came from elsewhere. At any rate, more recent songs of the eighteenth and even nineteenth centuries indicate that the Canadian countryman still used clear, virile

and unobscured words at that time and they reveal the features of customs and character very typical of our rural civilization.

But while several of these songs have varied their lyrics and even their melodies in changing use, it does not necessarily follow that they have been completely impoverished. They are the same ones which have an appeal and picturesque character in their new form, that do not always know the original models preserved in the memory of French countrymen and books of specialists. These transformations were inevitable and it was all the same that a people so imbued with songs composed some in turn. The work of the early colonists in the shanties and on the rivers had to suggest new song adaptations which they hummed incessantly as the fancy took them. While those of our fiddlers are not always the most subtle and pure in form, they are genuinely fine folklore.

In the same book, Ernest Gagnon also remarks that most of our popular songs are based on Gregorian tonality and conform quite rigorously to the dictates of the old Gregorian modes. And they are indeed the most beautiful, simple and melancholic. He essentially says that the people took the habit of singing in this mode from the church, with the result that the more recent songs, not respecting the ancient modal character and based instead on the diatonic system, assume an appearance of Gregorian chant, for example, through the simple suppression of the leading note and by ending the melody on any other degree than the tonic. Others are clearly based on the major and minor modes. They are brisk and lively, sometimes in brusque and savage rhythms, but always simple and well-written.³

They are tallied by the hundreds and the different versions by the thousands. There are songs for all the circumstances of life, for men, women, the elderly, children, lovers, drinkers, trappers, lumberjacks, ploughmen and boatmen. And as they come from France, it is natural that they might be heard in most of the countries of our ancestors' origin. A good number of them are indeed found in the French provinces, with differences known in the lyrics and especially in the melody, notably in certain regions of the West: *Derrière chez nous y a t'un étang, La Fille du Roi d'Espagne, Entre Paris et Saint-Denis*;—in Champagne: *Isabeau s'y promène*;—in Saintonge and Lower-Poitou: *Gai, lon la, Gai le rosier*;—in Aunis: *Mon père a fait batir maison*;—in Cambrésis, Angoumois, Artois and Nivernais: *J'ai cueilli la belle rose, Mon père avait un beau champ de pois, Une Perdriole, J'ai tant dansé, j'ai tant sauté, Dans ma main droite je tiens un rosier*;—in Franche-Comte: *Par derrière chez ma tante y a t'un pommier doux*;—in Brittany: *A Saint-Malo beau port de mer*;—in Normandy: *Au Jardin de mon père un oranger y a*, from which the famous *Claire Fontaine* also comes to us.⁴

* * *

Canadian folklore has come a long way since the early, ancient work of Larue in 1860, and that of Gagnon in 1865.⁵ Many investigations have been carried out and studies have been published on this subject by the Museum of Ottawa.⁶ Those of Mr. Marius Barbeau,⁷ who found invaluable collaborators in Mr. E.-Z. Massicotte and Miss Lorraine Wyman,⁸ have a particularly indisputable authority. We now possess countless numbers of interesting documents, literally and musically, that without Marius Barbeau's ardent veneration of old, everliving things, we would be less

and less sure of possessing. He has considerably increased our knowledge in this field. The book he published in collaboration with Mr. Edward Sapir for the English texts deserves the attention of researchers and the curious.⁹ The documentation in it is reliable and if the author gives preference to one version or one "tune", he has the best reasons for it. He went to the sources and we are assured that he is acquainted with all the forms the old songs of France have assumed in our country.

Mr. John Murray Gibbon is also a folklorist in his own right.¹⁰ In translating a great number of songs into English, he provided them with the opportunity to penetrate the English world where they have found a kindly response. He remarks in one of his books (edited by J. N. Dent and Sons) that not all of our songs were drawn solely from peasant inspiration of woodcutters, trappers or *coureurs de bois*. He recalls the authors of these songs, the troubadours, and he knows that the life of the first colonists was very appreciably different from that led at court in France.¹¹ We certainly know how far they were from it, those who, axe in hand, worked their way through the dense forest. But while these troubadour songs brought by the first soldiers or French colonists are "*paysanisées*",¹² so to speak, it does not mean that Canada was originally inhabited only with peasants. Mr. John Murray Gibbon makes a point of warning the reader that he "must avoid the all too common error of those who think that all French-Canadians are of peasant descent." He even says that there "was an abundance of aristocratic blood among the early settlers."¹³ We had never doubted it.

* * *

Actually, folklore is increasingly present today. A whole revival movement has arisen following the combined efforts of the Museum of Ottawa and the Canadian Pacific to disseminate folklore within the cultured public. After two years, the Quebec Festivals are already celebrated even in Europe, where we are beginning to think that this movement could indeed give rise to a more typically Canadian musical art than that of imitation which has always flourished on the banks of the St. Lawrence.¹⁴

Our folklore richly deserves the attention it is accorded, seeing that it represents, by definition, the soil, atmosphere, customs, the very essence of our country. Thus our ethnic conditions could not be examined in depth without taking its musical and poetic elements into account. But the movement does not suit everyone in that it treats our native arts a bit like curiosities or museum pieces. Without a doubt, the old "spinster"-lover of old-fashioned things is readily imagined, looking with a disproportionate admiration and through her antediluvian opera glass at humble objects made without ulterior motive by our countrymen. But these old and harmless damsels must be allowed to think that the small Quebecois peasant industry was invented only to pander to their puerility. Those who are naïve enough to believe there is only that in our country ignore so many things, all in all, that we need not set about educating them. So leave them to flock from all parts, these romantic lovers of the arts and crafts of our land, those to whom a bobbin of wool, a spinning wheel, a piece of cloth woven into a rug, a tune sung by a peasant specialist in an appropriate setting, can bring happiness. We know there is something else in folklore.

It is true that the English and Americans take more interest in our folklore than we do ourselves. These old ballads, this knitting, crocheting and weaving bore us, we, French-speaking people, townsfolk with few leisure activities, and we do not really see in it the whole art that the voluntary lovers and old glass-eyed spinsters have discovered. We are less sentimental and not yet detached enough from our soil to contemplate it with romantic eyes. We like less than others to hear these songs of shantymen, weavers and spinners, in settings with plenty of local colour and made of all pieces inside a luxury hotel. We are some to be aware of this dangerous Romanticism. But once again, the way of doing things does not matter, since something can come out of all of it.

* * *

*"Gai, lon la, gai le rosier,
Du joli mois de mai."*

These lyrics of one of the most diffused and loved of our popular songs suffice to prove their origin and that this origin is not Quebec, but rather the gardens of Versailles,¹⁵ as the author of a little fascicle destined to disseminate the precursory echoes of the Quebec Festivals remarked.¹⁶ Roses bloom later in Canada, but nothing prevents us from speaking of them ahead of time and breathing in the fragrance like just as easily recalling the court of Louis XIV even in the most remote *ranches* of the West. Moreover, these scents and memories do not cloud the senses and while it is not Versailles that is admired, it is a castle all the same, at once newer and older—is this not a modernaging tendency?—less weighted by a glorious past and destined, it is true, to a use other than that of Versailles. And yet, the noble figures who occupied it

in 1928, Champlain, Poutrincourt, Lescarbot,¹⁷ without counting the others, more disconcerting still, who take us back to the Middle Ages, Robin and Marion, have given it an unaccustomed air and I will even say a certain style. The picturesque quality of the capital agrees with these sorts of "revivals" and things are done so well therein.

For our greatest satisfaction, the Quebec Festivals seem destined to broaden the scope of their activities each year. Through a kind of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century French trouvère, troubadour and madrigalist retrospective in 1927, we were able to find out about the origins of our folklore in a concrete way. The following year, to illustrate these Middle Age origins in a more salient way yet, *Le Jeu de Robin et Marion* by Adam de la Halle was mounted, which is a sort of musical comedy and one of the first lyrical secular works of the Middle Ages. Historians tell us that the author, who lived in the thirteenth century, certainly did not devise all the melodies on which the text of this little drama is based and that he undoubtedly borrowed from the songs of his day. But it is precisely there that the interest of the revival lies. The work was performed in the version of Mr. Jean Beck, a specialist in Middle Ages song and Professor at the University of Pennsylvania who reconstructed a harmonization based on authentic documents.¹⁸

If we add to that *L'Ordre du bon temps*, a ballad opera by Louvigny de Montigny and Healey Willan,¹⁹ the prizewinning works of the Beatty Competition,²⁰ others still of lesser importance and sometimes of better quality, if we consider the artists coming from all parts to perform them, we realize the importance and scope of these manifestations which

give our musical life renewed activity round about the month of May. The significance and lustre of *Le Jeu de Robin et Marion* was certainly amplified, whose little adventure really appears a bit trifling to the folk of the twentieth century, accustomed to more solid pickings. But do not forget that Robert d'Artois lived in the thirteenth century and that the celebrated Adam de la Halle had to have amused him a great deal.¹¹

* * *

While the Quebec Festivals have not yet revealed a masterpiece, good pages have been heard therein that would even be heard again with pleasure. At any rate, it seems good that we would decide to produce a masterpiece at all costs, inspired by the Canadian soil, and it would be all the same if it were signed with a foreign or Canadian name. However, many, recalling *Maria Chapdelaine*, do not like foreigners who come to our country to create a superficial show of exoticism and they consider that calling on them for help shows our distress a bit too much.¹² This is being a little oversensitive and, for my part, I could not see any disadvantage in a foreigner giving us the gift of a fine Canadian symphony. And this symphony could certainly be Canadian without its author also being Canadian.

Be that as it may, we can be assured that as soon as a vigorous genius arises within our frontiers, he will know where to draw his personal *raisons d'être* and not to resemble anyone other than himself. That being the case, nothing tells us that his best and sole source of inspiration will be folklore of French, Scottish or other origins. On the other hand, I would not be the least bit surprised if it were just as easily Indian or Eskimo. This Indian or Eskimo folklore, very rich

melodically and rhythmically, is also from our soil and has a relatively recent introduction, titles, at the least, age on the others. It is varied, colourful, "distinctive" in substance and could definitely be an excellent source of inspiration. A musician of genius could find enough to sustain himself there, but following in the example of a Bartók or a Falla, he would have to penetrate the spirit of it and express its meaning with strength and magnanimity. Such a musician will be able to invent melodies and rhythms in turn where the same blood will course but which will be expressed just as well through the newest means.

But no one needs restrictive or unnatural theories imposed on them. In a word, let inspiration be free and do not forget that in art, the subject is not important, only the way in which it is produced matters. Do not forget that music always expresses man and nature through individuals, sensibilities and intelligence. That a work could express the Canadian nature, sensibility and intelligence would suffice for it to be recognized as indigenous, even if it did not borrow any specific element of folklore.

In the meantime, do not misuse anything, no more folklore than anything else. But learn from it. Find out about our folklore in its natural state and do not neglect the lesson of European musicians who have been able to find an atmosphere, a particular turn of spirit in similar sources there. In this way, the day that we possess a complete language, we will perhaps have something to say which will not have been debased throughout the world. Then it will be more surely a question of a Canadian musical aesthetic.

NOTES

Sources

- "Les Chansons populaires du Canada". *La Patrie*, vol. 48, no. 220, 30 October 1926, p. 38.
- "Le Folk-Lore canadien et le livre de M. John Murray Gibbon". *La Patrie*, vol. 49, no. 44, 16 April 1927, p. 36.
- "Romantisme du folklore". *La Patrie*, vol. 49, no. 56, 30 April 1927, p. 38.
- "Concours de musique canadienne: I-M. E.W. Beatty, mécène". *La Patrie*, vol. 49, no. 162, 3 September 1927, p. 27.
- "Concours de musique canadienne: II-Le Revers du billet de Mille". *La Patrie*, vol. 49, no. 167, 10 September 1927, p. 32.
- "Le Prochaine Festival du Folklore à Québec". *La Patrie*, vol. 50, no. 32, 31 March 1928, p. 38.
- "Sources d'inspiration pour une musique canadienne". *La Patrie*, vol. 50, no. 108, 30 June 1928, p. 34.

- 1 The early ethnomusicologist, Herbert Larue (1833-81), arrives at the same conclusion of the song texts in his 1863 article, "Les Chansons populaires et historiques du Canada". See Morin's "Those of Yesterday", Note 9.
- 2 Ernest Gagnon. "Préface", in *Chansons populaires du Canada*. Montréal: Beauchemin, 1925, p. 15 (footnote 1).
- 3 Gagnon, *Chansons populaires*, pp. 275-78.
- 4 Morin appropriates this detailed inventory of French folksongs by region from a more comprehensive listing found in Gagnon's *Chansons populaires*, pp. 15-17. Gagnon, like Morin, asserts, "A good number of our popular songs are still sung, with more or fewer modifications and variants, in the provinces of France." (p. 15) He closes with a corresponding citation of *Claire Fontaine*: "Finally, *Claire Fontaine*, our popular song *par excellence*, has a long-standing identity with most Canadian *habitants*: it comes from Normandy!" (p. 17).
- 5 Larue's folkloric research was initially undertaken in 1860, but was not completed until 1863, when it was published in *Le Foyer canadien*. See "Those of Yesterday", Notes 7 (Gagnon) and 9 (Larue).

- 6 Substantial research in Morin's day on French-Canadian and Native folk music was conducted by anthropologists and staff members of Ottawa's National Museum of Canada, including Edward Sapir (1884-1939), Marius Barbeau (1883-1969), Diamond Jenness (1886-1969) and Edouard-Zotique Massicotte (1867-1947). These collections, now housed in the Canadian Museum of Civilization, have made possible the study of ethnic identity, musical styles, instruments and mutual influences among the native peoples of Canada. See "Canadian Museum of Civilization", p. 203, and "Ethnomusicology", p. 424, in the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*.
- 7 One of the most active promoters of music nationalism in Canada was anthropologist and folklorist C. Marius Barbeau. A tireless seeker through field work and publication, Barbeau was the first to open up the field of scientific research devoted to French-Canadian folksong and the musical culture of the early Indian (Huron, Iroquois, Algonquin, etc.) settlements. His song collections, comprising some 13000 original texts and variants (8000 with tunes), are models of scrupulous transcription and documentation. A partial list of his published anthologies and studies appears in *EMC*, pp. 480-81. See also "Marius Barbeau", pp. 87-88, and "Franco-Canadian Folk Music", pp. 478-79.
- 8 Massicotte collected folksongs with Barbeau in Montreal and in the Trois Rivières area over the period 1917-21. The two men organized the first "Soirées du bon vieux temps", held at Montreal's Bibliothèque St-Sulpice (now Bibliothèque national du Québec) in 1919; these typically featured a repertoire of native songs, stories and dances. See *EMC*, pp. 478 and 815, re: Massicotte's concurrent folkloric pursuits. The nature of the Barbeau-Wyman collaboration is not readily ascertained.
- 9 Barbeau and Sapir, *Folk Songs of French Canada*. See "Among the English", Note 14.
- 10 A writer and publicity agent for the Canadian Pacific Railway from 1907-45, John Murray Gibbon (1875-1952) organized the CPR Folklore Festivals of the 1920s (see "Among the English", Note 2). Among his literary credits are English translations of the anthologies *Chansons populaires du Canada* and *Vingt-et-une chansons canadiennes*, compiled by Ernest Gagnon and Ernest MacMillan respectively. See *EMC*, p. 526, for further information.
- 11 Gibbon writes: "The thirty songs chosen for this collection are not, however, confined to the chansons brought from Old France. The artificial court life which so many of these reflect differs greatly from the life of the pioneer who with his axe had to clear the land for his farm and who penetrated the backwoods in his canoe among friendly or hostile Indians." ("Translator's Preface", in *Canadian Folk Songs (Old and New)*. London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1927, pp. ix and xiii.)

- 12 The flavour and connotation of Morin's self-coined verb, *paysanisées*, cannot be adequately conveyed in the English language. Derived from the French adjective *paysan(ne)*, meaning "rural" (e.g. life, customs) or "peasant" (e.g. air, manners), it may be loosely defined as "to make provincial/rustic/countrified".
- 13 Gibbon, *Canadian Folk Songs*, p. xiv.
- 14 The 1927-31 CPR Festivals, sponsored by the National Museum of Ottawa and Canadian Pacific Railway. See "Among the English", Note 2, regarding the nature and impact of these annual symposia.
- 15 Ernest Gagnon has traced the provenance of the song, *Gai, lon la, gai le rosier*, to the Saintonge and Lower-Poitou regions of France.
- 16 Gagnon, *Chansons populaires*. See "Those of Yesterday", Note 7.
- 17 The contributions of Jean de Poutrincourt to the Acadian settlement at Port Royal are elucidated in "Among the English", Note 7. Marc Lescarbot (c. 1570-1642), a poet, lawyer and companion of Champlain and Poutrincourt, spent 1606-07 in Acadia. Upon his return to France, he published a history of New France and a play, *Le Théâtre de Neptune*, which had been staged at Port Royal during that term. See Craig Brown. *The Illustrated History of Canada*. Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys, 1987, pp. 158 and 169.
- 18 The Alsatian musicologist Johann Baptist Beck (1881-1943) emigrated to the United States in 1911, assuming a teaching post with the Curtis Institute of Music, Philadelphia, from 1920. Beck was an outstanding scholar of medieval secular song: his application of modal rhythm of polyphony to the troubadour and trouvère melodies was an important contribution to the problem of proper transcription into modern notation.
- 19 See "Among the English", Note 6.
- 20 See "Claude Champagne", Note 6.
- 21 A survey of general reference encyclopedias and standard secondary sources pertaining to music does not reveal the name "Robert d'Artois", nor any potential connection he might have maintained with the medieval composer, Adam de la Halle.
- 22 Perhaps the best known novel of French-Canadian pioneer life is that of the French author Louis Hémon (1880-1913), *Maria Chapdelaine* (1912). The book, inspired by Hémon's experiences of early twentieth-century Canada, recounts the faith and courage of a people faced with the inhospitable soil and climate of Quebec's Lac St. Jean region. Although resentment surfaced over its failure to idealize French-Canadian life, *Maria Chapdelaine* became a model for

Canadian regionalist writers and, more than any other publication, promoted French Canada on an international stage. See *Encyclopedia Canadiana* (vol. 5, p. 113) and *Encyclopedia Britannica* (vol. 5, p. 827).

ESKIMO FOLKLORE

If the work on Canadian folklore assumed a position of exceptional novelty in our literature at the time of Larue and Gagnon, one can easily imagine the surprise that work on Eskimo folklore could have provoked. We are unaware of all the treasures that this latest creation of our musical literature holds, of which one of the lesser attractions is, at least, the utmost curiosity.

But how many have read the volume dedicated to Eskimo folklore by Ms. H. Roberts and Mr. D. Jenness, written about ten years ago under the supervision of Mr. V. Stefansson in the report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition?¹ Admittedly, this research volume is not intended for the general public and is instead an archival work. In any case, it is remarkable that the Museum of Ottawa, in being enriched with all these documents, has filled a void. For of all the countries directly interested in Indians and Eskimos, we were perhaps the only ones not possessing any official documents on their folklore. The Archives in New York, Washington, Berlin and Copenhagen are already quite full of substantial documents.

Mr. Marius Barbeau, who is in charge of the preservation and classification of these documents at the Museum of Ottawa, is eminently qualified to give them their deserved place in the study of our indigenous civilization. Mr. Barbeau is not a folklorist in the strictly Canadian sense of the term. As had been said in the eighteenth century, he is also an outstandingly educated "*sauvagiste*".²

Mr. Jenness recorded most of these songs with the help of a phonograph. As he said himself, such work was not always easy. If many Eskimos are still unfamiliar with white men, they are even less so with our scientific discoveries. The phonograph frightened and amused them all at once. The singers were not always patient, either.³

The author observes that there is a great abundance of dancing songs and incantations among the Copper Eskimos.⁴ Little or no hunting songs, work songs, children's rounds, no war songs at all nor love songs. Incidents from their life are put into dancing songs and that takes the place of a diary, as it were, for them. They meet in the largest local tent, which can just as easily be called a "dancing house", and there, encircled around the singer and to the sound of a drum, they hear the account of the latest events with ears and eyes. No matter that the significance of these songs is unintelligible to us. To sing and dance, a rhythmical melody and a few fundamental words to put the subject on track suffices for them.

Yet some travel songs are found therein which prove that these natives maintain amicable relations with their neighbours. But organized wars are known to be an irrelevant concept and, consequently, they do not have war songs. Love does not have much place in their affairs either, owing to the hard necessities of existence. It appears that celibacy holds no pleasure for anyone among them, hence very young marriages and, accordingly, very loose conjugal ties. The man needs a woman to prepare his food, mend his clothes and to do certain hard tasks, and the woman needs a man who provides her with food, clothing

and shelter. Bodily and facial beauty has no importance for them. They never think of it.

On the other hand, it seems that the weather affects them much more closely than beauty. They fear winter storms, synonymous with hardships of all kinds for them. Thus when they feel the bad winds coming, they gather in their tent and moan so as to appease the evil spirits which bring the storm. These are their *Incantations*, of which Mr. Jenness collected quite a large number. But there are not only incantations for calming storms. They know how to use them in all circumstances of their life, and the sun also has its own, as does death, etc.

Knowing nothing of the Eskimo language, the poetry of these songs completely eludes me. Moreover, it appears that this folklore draws all of its value and interest for us from its melodies and rhythms. These melodies and rhythms are full of flavour and life and, in this way, no musician could be insensitive to them. It will be an infinitely rich and more characterized source of inspiration for our future music than that of French folklore which obliges our musicians, as it were, to timidly make French music.

What a marvellous appeal these Eskimo songs possess! I have heard them on phonograph at the Museum of Ottawa and was deeply impressed by their haunting melancholy and their rhythmic and fatal strength. The records, which reveal these quite passionate songs to us, are a living and infinitely persuasive documentation. But Ms. Roberts has transcribed the songs of which it is a matter of discs that are not all good and that have not all been made in excellent conditions. One would

guess that the singers, amused or bothered by the device, must have added untimely accidentals to their texts and melodies of a sort that threw the ensemble off balance. The voice can ascend or descend imperceptibly, which gives the impression of astonishing modulations. The human voice is changeable. It cannot be subjected to convincing mathematical experiences as can be done to instruments. And all the more reason, the voice of these Eskimo singers which does not rely on scientific processes comparable to our own. Thus it becomes particularly difficult to establish in a peremptory way the scale of tones they use from these records, since it can be looked upon as any quarter-tone, third-tone or fifth-tone accidental, most often the result of poorly tuned voices.⁵ Nor can the value and length of the notes be absolutely specified. The same songs, transcribed by another person, would yield a different result. In this respect, the diverse transcriptions of Canadian songs made by Larue, Gagnon and Marius Barbeau can be consulted.⁶ One would find notable differences therein, even if the singer had been the same. And that is explicable. The voice misleads and the phonograph does not correct its errors. Put in slow motion, the trouble is increased again and we do not have a fine or acute enough ear to perceive all of these subtle nuances.

Ms. Roberts' work is conscientious, scrupulous and meticulous. Perhaps too meticulous. She puts the readers into a state of uncertainty through so much minutiae. Her chapter on scales is curious, but arbitrary.⁷ It is troubling to read the mention of tonality at the end of each song. It is sometimes B major, D major, E flat major, as if our tonal system was really that of the Eskimos. Ms. Roberts should not have

stopped to demonstrate the indemonstrable, although it might be the duty of the transcriber to prepare the ground for recognition. Thus I have a strong propensity to believe that Eskimos do not sing in E flat minor nor in any other of our keys (I mean they are unaware of their existence), in spite of the possible and fortuitous meeting of the same determinant accidentals. It is wrong to explain their modes in terms of our own. But once again, these songs have to be transcribed for our use. Let us just accept that Eskimos sing like us in E flat minor and modulate like us to neighbouring and even remote keys. All of that for our convenience.

In this folklore, so rich and alive in rhythm and melody, songs bursting with joy and well-being are not found, as encountered in Russian or Hungarian folklore, for example. Eskimos have ways of their own to be joyful without great excesses. Their dancing songs are often slow and of a melancholic rhythm, rather than being gay in accordance with our habits and customs.

In every other country but our own, a book so full of new material for musicians such as this would have already been the object of great curiosity. On the contrary, it seems that the musicians of the province of Quebec have the same repulsion for Eskimos as certain Americans have for Negros. But seeing that the folklorist movement is becoming more pronounced, we will one day understand the value and wealth of that of these curious Indians of the Coppermine River, in the vicinity of Alaska,¹ where a strongly characterized rhythm, melody and melancholy live.

NOTES

Sources

"Le Folklore esquimau au Festival de la chanson canadienne, à Québec".
La Patrie, vol. 49, no. 62, 7 May 1927, p. 39.

"La Musique des esquimaux au Festival". *La Patrie*, vol. 49, no. 68,
 14 May 1927, p. 39.

- 1 While with the Canadian Arctic Expedition, Diamond Jenness (Morin's "Mr. Jennings" is a consistent error) recorded 137 songs which form the basis of his and transcriptionist Helen H. Roberts' *Eskimo Songs: Songs of the Copper Eskimos* (Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1913-18. Ottawa: F. A. Acland, vol. 14, 1925). This volume in turn represents Morin's primary source of information for "Eskimo Folklore". Many of the societal and cultural customs of which he writes are in fact anomalous of the Copper Inuit, an Inupiak-speaking group which settled in the Central Arctic (Coppermine, N.W.T.) region. Consult "*Canadian Folklore*", p. 228, and the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, p. 425.
- 2 Implemented to capture the scope and diversity of Barbeau's scholarly activity, Morin's term "*sauvagiste*" has no satisfactory English-language equivalent. As a word fashioned after the French noun *sauvage* ("savage"/"indigenous person"), it may denote one who is an "expert aboriginalist", a hybrid profession encompassing anthropology, ethnology and folklore studies. See also "Canadian Folklore", Note 7.
- 3 Jenness and Roberts, *Eskimo Songs*, p. 7.
- 4 Much of Morin's subsequent portrayal of the Copper Inuit social and musical culture (i. e. the next three paragraphs) is condensed from Jenness' "Introduction", in *Eskimo Songs*, pp. 9 and 13-15. A more recent synopsis is found in *EMC*, pp. 933-35.
- 5 Jenness and Roberts, *Eskimo Songs*, p. 391.
- 6 See respectively "Those of Yesterday", Notes 7 and 9, and "Among the English", Note 14, apropos of these volumes.
- 7 "Chapter 3: Scales or Tone Preferences Among the Copper Eskimo and Other Groups", in Jenness and Roberts, *Eskimo Songs*, pp. 391-402.

- 8 Nowhere in his *Papiers de musique* does Morin appear cognizant of the fundamental distinction between the "Eskimo" and "Indian" peoples. Moreover, he clearly does not grasp the Canadian geography, particularly where the northernmost regions of the country are concerned. His error in placing the Copper Inuit "in the vicinity of Alaska" is a consistent one, also arising in the earlier article, "To Find National Meaning".

SHOTS IN THE DARK

MUSIC CRITICISM FIFTY YEARS AGO

Fifty years ago and a little more. It was around 1875, in the days of Guillaume Couture's youth, and that of the violinist Alfred DeSève.¹ It was in the days of Ducharme, Prume, Panneton, Calixa Lavallée, Sabatier, Martel, Fowler, R.-O. Pelletier, Paul Letondal, Howe, Smith, Barbarin, Ernest Gagnon, etc.² Emma Lajeunesse, the Albani that England, that subsequently all of Europe would so spontaneously and brilliantly accept, was already the pride of Canadians.³

To read all these names in the newspapers of the day, we begin to miss this period in which the word "art" or the word "music" still had a vague meaning, a somewhat incongruous flavour in our country, where artists lived a bit on the fringe. Names are found in the rare musical columns of this time which no one remembers anymore and how, indeed, could the name of the great baritone Lavoie, the ecstasy of connoisseurs, have survived?⁴ He evidently did not have the good fortune of Albani.

But what is most striking in this flashback is that things have not changed a great deal since 1875. Progress has not been made in the field of music analogous to that which we delight in noting in the other fields of culture, and we have retained a bit of this innocence, puerility and sentimentality which distinguished our masters of old. I would not want the meaning of what I am saying to be scorned. These gentle reproaches stir up sentimental feelings in me and I would not want to

forget that there is necessary evolution, inevitable change over time, and that it was heroic to be what the above-mentioned musicians were in 1875. Nor should we lose sight of the fact that if musical progress has been so slow in our country, it is because too many people have been silent. Indifference and apathy were as natural to Canadians of 1875 as they have remained to those of 1930. We seem to want to talk more today. But many, who sound high and mighty and have the same things to say as fifty years ago, incur the same public indifference. Thus we do not risk any more than then to become quite splendid in culture.

Criticism existed in that time. In 1858, Gustave Smith already offered lively and interesting columns in an Ottawa newspaper.⁵ When Ernest Gagnon and Herbert Larue explored folklore a bit later, the ground was prepared by this pioneer who knew how to stay young even in his old age, and who could favourably receive the outspokenness of Guillaume Couture in his 1875 *La Minerve* columns.⁶ Panneton gave papers full of wit and of a rare measure, and I know through my teacher Gustave Gagnon how remarkable his sensitivity and knowledge was.⁷ Around the same time, R.-O. Pelletier published an outstanding study on the organ in the *Revue canadienne*,⁸ and Napoléon Legendre a well-researched biography on Albani in *Canada musical*.⁹

Canada musical had already endeavoured to give criticism a more professional tone,¹⁰ but with Couture, this tone became clearer still.¹¹ The credit is his for having dared to be frank and even a little blunt, one of the first to do so. And to be all that, he had to have a lot of courage in 1875, to be young in any case. Needless to say, he had to know music at the same time. Couture knew music, and I do not find anywhere that he

might be mistaken about Sabatier, for example, who composed harmless *Cantatas* in honour of the Prince of Wales.¹² It even occasionally happened, oh! to be so conditioned by one's job, that he picked out elementary mistakes with much seriousness in the music of his Canadian contemporaries. The unfortunate Malard was once reprimanded in no uncertain terms for having established two octaves by parallel motion, and in the outer parts, in a *Rêverie*.¹³ Hence he concluded that such music was of minor interest and should not have come out of the files. I will add that the mistakes are there, at least, sheltered by criticism.

Couture's criticism was not only blunt and negative. It was constructive and I like the fact that there was such an example of vigour in our country's past. He even occasionally had to rise up against the lack of good manners in concerts and implore the gentlemen listeners to dress in honour of their elegant neighbours. He was obliged to reproach a listener once for sitting with legs crossed over the side of the box during a concert of Miss Titien, I believe, all the while cleaning his teeth with a penknife. Gilt-tipped toothpicks are more elegant today, and our legs can be deposited in the cloakroom.

However, little has changed. Choral or orchestral societies are born and die with the same ease as in the past, and for identical reasons. The Philharmonic Society, whose name is quite old, was dead from the start, since it already departed this life a first time in 1864.¹⁴ Calixa Lavallée, Ducharme and Prume experienced a relative fame which did not wear itself out too swiftly because they had the tact not to solicit it for too long. One great name remains radiant among the performers: Albani.

The errors of octaves by parallel motion are overlooked with a smile today, but we are forced to seriously question the work of amateurs. Music critics find themselves denied the right by poets to condemn absolutely ill-formed musical works which have no claim on attention, while the same poets soundly condemn the libretti of these unspeakable works of amateurs in the name of poetry and without contemplating rebuking them for it. (Need I say that it is a question here of an Intendant, a poet, a musician and two amateurs?) The same childishness, the same naïvety, the same tone, the same tedium as in the past. Speaking frankly, plainly and bluntly ought to be the lot of the young people. But for us, this pleasure remains a risk and we have been able to raise boredom to the rank of respectable institutions. In fifty years, we will seem much more ridiculous to our descendants than our ancestors of 1875, and we will have a lot fewer excuses to our credit. Perhaps I will be mistaken?

NOTES

Source

"La Critique musicale il y a cinquante ans". *La Patrie*, vol. 51, no. 29, 30 March 1929, p. 118.

- 1 Montreal-born violinist Alfred DeSève (1858-1927), a pupil of Jéhin-Prume, Sarasate and Henri Vieuxtemps, began his performing career in Paris under the patronage of the Queen of Spain, Isabelle II. His professional activities were undertaken in Boston as a teacher

- at the New England Conservatory and member of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. His solo appearances with the Symphony (1882-83) were among the earliest by a Canadian soloist with a major American orchestra. See the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, pp. 358-59.
- 2 With the exception of Charles Wugk Sabatier (1819-62), Gustave Smith (1826-96) and Lazare-Arsène "Messire" Barbarin (1812-75), Dominique Ducharme (1840-99), Frantz Jéhin-Prume (1839-99), Charles-Marie Panneton (1845-90), Calixa Lavallée (1842-91), Oscar Martel (1848-1924), Joseph A. Fowler (1845-1917), Romain-Octave Pelletier (1843-1927), Paul Letondal (1831-94), Howe (n.d.) and Ernest Gagnon (1834-1915) were close contemporaries. All primarily Paris-trained, these men were successful performers (pianists, organists, violinists) whose careers evolved into eminent teaching and critical roles in mid- to late-nineteenth century Montreal. Consult individual entries in *EMC* for further information.
 - 3 Through a brilliant career spanning four decades, the celebrated soprano Emma Albani (b. Lajeunesse; 1847-1930) became the first Canadian-born artist to achieve international fame. A star of Covent Garden (1871-96), the English Festivals and Paris' Théâtre-des-Italiens, she was the most sought-after and prolific singer of her time, with roles in some forty operas including *La Sonnambula*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Rigoletto* and *The Barber of Seville*. Albani's repute embraced accolades of Gounod, Liszt, von Bulow and contemporary critics, numerous honours from royalty and virtual "cult figure" status in Canada. See *EMC*, pp. 12-14.
 - 4 Proving Morin's point in convincing fashion, the name "Lavoie" does not appear in available standard Canadian music references.
 - 5 Described by Helmut Kallmann as "one of the most versatile and interesting pioneers of the second half of the nineteenth century" (*EMC*, p. 1227), Gustave Smith's professional activity encompassed music, visual arts and journalism. Although he contributed a series on music teaching to the Montreal periodical *Le Pays* in 1858 (2 February-27 May), he did not assume his post as co-editor of *Le Courrier d'Ottawa/The Ottawa Courier* until 1868, contrary to Morin's assertion. His column, "Etudes sur les beaux-arts", appeared in Ottawa's *Le Foyer domestique* (1 March 1876-1 December 1878). See *EMC*, p. 1227, for complete data.
 - 6 The first of many prominent Canadian composer-critics, Guillaume Couture wrote informed and often impassioned analytical notices for *La Minerve* (1875-77) at a time when Canadian criticism largely afforded its readers descriptive reports of musical events. See also "Guillaume Couture", Note 5.
 - 7 Montreal pianist, teacher and composer Charles-Marie Panneton authored "De la musique religieuse" for *La Revue canadienne* (November 1876 and June 1877) and several articles under the title

- "Le Colorado en 1880, suivi de quelques réflexions sur les Etats Unis en général" (1881). See *EMC*, p. 1012.
- 8 Romain-Octave Pelletier, a leading organist, composer, educator and writer of late nineteenth-century Montreal, wrote a series of texts on organ building and playing published in Montreal's *La Revue canadienne* (1881-82). See *EMC*, pp. 1028-29, and Kallmann, pp. 243-44, for information regarding Pelletier's pioneering efforts in performance and education.
 - 9 Napoléon Legendre (1841-1907). *Albani-Emma Lajeunesse*. Quebec City, 1874. The release of this maiden Albani biography coincided with the singer's earliest successes in London and Paris.
 - 10 Labelled a "Revue artistique et littéraire", the Montreal periodical *Le Canada Musical* published monthly through 1866-67 and 1875-81. Reporting news of musical interest from Montreal, Quebec, Ottawa, Winnipeg and France, it promoted young musicians Albani, Couture, Lavallée and Jéhin-Prume. See *EMC*, p. 193.
 - 11 See Kallmann's remarks in "Guillaume Couture", Note 5, and *EMC*, pp. 324-25.
 - 12 Sabatier's *Cantata in Honour of the Prince of Wales*, comprising an overture and nine vocal numbers, was performed under his baton on 24 August 1860 by two hundred-fifty singers, an orchestra, and soloists including the young Adelina Patti and Emma Albani. The libretto by Edouard Sempé appeared in print; the music was only published in part. A complete report of the concert and the unusual circumstances under which it took place is found in Kallmann, pp. 94-96. See also *EMC*, p. 1164.
 - 13 Neither the minor composer Malard nor his *Réverie* are noted in Canadian music references. Couture presumably attended a concert in which the work was performed or had the opportunity to peruse the score at greater length as critic of *La Patrie* (ca. 1879-84).
 - 14 The first Montreal Philharmonic Society was created in 1848 by R. J. Fowler with the goal of uniting French and English elements in the city. Succeeded by a choral and orchestral association of the same name in 1875, the Society achieved renown under the baton of Couture (1880-99), who introduced Montreal to works such as *Judas Maccabeus* (Handel), *Requiem* (Mozart), *Tännhäuser* (Wagner) and *Der Freischütz* (Weber). Growing deficits and a marked change in the size and tastes of its audiences led to the Society's demise. See *EMC*, p. 878.

THE DUTIES OF THE CRITIC

Criticism is not as easy as some old, well-known proverb says it is. The fact will be acknowledged that, if we should not possess a sound and sane judgement, it might be as difficult as art. But that art might be difficult is not far from being folly. That which is art, in whatever representation this may be, is neither easy nor difficult, if we accept that this little something is a gift and we either possess it or we do not. But criticism as a profession is, like art, difficult. He who wills it does not practise it soundly.

In our province, it is nevertheless believed to be a thing within everyone's capability. Everyone is more or less an art critic in Canada. Possessing a canvas, a few photographic reproductions or other of the classified masterpieces, to be able to read a novel, own a phonograph, records and a radio and go to a concert on occasion is enough for it. In that we are not different from other people, but we seem to surprisingly abuse the right to judge any old thing.

Our lack of artistic knowledge too often affords us the opportunity to take pathetic, unspeakable things seriously, while on the other hand, we do not know how to recognize the real, authentic thing, "genuine" as the English say. The easy charms of mediocrity tempt us and we give ourselves over to the lowest trash with exquisite delight. How mistaken we were, how misled we have been, and how misled we will be again!

The experience of removing oneself from Sainte-Catherine Street¹ for awhile and judging things in our province with a little distance is not done enough. From a distance, the case made of some third-rank artist

or other in Montreal is a bit laughable. Pressed to fête and applaud, we act without a choice. Our teachers are somewhat responsible for this state of affairs. They taught us to venerate superiority, but did not give us the means to definitively discover this superiority. They did not teach us the system of weights and measures for spiritual matters.

When it is a question of classified and accepted foreign personalities, it seems that admiration should be self-evident. And yet, what a lot of examples of the reverse! But when it is a Canadian in question, we go from one extreme to the other. An amateur will be made into a genius, while real personality is not recognized in the next person. But the responsibility of our teachers is mitigated through the initiative of our province's newspapers, of which some are great prodigal children. A wind of moderation undoubtedly blows every now and then in the various Canadian papers. But the fever remains intermittent. It threatens us incessantly. We get carried away at the slightest little thing. What a lot of people who were buried under grandiloquent and disproportionate praise and could not get back on their feet again! In tactless hands, praise is a much more fearsome weapon than a conspiracy of silence. Silence holds nothing as humiliating as all of these flowery coatings which are felt to be issued through any other motive than the value of art and personality. What are the most dazzling fireworks worth, if one has to die from them!

* * *

But I do not claim to try, nor to be able to define all the moral or other obligations that the solemn title of this chapter entails. Apart from the fact that it would be lengthy and treacherous, I would be afraid of

setting myself overly strict limits, or traps. But these so seemingly innocent words, "the duties of the critic", must nevertheless be contemplated and assigned a useful meaning.

The word duty has something a bit solemn about it. It implies that to which one is obliged, be it through reason, morality, law or propriety. In taking it in such a strict sense, the already rather weighty responsibility of the music critic is increased. But rest assured. Those who are charged with informing the public about musical things do not have such a serious and absolute conception of their profession. And that would undoubtedly be best, for their peace of mind.

The critic's duties are not the same everywhere. They vary in every country, in every town, according to the degree of advancement in musical culture and the prevailing tastes among musicians and within the public. And, of course, these duties may be markedly different in Montreal from those normally accepted in the large European cities, where the general public no longer needs the existence of Rameau, Pergolesi, Brahms and Mahler revealed to them, nor the names of the authors put before them in looking at the *Fifth* or the *Ninth*, *Parsifal* or *Zarathustra*, *Antigone* or *L'Heure espagnole*.² In Europe, a critic might incidentally compare a given passage of *Parsifal* to *Zarathustra* and be understood by his readers. Here, both of these works would have to be explained first, or at least made heard, which would be better still but impossible. Hence it emerges that the task of the critic is at once more rudimentary and more difficult in Canada than it is abroad.

It is a truism to say that criticism must not only be negative and interested only in the flaws of a work. In fact, it must also reveal the

beauties of the work when the work possesses them, otherwise it does not meet its objective. Indicating a work's faults is easy, as is saying that it is fine. Demonstrating the diverse reasons for it is much less so. To examine the style of a master is indeed more complicated and difficult than to say that he writes, composes or plays poorly, although that might be the only thing to say in certain cases. But here we fall into objective, scientific criticism, and this is really the last thing we will see flourishing on the enchanted shores of our Saint-Lawrence, where holding forth objectively and scientifically on matters of art would seem to be an anomaly, to say the least, to the tourist who goes "camping" in his Ford. The time for it has not come.

Subjective criticism is thus the only one which might stand some chance of spreading over our territory, even in a distant future. Moreover, it is not bad and we know that it can discover the secrets of a work, its organization, form and very essence as much as the other. It is perhaps the most true to life and appealing for everyone in that it is first of all the reflection of a personality, the expression of an opinion, a reaction, an impression, an emotion before a work of art. And the reader can experience this impression in turn if it is well-explained and described. This criticism is also able to impose an excellent leadership when it is handled with tact, courtesy and grace.

* * *

Therefore, the Canadian music critic has pressing, numerous and diverse duties. He is an inspector of the musical diet, as it were, just like everywhere else. It is he who must ensure that the public is not poisoned with adulterated products, albeit pleasant to the ear. He has to

prevent all contamination and undertake a serious chemical study of works which attract his attention and that of every listener. He is a censor, however disagreeable, pretentious, ineffectual and even ridiculous such an artistic censure may be.

One of the first duties of the critic (or censor) is to know his craft in the first place and, since it is music in question, to be acquainted with music. In a word, he must know what he is talking about. That will seem elementary. It is said that he must be good, benevolent, generous and cause the least possible grief even to the most foolhardy, to the most mediocre among the mediocre. Kindness also has limits, and is it not being generous to prevent an artist, on the threshold of his career, from going completely astray? It is still being good to unmask the imposters and charlatans and warn the public against their faults. It is being benevolent to bring certain vain fools down and to discourage these talentless amateurs who consider giving concerts without possession of the most basic skill.

The critic must not be naïve and believe everything that certain "operators", yearning for a little glory, tell him. He has the right to question these lavish engagements with which some provide themselves so gratuitously, and also these triumphs abroad to which others claim. It is true that these ones do not stand up to the dangerous fame for long, to which the curious cling and they are remembered to be perpetually like themselves, such that their mediocrity finally changes them. But systematic doubt is worthless to a critic and an excessive care to accept everything is also dangerous to him. It is here that critical instinct, judgement, observation, culture and intelligence play a role. A perceptive

critic will avoid falling into certain traps or errors where, in the final analysis, the most serious wounds he will inflict will still be to himself. Unless he experiences a particular pleasure in flogging himself, he will find an attitude other than that of being too naïve or too sceptical, a more intelligent, dignified, courageous and selfless attitude. The more he is felt to be sure of his craft and incorruptible, the more chance he will have to be heard.

But we do not want to believe in the impartiality of the critic, nor in his independence of mind. Such a moral position is unimaginable in our country, as is such a state of mind. Whether he admires or condemns, the critic will always bring about the same surprise. We will most often assume that he is misleading someone, if not that he is always mistaken himself. The public, unable to equitably judge by itself and always afraid of being deceived about the quality of the goods it is offered, will always feel wronged in one way or another. For the public, there is what is written before the concert, the newspaper releases for example, this sometimes innocent but often harmful literature, and what is written afterwards, that is, the review signed with a responsible name. We are thrown if the critic does not keep to the beaten track, if he does not endorse the customary turgidity of these promising releases where emperors, kings, princes or marshals sit enthroned, whether from the bow, throat or keyboard.

* * *

Do we really want criticism to exercise such a serious censure in our country? We do not think it necessary and claim that its absence does not prevent us from being quite well. Are we sure of it? Do we

assume that good health prevails in musical taste? On the contrary, do we not believe that disease is common and that it is, at present, impossible for most music lovers to recognize healthy music from adulterated music, which would amount in another domain to confusing a fine car and a pile of scrap iron. Everything is confused. Just as at a meal, we might at once drink milk, tea, ginger ale and an excellent wine from Burgundy, we will go with the same recklessness from Beethoven to the most dubious Jazz in a few seconds, while skimming over the latest Waltz of an illustrated Magazine.

* * *

But is this not to some extent the fault of the phonograph and radio? These machines are rather treacherous, because turning the needle a little is enough to hear, in a few seconds or so, Mozart and secondhand tunes. These intermediaries have no preference. And since all tastes are in the nature of things, it is natural that the traditional stuff is found in these department stores. The public is free to choose what they like in all of that. But they do not choose. They take what is given them, what is imposed on them. They do not know. How could they know, seeing that we have never taken an interest in educating them. So while they are not completely poisoned, their sensitivity is slowly dulled, and it is to be feared that their auditory sense might be more removed still from certain sonorous beauties than their gustatory sense from certain gourmet dishes. Nothing nor no one reveals to them the state of numbness into which they have fallen. Even the most elementary critical sense seems to have escaped people who, in the past, could have claimed to perceive certain subtleties and refinements.

Do we not think that in the one field of mechanized music, in canned music as it is called in the United States, criticism has a role to play? The omnipotence and infallibility of criticism are not articles of faith, but a skilled review would certainly find as many followers in this mechanized field as it has in the other. It is not unusual that we might await the next-day review of a recital to get some idea of what we heard, to know if we can like it. We still like to know what a given critic of Mr. or Miss Z. thinks.

So then, since the general public who buys the records and listens to the radio is not informed about the quality of the goods that they buy and consume, it falls to criticism to help and guide them. In attempting a classification of current values by genre and taste, the public would know what to choose and could extend the field of their pleasures and knowledge. Such criticism has existed in Europe for a few years and surveys have shown that the sale of fine records has considerably increased. The general public will not refuse to approach fine works and flawlessly recorded records when it is possible for them to do so. If they find their pleasure therein, they will naturally return to it. Good records are no more expensive than the bad ones, and they can bring happiness to the people and aristocracy alike.

Thus, to begin with here, it is a question of aesthetic criticism, a criticism of records which would be like a subsidiary of pure music criticism. In merely taking into account the recording and conditions under which the work has been done, the methods employed, etc., a technical criticism of records is, just like phonographic and radio devices, also desirable and necessary, but it will only come after the other, when

an aesthetic interest has touched the discophiles and radiophiles of our country. Until then, criticism will just as easily enlighten the people as those that we call the aristocracy. For ignorance not only belongs to the people. That of the aristocracy also has its depths.

NOTES

Sources

"Chacun sa vérité". *La Patrie*, vol. 49, no. 209, 29 October 1927, p. 34.

"Les Devoirs du critique". *La Patrie*, vol. 50, no. 43, 14 April 1928, p. 38.

"Critique phonographique". *La Presse*, vol. 46, no. 121, 8 March 1930, p. 57.

"Le Sens de la mesure". *La Presse*, vol. 46, no. 127, 15 March 1930, p. 73.

- 1 Sainte-Catherine Street is a major east-west retail and commercial artery in Montreal.
- 2 Beethoven, *Symphony no. 5 in C minor* (1807-08); *Symphony no. 9 in D minor* (1822-24); Wagner, *Parsifal* (1882); Richard Strauss, *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1895-96); *Antigone*; Ravel, *L'Heure espagnole* (1907-09).

WHERE IS CRITICISM GOING?

In Europe, one periodically wonders where criticism is going. Fortunate countries of intense intellectual output, where a critical review reflects and speculates on the meaning given by this one to works of art. Our country has not experienced these literary battles in which the most secret machinery of the art professions is dismantled, and this agreeable need to understand still affects us very little. Knowing that literary criticism is going quite simply where literature leads it is enough for us, and others in the same way.

If there is only criticism in the absolute sense of the word where there is material to judge and study, that is output, Canada represents a prolonged youth in this regard. However, I believe our country does not yet have criticism that merits its art. While literature seems favoured, do not forget that the greatest critics had notorious gullibilities and to have given credit to so much agreeable, innocent and mediocre literature deprives us to some extent of the taste for blindly following them. Painting and sculpture still await scientific criticism which might give meaning to our pictorial and sculptural diversions. Until then, *Ateliers*, the fine book by Jean Chauvin and the first introduction to the history of art in our province, will remain the most invaluable and elegant invitation under consideration.¹

And music? Well! Music criticism is suffering from a malaise greater still than the other arts. For while we are occasionally invited to concerts to hear Kreisler, Cortot, Rachmaninoff or Galli-Curci,² it is quite seldom that the music critic must judge a national work. The field of

Chopin Polonaises, those of Liszt and the Rachmaninoff Preludes are certainly quite vast, but besides the lack of novelty in the disclosed secrets of these works, criticism deserves no credit for rediscovering classified and catalogued values. It is undoubtedly criticism's duty to initiate the great majority of people to these public mysteries, but in this way, it only achieves disclosure and artistic popularization. It is much more interesting for criticism to seek things in the unknown that are liable to sustain its curiosity, and it is there in which its investigative work begins.

Well! It cannot be said that Canadian music criticism had such great chances to work minor miracles. Musicians offered it only slim pickings that it did not often have the right to find inferior. We know what it cost Guillaume Couture and a few others, of which I am one, to have scorned certain Canadian music stews and uncovered the weakness in them. These ones were reproached for not loving their country and not respecting the effort of the most humble. But we were mistaken. It is not because of their humility that these efforts were not encouraged: rather, it is because of their shocking pretentiousness. Is it not loving one's country to want everything in one's lot to be very good and first-rate? "*Qui aime bien châtie bien*",³ our childhood teachers said.

Despite the musicians, despite the public, music criticism tried to spring up in our province all the same, and it certainly finds itself in the presence of a little more substantial pickings now than around 1875. The current musical output is not so abundant that it might occupy the life of a critic, but the work of at least two Quebecois composers poses problems for criticism that musicians of the past never presented to those

of their day.⁴ I mean that, in seeking a freer language and inspiration apart from hollow tunes⁵ and worn polkas of yesterday, the young Canadian music furnishes criticism with a more vast and serious field of investigation. At present, it is possible for criticism to wonder what a Canadian music could be, and it has certainly guided the inspiration of a few timid young musicians almost given to despondency. Alas! the musicians too often continue to write for themselves, but if by chance they make their works heard, they have the opportunity to find not only a small public willing to listen to them, but a criticism capable of understanding their effort and following them in their investigations. And knowing that we keep a close watch on them will perhaps prevent mediocre amateurs from publicly displaying their stupidity. I know of inferior works which were not published, thanks to criticism. I know of others which, despite the praise of criticism, still unfortunately wait since trash has charms in the music publishing business that not all fine works do, being too serious for the masses, as it is said.

Criticism must thus continue its explorations. It has the duty to condemn as much as to admire, provided that it gives its reasons. It has to be merciless in the face of the void. Our musical history needs solid works, and we know all too well the danger there would be in forming a Canadian music phantom on such hopelessness, whether from 1890 or 1930. If criticism in France can indulge itself in many extravagances and distribute blessings in spades, we know that it is without risk. Serious art has its acquired place. On the contrary, our output is too slight to be granted such luxury. When it is pretentious works in question, criticism must exhibit a rigid severity. Never mind the knocks, the

aversions, the threatened daily bread. I am well aware of the fact that the stark naked truth has no charm, but also that too much sensitivity and subtlety disconcerts. A competent criticism should not be exposed to confuse Saint-Pierre of Rome and a Diamond taxi.⁶ And if it is said that this taxi is a cathedral, it has the right and duty to say no, whatever the cost. This right will never be overtaxed in our province.

NOTES

Source

"Où va la critique?" *La Presse*, vol. 46, no. 115, 1 March 1930, p. 65.

- 1 Jean Chauvin. *Ateliers: études sur vingt-deux peintres et sculpteurs canadiens*. Montréal: Louis Carrier et cie, 1928.
- 2 Fritz Kreisler (violin), Alfred Cortot (piano), Sergei Rachmaninoff (piano) and Amelita Galli-Curci (voice) were featured soloists at separate Montreal engagements in the mid-1920s. See Morin's reviews, including "Fritz Kreisler, violoniste". *La Patrie*, 23 March 1926, p. 18; "Fritz Kreisler". *La Presse*, 9 November 1929, p. 61; "M. Alfred Cortot, au His Majesty's, hier soir". *La Patrie*, 1 December 1926, p. 18; "Un Pianiste français: M. Alfred Cortot". *La Patrie*, 4 December 1926, p. 40.
- 3 The expression "*Qui aime bien châtie bien*" is a Quebecois idiom from Morin's day, translating loosely to read "If you really love your children, you will expect much from them."
- 4 Morin is referring to Rodolphe Mathieu and Claude Champagne, both leading francophone composers of the early-twentieth century and respective pioneers of atonal and folklore-inspired composition in Canada. See Morin's articles "Rodolphe Mathieu", p. 184, and "Claude Champagne", p. 194.

- 5 "*Des bluettes sans fond*", translated in text as "hollow tunes", is an archaic French expression which Marc Honegger defines as "a small literary work in a well-crafted style but on subjects of little importance and, by extension, to the music with which it is associated. The word has always had a somewhat pejorative character." (*Science de la musique*. Paris: Bordas, 1976, p. 113.)

- 6 St. Pierre Cathedral, Rome; Diamond Taxi Co., Montreal.

IN DEFENSE OF THE PUBLIC

People who profess to trying to educate the general public put forward the principle that this public must only be served with works it might understand, that is, popular music. It is maintained that if the people do not come to the large concerts, it is because music is not within their reach, because they do not understand anything about it and because, consequently, they do not derive any pleasure from it. This is possible. But it is too easily forgotten that it is hard for the majority to treat themselves to such a luxury and that they do not have the time for it. Not only is music not a basic essential for most (this is what is said), it is also too expensive. Concerts at two or three dollars certainly suit the rich folk who have spare time better than the workers that every evening finds exhausted.

Assuming that such a pleasure could be offered to the people at a quite acceptable price, is it considered then that they should only hear popular music, played "popularly"? (By popular music, I do not mean strictly peasant song or American jazz, but all music of good form spread through the masses, for example Thaïs' *Meditation*,¹ a given Chopin *Polonaise*, etc.). I do not think so. A Concert Society which sets such goals would have a short and unattractive life. On the contrary, I think the masses can take pleasure in serious, scholarly and even "modern" music, on the condition that it does not disregard the senses and this gift which is properly called charm, that it has dramatic interest, in a word, life. In this case, the general public can appreciate a page of Debussy or Stravinsky just as well as another of Bach, Grétry or

Massenet.² The scientific or historic value of the work does not interest them. Moreover, they do not have the competence required to judge whether such music is good or bad. They are sensitive to sound above all else. Only their pleasure interests them.

Well, this pleasure may be derived in the most perfect masterpieces, where we find pages which can at once satisfy the "distinguished" critics, sensitive artists and non-musicians. The main thing is to understand and choose to their taste and matching their capabilities. We must not think that the finest pages have become unattractive or inferior because they have been mercilessly debased, any more than that the popular masterpieces have lost all musical flavour for the professional folk. An artist certainly has the right to plan his meals according to his taste and stomach, and he will undoubtedly have a greater need for variety than the non-musician. But do not be more uncompromising for some than for others. Do not forget that certain dishes are of all tables. Each is entitled to its musical sustenance and must be able to readily find it.

It is dangerous to assume that the public will always like bad music by choice. Once again, they do not judge it and when they are mistaken, it is because they have been poorly educated and fed. But there is certainly a long experience of inferior music with the people (as in the highest classes of society as well) and it is knowingly produced. Bad music sells and yields a profit. The industrial stuff also had to be introduced into music.³ But we are free to lose interest in it and to find, from good music, that which can give pleasure while remaining in good taste and quality.

By virtue of their education, the people have the right to like light and popular music better than the other. They have the right to prefer operetta, dance music and all the *Meditations* on the Beethoven *Sonatas*. They have the right to drink only tea if they like, and nothing prevents the finest gourmets from appreciating a thousand other things. But why would we not give them good tea and why would they not learn to appreciate it more? Purveyors of tea or serenades often treat the people with a distressing negligence, be it in concert, on the radio or elsewhere. We must stop saying that anything is good enough for them and consider them capable of appreciating the good things as well, when they are excellently performed. This is a rudimentary courtesy.

NOTES

Source

"Défense du public". *La Presse*, vol. 46, no. 91, 1 February 1930, p. 65.

- 1 After Gounod, Jules Massenet (1842-1912) was perhaps the most popular of French opera composers, possessing a natural melodic sense in a distinctive French style. Among his best operas was the three-act *Thaïs* (1894) on a libretto by Louis Gallet. *Meditation* for violin and orchestra, from *Thaïs*, was a standard work in the French violinist's repertoire. See *Baker's*, p. 1160, and *International Cyclopedia*, p. 2260.
- 2 Grétry (1741-1813) and Massenet were noted for their "popular" melodies and dramatic expression in the operatic medium, following in French Classical tradition. When Morin first travelled to Paris (1912-14), Debussy was considered a proponent of "modern" French music, while the impact of Stravinsky's *Sacre du printemps*

rendered the Russian a twentieth-century musical revolutionary.
See "Morin: The Paris Years", p. 17.

- 3 Morin is speaking of twentieth-century innovations in broadcasting and recording technologies, which permitted the indiscriminate production and dissemination of both well-crafted and inferior works in his day.

THE CANADIAN STUDENT

Others besides myself have noted for a long time that the taste for music is real among Canadians and that gifts are not uncommon. My teaching experience leads me to believe in this current and popular opinion. But it seems that we are too readily satisfied with these tastes and gifts and do not endeavour enough to develop them. What are the finest gifts without study, without development? Whereas the taste for music is real, admit that that of study is mediocre. Of all those I have approached, the Canadian student is certainly the one who works least. But on the other hand, he is the one who wants to succeed posthaste. And since one only succeeds quickly in working very hard, he becomes disheartened and abandons a field that he could brilliantly attain with a little perseverance.

The Canadian student does not know how to study. He is not taught to work in a rational way. We show too little concern for giving him a method of study.¹ And yet, such a method is as necessary to the teacher as to the student and if the teacher goes by chance, empirically, it is not surprising that the students do not succeed anywhere. It is a fact that many do not succeed in anything as a result of misunderstood and irrational work.

Just as in elementary school (I could just as easily say in certain colleges and convents), literal memory is greatly cultivated, the young musician proceeds by repetition to learn the bits he is given. He will actually repeat a passage ten, fifteen, twenty, fifty times without either he or his teacher caring that a difficulty is overcome much faster if it is

first understood, if one knows how to approach it. The fingers are made to work and the brain not at all. We walk in the dark. Moreover, the same arduous work is redone as soon as the student is in the presence of a new difficulty. He repeats, he tirelessly repeats. He takes the longest route. He has not been taught to think or to reason, nor to reduce the difficulty in his mind before requiring an effort of the fingers. It matters little indeed that he might lose a lot of time in repeating a given passage if the effort of mind is less in this way. It must be dangerous to make the brain work. Such mechanical work is without prospects of success and, moreover, deadening for the mind.

But this primarism, this empiricism in music teaching is the price of this parrot system which governs our early development. At a very young age in school and, as I said earlier, in college or the convent, things are repeated from morning to night that will only later be understood, too late to take considerable advantage of it. I know from experience how out of place we are in trying to penetrate the meaning of these marvellous, ready-made formulas, so convenient and so unsettling, with which our memory is encumbered at school. We will also say to the student, practise scales, arpeggios and octaves. The poor student does not even suspect that he could be told how and why. And yet, would it not be fair that he knew? His progress would be five times faster and his mind developed accordingly.

It is no doubt unnecessary to understand everything from the youngest age and not everyone is lucky enough to have a scientific mind. There is in fact a great number of students who have no curiosity and who care very little about knowing what music is and what is pompously

called the "mechanics". They have never sought the meaning of this expression and vaguely sense that when we say of a student that he has the mechanics or the technique, it means that he plays very difficult things fast and loud. Nothing else.

But if certain students have faults, the teachers share the honour of having the greatest ones. They are the ones who hand out education and their knowledge is too often, alas! that of ill-informed amateurs. It is time for this amateurism to leave us. Since certain teachers let themselves sink into quiet routine, it is up to their students to reawaken them and make them satisfy their curiosities. I advise these ones (they must have demands and curiosities for it) not to do anything without our being able to demonstrate, with good reasons in support of it, that it has to be done in this manner. As may be expected, it is a question here of students who are at the age of reason and many often reach this age of reason before their teachers would suspect as much. As for the others, as for the twenty-year olds who have no concern for understanding, their teachers are right to treat them like repetition machines. They will content themselves with repeating a difficult passage fifty times that they will only marginally master anyway, whereas the former will ask for an explanation if they have not understood.

But it is then that the students become terrible and can greatly embarrass the teachers. It would be difficult to understand in any case that, in the presence of curious and intelligent students, they content themselves with the reply, "You will come across this later", thinking they are giving the key to knowledge. Well! It will no longer be time later. There are things that must be known at the right time and that

the teachers have to be in the position to reveal to their students when the first demon of understanding titillates them. But I think that, contrary to the standard methods, good students make good teachers in Canada. They are the ones who complete the education of most teachers. It is one school like another.

NOTES

Source

"L'Elève canadien". *La Presse*, vol. 46, no. 63, 28 December 1929, pp. 61, 65.

- 1 See also "The Poor Relation", p. 143, and "Solfège", p. 277, regarding Morin's advocacy of an educational methodology in Canada.

SOLFEGE

It has been talked about for quite a while, but much more than a year and it is as if a new world had just been discovered. We are finally understanding that solfège is at the root of musical teaching and that those who do not have a thorough knowledge of it cannot claim to have a serious or complete education. At last it seems that we are trying to institute the teaching of music upon somewhat more rational methods. It appears that we have finally understood the advantages there are in beginning an education with the beginning, be it in matters of art or grammar. I never doubted that the bright light would inundate us one day, and our country must not be indicted too much for having waited for the coming of the twentieth century and some thirty years more to understand such a simple thing. We are well aware that in certain matters, the experience of others cannot prevail for us. So we have had to undergo certain negative experiences in turn and in the country itself.

Well! We have been on the wrong track in the field of music education. The cart has been put before the horse. Moving the horses round will not be as simple as one might imagine. It will require quite an education. An enormous part of the population will go on obstinately believing that the old empirical method was the good one, the best one, and that it is unnecessary to change, that our forefathers did the same and they were happy, etc. Overcoming such stubbornness and ignorance will be the most difficult task. For the great majority of people, children will always have to play the piano, the violin or sing at first. There is no need for them to know exactly what they are doing and for their mind

to take part in the celebration. They will not be willing to accept that it goes for music as for the sciences and grammar, and that the methods which seem good and rational at college, the convent or university can be equally so in the Conservatory. We will certainly come round to the idea; we are so young and so full of promise.

But little as it may seem, the teaching of solfège officially exists in the province of Quebec. There is nothing that would prevent even a foreigner from assuming that this branch of music is a part of primary teaching. After all, the existence of a provincial Inspector for the teaching of solfège must mean something. Solfège is officially taught only in very few schools in our province, in teachers' training colleges and some fairly new foundation houses, apart from the classes of the National Monument which go back to the days of our childhood. It is taught in a serious way in Beauceville, Sherbrooke and Saint-Jérôme, just as in certain colleges; it is talked about in certain convents; but there is no trace of it to be found in the elementary schools, which would nevertheless be its proper place. For the time being, we have to content ourselves with the way things are and we must trust that solfège will soon be installed where it should be: with children. It is even to be hoped that it might be a compulsory subject like the catechism, grammar, geography, physical education, art and certain manual tasks.

* * *

For most people, solfège and singing are two identical things. Now, the teaching of solfège is not the teaching of singing. Make no mistake. Singing in solfège, in music in general, is a means of expression like the piano. Music is the result. Singing tunes for hours and memorizing them

solely by repetition is not learning to sing or learning music: it makes mechanical parrots. It is no more to know music than to repeat a given tune learned after a thousand repetitions. For that matter, this way of doing things is a dangerous exercise, like any mechanical action which is not understood by the intellect.

If the intellect's part in this domain is acknowledged, it will be understood that a child will only be able to sing or do tonic sol-fa musically if he has understood the ordinary elements of musical language, if the musical signs represent sounds and not only words for him and if, in short, his education has been based on the musical cultivation of the ear. Music must be the language of musical sounds for him, and this language has to be placed at the root of his musical education. So then, just as we would not dream of teaching reading to a child who does not know any word of the language and who cannot talk, he must not be taught music if his ear is not musically trained and his musical memory is non-existent. The development of the ear first, music being attributed to sound. The words are only there to denote these sounds. They are not an end in themselves. Thus, it is not enough that the child might be able to recognize the figuration of sounds on the blackboard. He must hear these sounds.

I will be told that it is not desirable to make musicians of all children. It is indeed a question of that! All children learn to write and study grammar for it, etc. Not all are writers or poets, though. They learn to calculate and not all are mathematicians. They take a little chemistry and philosophy later in college and are no more all chemists and philosophers.

Is music not a subject like another? In all, and in the opinion of several scholars, it even seems to be "the simplest and most easily assimilated by children". Thus, if the practice of such a subject has only produced failures in certain cases, it is because the methods were wrong or improperly applied. It is certainly not contemptible to comprehend the most basic things of this art which constantly accompanies us in life and which, for the most part, remains the mystery of mysteries.

Professional folk have already recognized the method of André Gédalge on this subject, the learned pedagogue who was inspector of musical teaching in France and who put forward the result of his research and experiences in books.¹ His book, *L'Enseignement de la musique par l'éducation méthodique de l'oreille*, is full of intelligent, rational and easily assimilated doctrines which have already produced marvellous results. Pending new and better evidence, this method must be looked upon as the only good one to impose in Canada where, as a matter of fact, there are not always old prejudices and routines to overcome in musical teaching, in a word, where the ground is virgin. I even consider that the preservation and dissemination of certain empirical methods, still applied in our province, will be harmful to the development of solfège and that it will be the surest means of deterring the official and definitive installation of solfège in the elementary school. An appealing, musical, rational and sensible method, not treating children like repeating machines but like thinking and feeling beings, capable of reflecting, will convince the most sceptical.

The installation of solfège in school is not something that will happen in a year. Apart from having to prepare not only the general opinion but also our leaders for it, a teaching personnel will have to be created as well. Moreover, elementary school teachers should be in a position to offer the children the elementary knowledge which will prepare them to receive a more complete education from specialized teachers. This teaching will be all the more effective because the student will have been prepared beforehand for the language of sounds. This is not at all extraordinary, nor very difficult. But it must all be excellently done. The results depend on the methods implemented as much as the way in which they are implemented. It is not a matter of vague daydreaming there. Even children of average intelligence, taught according to an intelligent method, would be capable of really surprising our country's musicians.

So once again, take advantage of the example given to us by foreign countries. Let us not persist in always trying to discover everything by ourselves. There is a certain experience of the world of which there is no need to relive on our shores. Take it ready-made. Denying ourselves this experience is a little foolish and a lot of time is wasted in this game.

NOTES

Sources

"Le Solfège". *La Presse*, vol. 46, no. 46, 7 December 1929, pp. 65, 68.

"Le Solfège à l'école". *La Presse*, vol. 46, no. 52, 14 December 1929, pp. 61, 65.

- 1 The eminent French pedagogue, composer and music theorist André Gédalge (1856–1926) was appointed professor of counterpoint and fugue at the Paris Conservatoire in 1905, tutoring many of the leading French composers (Schmitt, Ravel, Milhaud, Honegger). His selection as inspector of the provincial conservatories (1906) brought him into lower-level music education and produced his *L'Enseignement de la musique par l'éducation méthodique de l'oreille* (Paris, 1920).

THE PRIX D'EUROPE

The Prix d'Europe now has an importance in our province which should not be ignored.¹ When the Quebec government granted a sum of three thousand dollars (since brought up to five thousand) to the Quebec Academy of Music in 1911,² in the name of "encouragement to music", few suspected that this foundation would take shape with our institutions to the extent that its abolition would today seem awkward.

Since 1911, the competition returns every year on the same date, almost at the same hour, and this regularity is indeed a distinctive feature of the reliable institutions. The duties of the State, like those of the Quebec Academy of Music, are relentless. One must not complain about it, but should on the contrary be delighted that music can take advantage of this beneficial institution.

The governments of America have these generous gifts which dazzle the European people. Moreover, these scholarships are thought to be only a small portion of what the governments award the arts. It is presumed that in the Americas, Academies and Art Colleges are at the State's expense. I could not affirm it, but I believe that the Quebec government is the only one, not only in Canada but in America, which maintains an Art College out of pocket. Is this to set the tone for other governments or to simply assert that we are old-France? Be that as it may, it is more convenient for the State to assume the costs of education in a country.

The question of the usefulness of the Prix d'Europe has often been raised. It must have been resolved in a satisfactory fashion, seeing that

its usefulness is henceforth recognized by everyone. It is understood that further study in Europe is necessary for young Canadians who have set their sights on the musician's craft. I almost believe—which would point to a rather unforeseen spirit in our country—that it has become essential to take advantage of a brief stay in Europe, at the very least, otherwise we risk falling into a state of inferiority.

As for those who believe that the Prix d'Europe has not yielded the good results that were expected of it, we can respond that we perhaps did not expect better than what it has provided. It is unnecessary to be so very demanding of scholarship-holders who have not yet had time to "fulfill" a career and who have not always found the most basic aid and encouragement upon their return here. Nor should the juries be so gratuitously reproached for committing gross error in their choice. That is too easy. We should instead have faith in the juries, at least on principle if not by conviction. That a jury is mistaken proves nothing against the Institution in practice. We could just as well agree that the "prizewinner" did not keep his promises and only deem him, by way of mild reprisals, an innocent victim of the jury.

* * *

Eighteen scholarship-holders have already gone to prime themselves in the European science. That is a number, and these other recipients whom the Secretary of the Province appoints directly, independent of the Quebec Academy of Music, must be added to it. I am already troubled to learn what has become of all these scholarship-holders who have crossed the seas and asked generous France for the knowledge necessary for the genesis of their talent and the precision of

their personality. But I have retreated from the overly delicate, treacherous task which requires personal considerations, sometimes unpleasant and awkward when we ourselves are involved in things.³

And yet we will have to come round to it. For conclusions must be drawn from all of it. Are we on the right track, or the wrong one? Are we finding our way along a definite line? Are we taking all the necessary precautions vis-à-vis the competitors and future recipients? Can we ascertain through a concise examination and reliable information that the scholarship-holder at least offers guarantees of a career, brilliant or not? Do we attempt to find out what the competitor's personality resources are, if we are even in the presence of a particular talent, mind or temperament?

A reliable institution which so closely concerns the State owes itself and the public as well a kind of official assessment. We need to know where we are in it and, if we have made progress, we must know to what extent. These self-examinations partake of a noble moral discipline and, after eighteen years of operation, such an account would be full of lessons. But only later, once the declining years have come.

I am well aware that no personality is formed at sixteen years of age, nor at twenty, and that it is difficult to anticipate everything and infinitely easy to be mistaken. Nevertheless, there are things which do not deceive: this fluent, flexible, spontaneous way of doing things, which does not come entirely from the teacher, but belongs exclusively to the student, even at sixteen years of age; a certain cast of mind, curiosity, general knowledge, superior intelligence and a vibrant and lively sensibility are such indications. One can know many things and have

only mediocre talent. This respectable and honest mediocrity should be feared in a country so scantily furnished with fine minds as is ours. But even yesterday, personality was certainly not far from being considered a vice.

The task of the Prix d'Europe jury is not easy. But it would become easy if a principle were made not to judge so much on the right or wrong notes, in the double and triple sense of the word, as on the promises of the talent and, above all, on the certainties of the career. We have to be able to sense the personalities preparing themselves among the flood of candidates. We must look toward the future and be wary of these good students already at the end of their development, who are a high-risk business as well.

In Canada, we have too much need for "affected", superior people, to liberally encourage uncertain careers doomed in advance to half-success, complete failure or routine. We must no longer take the risk in the future of being educated by people such that nothing prepares us for and guides our higher education, apart from their skill in art to avoid harmonic errors or in this other to play properly, but only for a few close friends, whether the piano or the throat.

In short, we need people who might do something, artists who might carry out an act which is not merely one of those who expect it "to pass off", so restful, so irresponsible and so negative. For in a country lying fallow, these ones are perfectly useless.

* * *

It would be logical and natural that the number of scholarship-holders would have progressively increased each year. That their

preparation was better and more complete would also be logical and natural. This Prix d'Europe already being old, they no longer have the excuse today of being hurriedly prepared and, consequently, of not having taken solfège, a harmony class, in a word, of possessing only half the required knowledge. I do not share the secrets of the powers that be—or, if you like, the jury members—but I am led to believe by all that I observe around me that the preparation is not as good, as complete as hoped, nor much better than in the beginning. Instrumentally and vocally, it is adequate, sometimes good, even very good. I know that the voice, that gifts for the instrument are the basic essentials in this case, and the rest is acquired with study, unless one is perfectly incapable. But would it not be better that the scholarship-holder set off equipped with all this customary knowledge which is of the domain of education? Once in France at twenty or twenty-five years of age, he will need a tough spirit to fill the void in his music education. The recipients certainly go to Europe to learn something. But would they know all that can be taught in Canada, they would still feel inferior vis-à-vis their comrades of the same age in Europe. It is a question of general knowledge. Many, alas! complete their overseas stay without even realizing the inadequacy of their musical and general knowledge. To play and sing, and not always exceptionally well, is enough for them. It is a little on the short side.

The Quebec Academy of Music cannot be held responsible for such a state of affairs. As long as we do not create what is lacking in the general training of our musicians in our country, a rational and scientific music education, it will be the same. We would not think of leaving

future doctors to pick up bits of knowledge from anyone, without method or discernment, just enough to make the sick die afterwards. Once again: the teaching methods recognized as correct and necessary for medicine and the fine arts in general are also correct and necessary for music. This truth is staring us in the face, it is so obvious.

Thus, until we have all of that, the applicants to the Prix d'Europe will prepare themselves haphazardly, as they are able. They will have to be taken as they are. Between two candidates, of whom one has no particular talent for an instrument, but is good at solfège, harmony and general history, and another marvellously talented with an instrument, but who is weak in the adjacent branches, the jury will be right to prefer the latter. For this one is weak because he has not had the possibility of further study, most often for want of money. It is only later, when education is within the reach of all the applicants, without exception,¹ that the task of the judges will become truly delicate. By virtue of their infallibility, they no doubt have our complete confidence in advance.

* * *

Leaving for Europe is easy. Returning from it is much less so. Whoever he may be, the scholarship-holder sets off full of promises. Two years later, he must return a teacher, otherwise his talent or the competence of the jury who chose him among several will be questioned—and this time dangerously so. This is being a bit too quick off the mark. A personality is not made from start to finish in two years, even in France. It requires more time and exceptional gifts.

Back in Canada, everything is left to be done for the young musician. Recipients of the other branches, fine arts, sciences, arts, etc., can hope to find any official situation which might shelter them from the early financial difficulties. There are schools and universities to take them in and use them. They are warmly welcomed and, at the very least, we have faith in them.

The young musician is not in this situation. Instead, the return of the first scholarship-holders was so perilous and difficult that several of them subsequently expatriated themselves. Certainly, we now have a Conservatory in Montreal open to young energies,⁵ and Quebec possesses a School of Music.⁶ But yesterday? We have lost Wilfrid Pelletier, Hector Dansereau, Ruth Pryce, Graziella Dumaine, Conrad Bernier,⁷ and we will lose others still. If we have lost them, it is not that they have all abandoned the career, like Ruth Pryce and Graziella Dumaine for example, it is incredibly that we have not been able to keep or interest them. Moreover, we would not have been able to procure situations for them such as the ones found in the United States by Wilfrid Pelletier and Conrad Bernier, to mention only those.⁸ They must not be blamed for having preferred a sure future in the United States over the dubious chances of the native land.

But the young have a fault: in returning to the country with innovative ideas and ways to proceed in a hurry, they disrupt the ordinary customs. Instead of encouraging them and making the most of this enthusiasm and optimism which are the most precious qualities of their youth, we question their knowledge and deny them that invaluable thing called experience. Do we not know that this famous experience to

which we attach so much credit is only acquired with time? One is not an old man at twenty-five years of age! Furthermore, a certain experience is not the prerogative of old age alone and I know of some who possess as much and even more at thirty years of age, more real and alive, than the old men known as experienced and established.

This fear of youth is a little foolish. How can a country be so young, so full of audacity in certain fields, and in art so old French provincial? In that, we are very scarcely American. Courage, young scholarship-holders, you do not know what pleasant surprises the musician's craft in a virgin land has in store for you. In turn, the discovery has to be made.

NOTES

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"Le Prix d'Europe: II-Sa Valeur et son utilité". *La Patrie*, vol. 48, no. 92, 12 June 1926, p. 38.

"Le Prix d'Europe: V-Le Retour des boursiers". *La Patrie*, vol. 48, no. 109, 3 July 1926, p. 34.

"A Propos du Prix d'Europe". *La Patrie*, vol. 49, no. 91, 11 June 1927, p. 38.

"Le Prix d'Europe". *La Patrie*, vol. 50, no. 96, 16 June 1928, p. 38.

"Le Prix d'Europe". *La Patrie*, vol. 51, no. 94, 15 June 1929, p. 37.

- 1 The annual performance competition, the Prix d'Europe (est. 1911), offered a study grant to its grand-prize winner. Competing on the piano, Morin was the second recipient of the award in 1912. See the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, pp. 1079-80.
- 2 Founded in Quebec City in 1868 by Ernest and Gustave Gagnon, the Académie de musique de Québec aimed "to promote an interest in music, raise the level of musical studies, and bring order to them by establishing programs, setting examinations, and granting diplomas and certificates in all branches of music teaching." (*EMC*, p. 2) The AMQ began to administer the Prix d'Europe, with substantial subsidization from the Quebec government, in 1911.
- 3 Morin alludes both to his own receipt of the Prix d'Europe scholarship (1912) and to his extensive coverage of the competition as music critic for *La Patrie* (see sources above).
- 4 See "*In Search of a Canadian Music*" regarding Morin's call for a public conservatory accessible to all potential musicians.
- 5 The Conservatoire national de musique in Montreal (est. 1905). See "Those of Yesterday", Note 24, and *EMC*, p. 312.
- 6 The Ecole normal Laval at Quebec City. Among its eminent instructors were Ernest (1858-77), Gustave (1877-1917) and Henri (1917-33) Gagnon.
- 7 All recipients of the prestigious Prix d'Europe, Wilfrid Pelletier (1896-1982; piano, 1915), Hector (Jean) Dansereau (1891-1974; piano, 1914), Ruth Pryce (violin, 1920), Graziella Dumaine (voice, 1916) and Conrad Bernier (1877-1944; organ, 1923) could not find sufficient opportunities and support from the Canadian public and institutions to sustain themselves as musicians. Their careers were variously undertaken in Paris, Vienna and the United States. See individual entries in *EMC*.
- 8 Pelletier, in particular, was introduced into New York's musical and operatic circles by Pierre Monteux, gaining invaluable exposure to the renowned Caruso, Farrar and Toscanini. Commencing his professional life as a rehearsal pianist with the Metropolitan Opera, he would ultimately become one of the organization's regular conductors (1929-50) and a frequent guest conductor for Toscanini's NBC Orchestra. See *EMC*, pp. 1030-31.

IN FAVOUR OF JAZZ

Jazz is not a new subject for anyone, apart from certain musicians to whom it seems a *crime de lese-musique*¹ to take an interest in it and to try to find out what goes on in the depths of this dark orgy. And yet this is a matter for serious thought and this subject is known to have given rise to a whole literature as much in the United States as in Europe. To respond to it with a kick or a push with the hip which would claim to be a "Charleston" movement while saying: "That's music?", appears to me to show much irresponsibility and, at the same time, much ignorance.

Why would jazz not be music? In the domain of sounds, can a clear distinction be established between what is music and what is not? At any rate, jazz has, if not claims to authentic nobility in the way in which our traditionalists understand it, then at least claims to great age. In America, this art form goes back well before the emancipation of the Negroes in the Southern states. Reports in fact speak of the way in which the Negroes treated the "spirituals", even around the middle of the nineteenth century, and all the distinctive features which characterize the current jazz style are found therein: the sliding of the voice, the very timbre of this voice and its rhythms. As for its African origins, one must go back several centuries. For that which is from Europe, Lionel de la Laurencie² recalls that when the king of the violins, Dumanoir,³ composed a serenade made up of such peculiar instruments as a *claquebois* and a small *rossignal* full of water,⁴ around 1648, he had already made jazz. Chicago and New Orleans have claimed paternity to various forms and this

birth is placed a little before the war of 1914 in our time. But there is still too much confusion there and the place of birth should matter less to us than the actual thing.

Yes, jazz is music. This does not mean that all the pages adorned with this title are the best in the sense in which we understand, for example, a Beethoven symphony. But this way of handling sound and using the manifold noises which partake of modern life, this use of the bare rhythms corresponding to the precise needs of our muscles, this simple and savage organism without parasitic ornaments, is music in that the impression derived from it is rhythmic, melodic and harmonic. Jazz impresses through its collections of sounds and the rhythm, and it is because of that that it is music. Furthermore, jazz would be pure music in that the sounds have no other *raison d'être* than their rigorous sonorous value, without any poetic or literary content. What, indeed, does the thought enclosed in a literary phrase matter to the Negroes! They transform and turn this phrase upside down without concern for the meaning it contains. This need for Negroes to softly make their joy or torpor heard is a part of life and is found in all eras of humanity, today as yesterday.

But jazz is often confused with the few dance steps to which it gave birth. Jazz is indeed a dance music and if this is its most certain origin, well! it is a noble origin all the same, albeit derived directly from the darkest cabarets. Moreover, dance has imposed rhythms and even forms on music since the beginning of time. The gavottes, minuets, sarabandes, forlanes, rigaudons, gigue and pavaues were fashionable dances. In the days of Romanticism, Chopin returned the mazurkas,

waltzes and polonaises to favour and no one dreams of discrediting these works today because they are dances. Was the Seventh Symphony of Beethoven not, in the words of Wagner, "the apotheosis of dance"? And what will one make of all the ballet music of yesterday and today?

When the influence that this art has exercised on musicians as varied as Stravinsky, Ravel, Messager, Milhaud, Auric, Wiéner or Délage, Hindemith, Butting or Gruenberg is considered, it cannot be doubted that this joy of rhythm has already played a considerable role.⁵ European composers do not make jazz like Chopin, Liszt or Brahms did, under the influence of gypsy music, *Rhapsodies* or *Waltzes*, but it is not beyond the realm of possibility that something as distinct might come out of it which expresses our mechanical need to live and its frenzy. In any event, if no masterpiece has yet established the jazz formula and even if it is never to exist, one need not conclude from it that it is necessarily wrong.

Jazz is an already "happening" and even "passé" thing. America has produced an authentic music in this domain, originally drawn from the Negroes and perfectly assimilated by American musicians such as Berlin, Youmans, Gershwin, author of that incredible *Rhapsody in Blue*, Donaldson, Kern, Pinkett, Turk, etc.⁶ This rhythmic magic is completely of our time and gives neither too flattering nor too troubled a picture of our agitation and animal *joie de vivre*. This popular art intimately partakes of our present life and expresses us in all that we have that is mechanical, temporary, superficial, empty and at once profound. And besides, of all the popular arts of today, it is the liveliest and America can claim paternity of it with pride.

* * *

If there is jazz and jazz, a distinction must also be made between the purveyors of jazz. There is certainly a very large difference between an orchestra such as that of Paul Whiteman and the most ordinary jazz band of our most ordinary cabarets.⁷ Nothing must be confused, nor should it be assumed that the music of jazz derives all its value from the sumptuous orchestrations with which it is adorned and the spicy performances from which it benefits when it is in the hands of as subtle a pyrotechnist as Whiteman. Whiteman's orchestrations are certainly works of art in themselves and his performances marvels of fluidity, precision, balance and plenitude. It is easy for this musician, who even gives a certain rhythm to silence, to set off a splendid fuse from the least page. But when he places his talent and prestige at the service of works such as some *Rhapsody in Blue* or other fancy, we are well aware that he does not work in an absolute vacuum. If it is easy for him to demonstrate that jazz is not only a "diversion of frenzied Negroes", to make use of a piquant expression of Emile Vuillermoz,⁸ it is because jazz is truly something else as well, be this something infinitely small.

At any rate, the instrumental disorder that we take pleasure in adorning with the name of jazz in our country often has nothing to do with *genuine jazz*. The latter can be refined, delicate, moving, sorrowful, melancholic, sweet or ironic, sometimes humorous, and it need not be criticized for its colour, which I may add is already rather reserved.

It is in good form to scorn jazz and even cinema in society, to find these musics and the pranks of the great Charlie Chaplin too "commonfolk". You will forgive me for not lapsing into this fashionable

snobbery and for liking jazz and Charlot. For that matter, it does not prevent me from likewise enjoying the music of Debussy, that of Wagner and Bach, or even the so-called liturgical music, since, for varied reasons, one may like his father and mother, brother and sister, cousin, friend, an arc light or a kerosene lamp, a Rolls-Royce and a Ford, an Underwood and a Corona, blue and yellow, Tristan and Pelléas, Montreal and Paris, etc. All tastes are natural, and it is not being deprived to like jazz, which corresponds in an absolutely exact way to what we are in the habit of regarding as music. Denying it is pointless and in poor taste. It costs nothing anyway to grant it a place within the domain of sounds and the musical aesthetic, that which does not in any way disturb the masterpieces which are at certain times our most perfect love. To those who tell me that it is not a serious art, I reply that it suffices for me that it might be an art, even a minor one, and only popular. It remains indisputable that when it is of high quality, even the most impervious musicians find an intense pleasure therein.

NOTES

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"Pour le jazz". *La Patrie*, vol. 49, no. 249, 17 December 1927, p. 38.

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- 1 The French "*crime de lese-musique*" has no satisfactory English-language equivalent: it may be loosely interpreted as "a crime in which music is violated". See *Dictionnaire général de la langue française au Canada*. Québec: Belisle, 1954, p. 702.
- 2 The French musicologist Lionel de la Laurencie (1861-1933) founded the Société française de musicologie in 1917, subsequently serving as its president (1924-26, 1932-33). A prolific scholar, his main area of study (French music from Lully to Gluck) was the basis of a skilled submission to Lavignac's *Encyclopédie de la musique et dictionnaire du Conservatoire* (Paris, 1921-31), from which the present Dumanoir reference is derived. See *Grove's*, vol. 10, pp. 385-86.
- 3 Guillaume Dumanoir (1615-97) joined the "24 violons du roi" in 1639 and from 1645-56 was balletmaster to the pages of Louis XIV. He succeeded Louis Constantin as *Roi et maître des ménétriers*, a post held until 1668. See *Grove's*, vol. 5, p. 710.
- 4 The French "*rossignal*" is known in Dutch as the *Nachtigaal*, an earthenware whistle of the Low Countries. When the player blows the water-filled "nightingale" he may, by varying pressure, produce trills and effects reminiscent of nightingale and blackbird song. The "*claquebois*" was a wooden precursor of the xylophone.
- 5 Described by André Hodeir as "the 'jazz epoch' in Europe", Stravinsky's *Ragtime pour onze instruments* (1918) and *Piano Rag Music* (1919) opened doors to compositions in the jazz spirit, including Hindemith's *Suite '1922'* (1922), Milhaud's *La Création du monde* (1923), Ravel's *Piano Concerto in D for Left Hand Alone* (1929), Louis Gruenberg's *Jazz Suite for Orchestra* (1930) and Honegger's *Concerto for Cello and Piano* (1930). Excellent historical and analytical perspectives may be found in Hodeir's *Jazz: Its Evolution and Essence* (New York: Grove Press, 1956), pp. 245-66, and David N. Baker's *New Perspectives on Jazz* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), pp. 9-24.
- 6 Morin highlights the best-known and most influential composers, songwriters and performers of American concert music from Tin Pan Alley to his own day: Irving Berlin (1888-1989; *Alexander's Ragtime Band*), Vincent Youmans (1898-1946; *Tea for Two*), George Gershwin (1898-1937; *Rhapsody in Blue*), Walter Donaldson (1893-1947; *Yes, sir, that's my baby*), Jerome Kern (1885-1945; *Ol' Man River*), Ward Pinkett (1906-37; trumpeter for Jelly Roll Morton) and William Turk (1866-1911; ragtime stride bass pianist). Consult individual entries in *New Grove American* for complete data.

- 7 Early jazz commentators considered Paul Whiteman (1890–1967) an enemy of that music despite his use of Bix Beiderbecke, Jack Teagarden and other jazz musicians as improvising soloists. While implementing varied jazz elements, he regarded its specific devices as one of many resources available to him. Moving from jazz orthodoxy onto an individual path, Whiteman's influence raised playing standards in popular music and helped to establish jazz and related forms as listeners' music. See *Grove's*, vol. 20, p. 388.
- 8 Emile Vuillermoz. *Musiques d'aujourd'hui*. Paris, 1923. The music critic Vuillermoz (1878–1960) was a conspicuous figure in French cultural life for more than a half-century due to the bulk and scope of his journalism and his efforts on behalf of contemporary music. Instrumental in planning the Société musicale Indépendante (1909), he became editor-in-chief of the *Revue musicale* in 1911 and contributed prolifically to Parisian and international journals. See *Grove's*, vol. 20, pp. 88–89.

OF MUSIC BOXES AND THEIR DANGERS

Talking machines, created yesterday, have already invaded the whole world. The smallest country house virtually lacks the basic necessities of life if it does not have its phonograph, which is a bit like the large wardrobe of the Norman countrymen. These small devices have even very seriously ousted the piano in the salons of the middle class, furnished today with an indispensable "chesterfield", a phonograph and a radio, little docile and talkative monsters which, with the turn of the dial, inundate us with jazz or Beethoven symphonies.

The atmosphere is saturated with their sonorities. We hear music at every hour of the day today, in spite of ourselves. It is in the air and adapted, moreover, to fit any situation. Even in the most complete solitude of the country, their infallible and inevitable sonorities will suddenly be heard. End of peace and tranquillity. End of vacations without music. For records are tireless, and it seems to be their fate to disseminate coarse or sad tunes, while others called "fans" disperse undesirable airs on bald heads. And when their voice is not powerful enough, the radio loudspeaker in the middle of the park, beneath the bandstand which is dying out because of mechanization, can make them heard by a thousand, twenty-thousand people. Benevolent modern science will supply the most remote corners of the earth with noises and sounds, even where one would not want to hear music for anything in the world.

But while these devices are at times indiscreet, noisy and irritating, they do have abundant qualities. The phonograph itself is assuming an increasingly appealing form and a more interesting option will be derived

from it in the future. At any rate, it is a long way from the new devices, whose tone is reliable, to the piercing and aggravating machinery through which we were introduced to musical mechanization. While today's devices are not perfect, according to the implacable ones, they transmit an assuredly more pure and homogeneous sound than in the past.

Empirical recording processes from the beginning of this industry have given way to precise scientific procedures and a sure output. Electric recordings take place from a distance, in special factories or laboratories where the sound is purified and rid of its ordinary interference. But a certain, necessary convention must still be taken into account in this field, as is done for that matter in photography and cinematography. It is a matter of transposition, in one case as in the other, rather than genuine and true-to-life reproduction. Moreover, it is for this reason that the phonograph is no more a musical instrument than the radio. But nothing tells us that we possess the last word in this art of recording and reproduction of sound. Science sees to flawless imitation.

The machinery is excellent, but fine records, or art records, are not the only thing, as it is said. An industry like that could not have subsisted on art records alone, on those which are said to be enjoyed by the *élite*. The masses and the middle class consume more than the *élite*. However, was it necessary that these standard usage records be manufactured without care and skill? This authentic junk with which the market remains saturated represents a sorry setback to the fine resonant disk.

For the most part, these machines are used only for dancing and propagating the delightful, sweet and pointless *Charleston*. It seems to me that they have a broader and more general purpose. They are also acquainted with the purest masterpieces of music and, thanks to their intervention, it is in future possible for the lover of Saint-Chrysostome, for example, to treat himself to exquisite pleasures at home.¹ Records are in fact invaluable for the listener, removed from the large centres, who wants to study music other than in books of criticism. This machinery is not averse to art.

* * *

Radio sets are no more the enemy, although their connections with music might not always be appropriate and the most "distinguished", and although they consent to serve as a vehicle for the lowest musical expressions, performed by the most questionable performers. Scientists like Edison have undoubtedly said that the radio only succeeded in distorting sound and that there was no similarity between the sound transmitted by the device and this same, originating sound. It is impossible to agree if the normal and still unavoidable convention of photographic distortion is not accepted. But just as the phonograph has made the most of the discoveries of radiotelephony,¹ it is not inconceivable that a new application of electricity and new methods will yield an improvement in radio which brings it closer to sonorous truth.

Yet this device is interesting, such as it is. Despite all its present weaknesses, one may hear musical works whose character is not completely distorted. It is thus an excellent means of propagation, diffusion and music education. Dangerous as well, as will be seen.

So these devices can do music education an invaluable service. Musicians would have to be interested in the best way for that, instead of losing interest in them. They follow the progress of science, which equips us each day with increasingly sophisticated devices, at an uncertain pace. Instead of approaching the engineers and appliance manufacturers, they keep to themselves and do not realize that this mechanization is gradually transforming their life and social condition. Rather than refusing to have anything to do with these devices, should they not use them as a means of action? It is not from their ivory tower, where cries and tears have no effect on the soundwaves, that these so very pure and sensitive recalcitrants will reform the application of the radio. Musical mechanization is gaining more and more importance in spite of them, and we know that a radio concert has a completely different influence than that of a recital in a concert hall. By very virtue of this influence, the greatest musicians must therefore use the radio for the dissemination of their art and doctrines. Their influence is necessary to combat the poison that is distributed therein each day. They can prevent the indoctrination which threatens us by introducing a little musical hygiene in all these dangerous dispensaries that most of our transmitters are. They must protest against the banality of daily programming, against all these groupings of three or four sound mongrels which claim to be symphony orchestras, against all these empty ballads to bring tears to the eyes which one would be ashamed of singing before the public. They have to deal ruthlessly with wealth as much as with mediocrity. For be it lunchtime, teatime, dinnertime or during the evening, sounds of a questionable colour and taste put us in a mood

which could quickly lead us to the most dangerous excesses. Music softens moral standards, a fanciful proverb says. Mind that bad music does not exacerbate them.

NOTES

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- 1 John Chrysostom (344-407), the saint and patriarch of Constantinople, was a great preacher of the Greek Church. None of his liturgical hymns have survived; however, several *troparia* and *stichera* are directly inspired by his homilies. See *Grove's*, vol. 4, p. 380.
- 2 Radiotelephony utilized a special apparatus and radio waves without connecting wires to transmit sounds between widely removed points.

THE INEVITABLE CODA

The form of this book, the order and diversity of the different chapters which make it up, do not imply the usual conclusion here. And yet, in publishing such a "carnival", I think it is necessary to find one in it for the sole purpose of guarding against the overly easy accusation of nationalism in the strict and limited sense of the word.

Do not misunderstand the meaning of my suggestions when I recommend folklore to Canadian musicians as a source of inspiration. I would not try to defend an art form composed exclusively of superficial particularities and Canadianisms, as is the case of a whole literature without a future and without character, already condemned by writers such as Robert de Roquebrune, Marcel Dugas and Victor Barbeau. But folklore can be a means of "personalization" for us as it was for others.

A means and not an end in itself. With such a limit centred solely around local colour, an art which must know the broadest humanity would be insignificant. Illustrious examples enlighten us, if only those of Bartók and Falla and, furthermore, we should not forget that Bach, Beethoven, Wagner and Debussy owe nothing musically to their respective folklore and are at once universal and national. We know that there is not only one way of being so and that while the language, objectively, is the same, there are Russian, Spanish, French and German inflections, particular inflections which constitute so many differences. Not having age-old traditions, folklore will help us find a distinctive accent and also free us from foreign servitude, from imitation of Dubois as well as of

Debussy and Stravinsky, no more desirable, which will perhaps arise tomorrow. It is not a matter of "re-nationalizing" ourselves, but quite simply of becoming "naturalized". Once our inflection is found, nothing will prevent us from being universal through the expression of the human element.

I think I have shown enough taste for folklore other than that of French origin in our country such that I will not be accused of expecting to hear a repetition of French art in Canada. As a matter of fact, the day a man of genius wants it, Indian and Eskimo folklore will add a distinctive timbre to our music that that of French origin would not guarantee it so completely. But once again, a means of naturalization, a search for a characteristic accent here. Once saturated with the Canadian nature and spirit, the one who will best express it will do it unconsciously. Any exclusively cold and conscious attempt will be indicative of duty and work, and art will be absent from it.

Irresponsibility, thoughtlessness, flippancy and apathy have led us enough. In music as in all fields of intellectual activity, we must impose discipline and definite goals upon ourselves. It seems that this might be the best way to get somewhere. Do not fear culture. Be prudent, be wise, be strong, be free but also resolute. We will be quite able to forget this reasoned application towards the possession of a personal craft and inflection the day the wholehearted and great creations come.

THE END

Paris, March 21, 1930

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