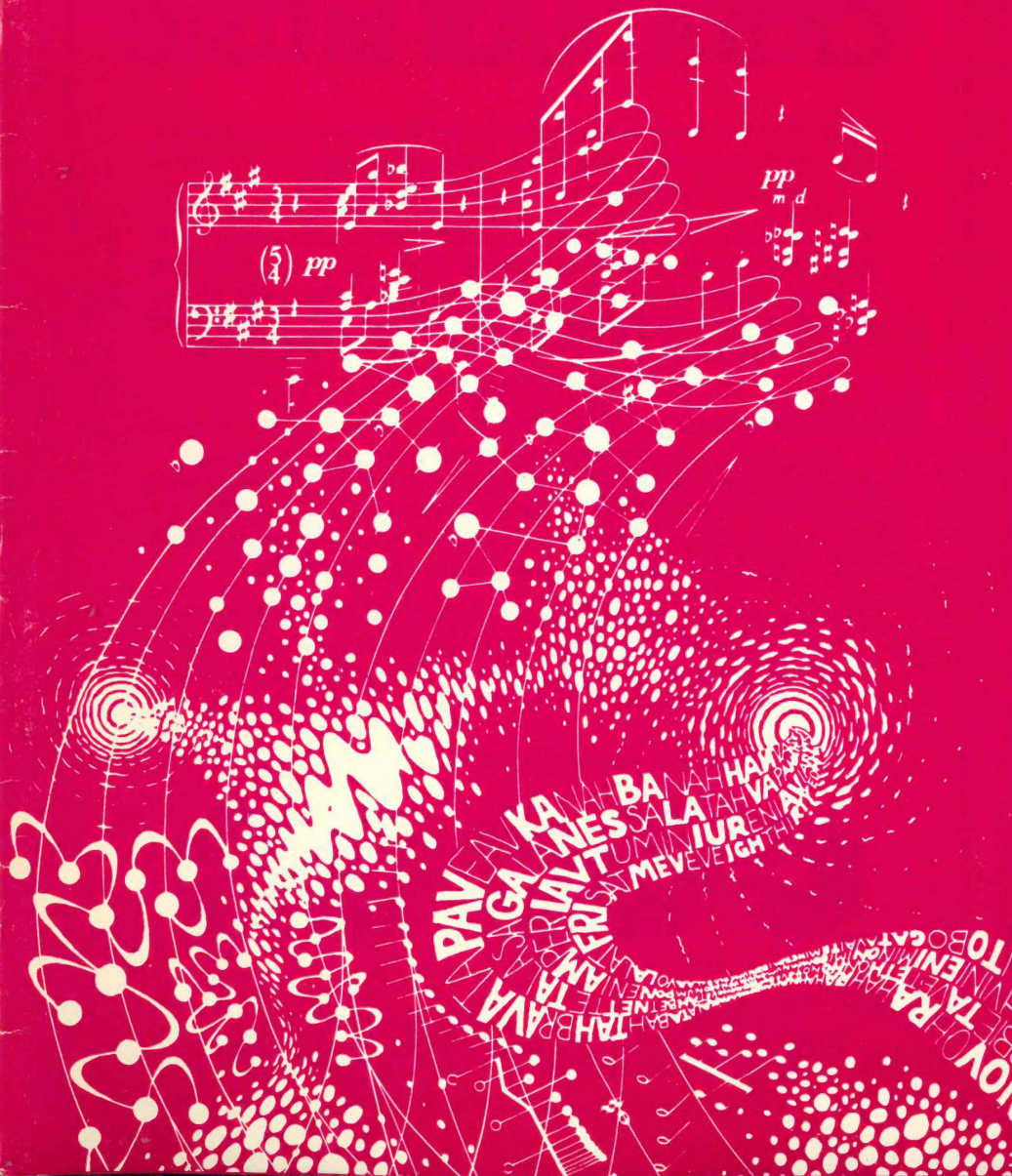


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NEW MUSIC CONCERTS

ROBERT AITKEN / artistic director

THREE WORLD PREMIERES:

Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji

Bruce Mather

James Tenney

NEW MUSIC CONCERTS gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council, the Municipality of Toronto and the Toronto Arts Council.

Walter Hall

February 2, 1980 at 8:30 pm



*P*ROGRAMME

JAMES TENNEY

Three Indigenous Songs

Fiona Wilkinson, piccolo
Jennifer Dowden, piccolo
Robert Aitken, alto flute
Russell Hartenberger, perc.
Robin Engelman, percussion
Claude Engli, tenor tuba
James Tenney, conductor

JOHN BECKWITH

Upper Canadian Hymn Preludes

John Tuttle, organ

BRUCE MATHER

Ausone

Robert Aitken, flute
Victor Martin, violin
Fujiko Imajishi, violin
Rivka Erdesz, viola
Douglas Perry, viola
Peter Schenkman, cello
Coenraad Bloemendal, cello
Peter McAllister, guitar
Donald Wilson, guitar
Erica Goodman, harp
Charlotte Moon, harp
Bruce Mather, conductor

INTERMISSION

KAIKHOSRU SHAPURJI SORABJI Cinque Sonnetti di Michelangelo

Henry Ingram, tenor
Fiona Wilkinson, flute
Alexandra Pohran, oboe
James Campbell, clarinet
David Carroll, bassoon
Victor Martin, violin
Fujiko Imajishi, violin
Joseph Pepper, violin
David Zafer, violin
Rivka Erdesz, viola
Douglas Perry, viola
Peter Schenkman, cello
Coenraad Bloemendal, cello
John Taylor, double bass
Marc Widner, piano
Robert Aitken, conductor

BRUCE MATHER

Musique pour Champigny

Janet Smith, soprano
Patricia Harton-McCord, mezzo
Janice Taylor, contralto
James Campbell, clarinet
George Stimpson, French horn
Robin Engelman, percussion
Erica Goodman, harp
Marc Widner, piano
Robert Aitken, conductor



HOWARD LEE, stage manager
JAMES MONTGOMERY, electronics

NOTES

JAMES TENNEY (b.1934)

Three Indigenous Songs (*premiere*)

Commissioned by NEW MUSIC CONCERTS with a grant from the Ontario Arts Council.

The Three Indigenous Songs (Dec.1979) are based almost entirely on certain acoustical properties of the words in their texts (see overleaf), although these are not performed vocally. The first song is borrowed from (my transcription of) an early blues singer, Jaybird Coleman, recorded in Alabama sometime between 1927 and 1931, with vocal stanzas interspersed with harmonica 'choruses'. The second is based on an approximate transcription of my own voice reading Walt Whitman's poem Kosmos, and the third is derived from an earlier setting of mine for mixed chorus of Jerome Rothenberg's translation of an Iroquois Indian poem.

The vocal sounds in each of these have been translated into instrumental form by assigning the fundamental frequency (or pitch) of each vowel to the tenor tuba, and that harmonic (of the fundamental) nearest to each of the three major formant peaks for that vowel to the alto flute and piccolos. Consonants are simulated by the two percussionists using wood-blocks (for t,k,p), tom-toms (d,g,b and th,f,h), and suspended cymbals (s,sh). For the harmonica choruses in "No more good water", and for the antiphonal phrases in "Hey when I sing...", the instruments are used freely, of course.

Historically, it would seem, music was born of speech (indigenous: from indu, endo within + the root of gignere to beget, bear), and melody was merely "honeyed words". The perceptual space induced by Three Indigenous Songs is meant to be somewhere near the threshold between music and speech. Occasionally, perhaps, some semblance of the underlying texts may actually be heard.

James Tenney

I

Well there's no more good water
 because the pond is dry.
 I walked down to the river
 then turned around and 'round.
 Just get fishin' in the water
 and my blues is down.
 Got a head full o' fool'shness
 my baby got a ramblin' mind.
 Hey pretty mama
 tell me what have you done.

II

Kosmos (Walt Whitman)

Who includes diversity and is Nature,
 Who is the amplitude of the earth, and the
 coarseness and sexuality of the earth,
 and the great charity of the earth,
 and the equilibrium also,
 Who has not look'd forth from the windows the eyes
 for nothing, or whose brain held audience with
 messengers for nothing,
 Who contains believers and disbelievers,
 who is the most majestic lover,
 Who holds duly his or her triune proportion of
 realism, spiritualism, and of the
 aesthetic or intellectual,
 Who having considered the body finds all its organs
 and parts good,
 Who out of the theory of the earth and of his or her body
 understands by subtle analogies all other theories,
 The theory of a city, a poem, and of the large
 politics of these States;
 Who believes not only in our globe with its sun and moon,
 but in other globes with their suns and moons,
 Who, constructing the house of himself or herself,
 not for a day but for all time, sees races, eras, dates,
 generations, the past, the future, dwelling there, like
 space, inseparable together.

Hey when I sing these 4 songs Hey look what happens

Hey when I sing hey it can help her
 yeah it can yeah it's so strong
 hey when I sing hey it can raise her
 yeah it can yeah it's so strong
 hey when I sing hey her arm gets straighter
 yeah it can yeah it's so strong
 hey when I sing hey her body gets straighter
 yeah it can yeah it's so strong

JOHN BECKWITH (b.1927)

Upper Canadian Hymn Preludes

This work for solo organ with taped concrete sounds was commissioned by, and first performed by, the Ottawa organist Ewen McCuaig. The premiere took place in the fall of 1977 in Ottawa. The work has since been broadcast by the CBC and played by other performers both in Canada and the U.S.

The tunes on which the five preludes are based were taken from two collections: Mark Birnham's The Colonial Harmonist (Port Hope, Ont., 1832) and Alexander Davidson's Sacred Harmony (Toronto, 1845). The titles and the tunes are 'Child of Sin and Sorrow', 'Canada', 'Port Hope', 'Resurrection', and King's (sic) Street'.

Although the Preludes stand on their own as separate short pieces, the prelude, interludes, and postludes made up of concrete sounds of the period are intended to evoke images of early Canada, the environment in which the tunes would have been heard and sung originally. The tape part was realized in the University of Toronto's Electronic Music Studio with the assistance of Dennis Patrick.

The composer says he regards the work as in some aspects a companion to the choral Sharon Fragments (1966), which also employs early Ontario hymns.

BRUCE MATHER (b.1939)

Ausone (*premiere*)

Written in Paris between August 1978 and March 1979 while the composer was Visiting Professor of Analysis at the Paris Conservatoire, Ausone was commissioned by NEW MUSIC CONCERTS and is dedicated to Robert Aitken. It is my second work in quarter-tones, the first being Régime Onze, Type A (1978) for two pianos, and draws its harmonic organization from the theoretical systems of the Russian pioneer micro-tonal composer Ivan Wyschnegradsky (1893-1979).

Following a suggestion of Robert Aitken, there are three versions of Ausone, one for solo flute, a second for flute and two harps and the third version which shall be heard tonight. The flute plays the quater-tones by means of alternate fingerings. In the case of the other instruments, however, the complete scale of twenty-four tones to the octave is obtained by tuning one of each instrumental pairs down a quater-tone.

The title is taken from "Château Ausone", one of the greatest wines of St. Emilion.

Bruce Mather

KAIKHOSRU SHAPURJI SORABJI (b.1892)

Cinque Sonnetti de Michelangelo (*premiere*)

Most or all of these five sonnets were written by Michelangelo (1475-1564) in his late 50's for his young friend Tommaso Cavalieri. They deal with typical themes of Michelangelo: love, beauty, age, passion in life and art.

Sorabji mostly ignores the sonnets' Petrarchan format. His setting does not emphasize its rhyme scheme, meter, or major formal divisions. The music is also unusual for several other reasons. First, it has very few recurring themes or motives: it tends to proceed in long waves of phrases of elusive melodic shapes. Second,

the rhythmic diversity in simultaneous lines is often extreme. Third, although the harmony has focal pitches, it is not tonal in the usual sense. Chords constructed in thirds, for example, are used more often for colour than for function.

The Sonnets, which were written in 1923, are performed without pause. They are scored for male voice, four single woodwinds, nine strings, and piano. The voice required is a rare combination of tenor and baritone; the piano part is highly ornate and recalls some of the keyboard writing in Sorabji's solo piano pieces and piano concertos.

Tonight's performance is the first anywhere of any of Sorabji's orchestral music. Thanks are due the composer and his friend Alistair Hinton for providing a copy of the manuscript score.

Paul Rapoport

BRUCE MATHER

Musique pour Champigny

(The composer was awarded the 1979 JULES LEGER PRIZE for this work)

Written between February and July 1976 at the Château de Pompairain near Poitiers where I spent a sabbatical year, Musique pour Champigny was commissioned by the *Collectif Musical International de Champigny* of which the *Ensemble 2e2m (Etudes, Expressions des Modes Musicaux)* gave the first performance in Montreuil (near Paris) on March 3, 1977 under the direction of its music director, Paul Mefano. The subtitle (or rather censured title) Clos de Vougeot was later applied to a work for the percussion ensemble, *Nexus*, but those who are familiar with this great red wine of Burgundy will find a correspondence in the textures and colours of Musique pour Champigny.

Of the eight performers, the clarinet and the three voices, soprano, mezzo soprano and contralto, have a

more soloistic role than the horn, piano, harp and marimba. The voices are treated as instruments, without text, as in a vocalise.

Bruce Mather



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THE COMPOSERS



JAMES TENNEY

Born in 1943 in Silver City, New Mexico, James Tenney attended the University of Denver as an engineering scholarship student before transferring to music at the Juilliard School of Music in New York. He studied piano there with Eduard Steuerman combining it with studies in conducting and composition. His teachers of composition have included some of the most innovative creators of this century, i.e. Carl Ruggles, Harry Partch, Edgard Varèse and John Cage.

James Tenney has numerous recordings to his credit and is the author of many highly-regarded articles and papers on theoretical and technical subjects. He is the recipient of many awards, among them two grants from the American National Science Foundation for research into musical acoustics (Yale University) and a Composer Fellowship grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1976.

Mr. Tenney is currently Associate Professor in the Music Department at York University, a post he has held since 1976.



JOHN BECKWITH

A distinguished writer, composer, pianist and former Dean of Music at the University of Toronto, John Beckwith requires little introduction to the followers of contemporary music in Canada. John Beckwith's dedication to the performance of new music through his long association with the Canadian League of Composers, is well known.

Born in Victoria, B.C., Mr. Beckwith's musical education took place in Toronto and in Paris where he studied with the late Nadia Boulanger. A prolific composer, his works cover the musical spectrum from educational pieces, chamber and choral music to large-scale works for orchestra and theatre. In 1972 he was awarded the annual Canadian Music Council Medal for his contribution to music in Canada.

His Quartet, composed in 1977 for the Orford Quartet, has been recorded by them and will be released shortly on the Melbourne label. In 1978 he completed the full length comic opera The Shivaree, to a libretto by James Reaney. The work will be produced in Toronto next season.



BRUCE MATHER

Born in Toronto in 1939, Bruce Mather studied composition with Godfrey Ridout, Oskar Morawetz and John Weinzweig, piano with Earl Moss, Alexander Uninsky and Alberto Guerrero at the Royal Conservatory. After obtaining a Bachelor of Music degree at the University of Toronto he went to Paris for three years where he studied composition with Darius Milhaud, analysis with Olivier Messiaen and counterpoint with Simone Plé-Caussade. Subsequently, he obtained a Master of Arts degree from Stanford University and his doctorate from the University of Toronto in 1967.

Since 1966 he has taught at McGill University and has been an active performer of contemporary music, often in two piano repertoire with his wife, Pierrette LePage. In 1978-79 he was Visiting Professor of Analysis at the Paris Conservatoire.

He has written works on commission for l'Orchestre de Chambre de Rouen, Collectif 2e2m, Rencontres Internationales de Musique Contemporaine (Metz), Radio-France, the National Arts Centre Orchestra, the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, the CBC Vancouver Chamber Orchestra, the Lyric Arts Trio, CBC Toronto, the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, Beckett and MacDonald (piano duo), the Ayorama Woodwind Quintet, Nexus and the Société de Musique contemporaine de Québec.



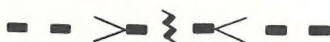
KAIKHOSRU SHAPURJI SORABJI

Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji, most reference books say, was born near London in 1892. He was educated privately. Most unusually for a composer in England, he knew by the end of 1913 at the latest the music of Strauss, Debussy, Ravel, Bartók, Schoenberg, Skryabin and Busoni. Some of these composers, along with a few older ones such as Bach and Chopin, have influenced Sorabji's music, but quite early in his composing career he assimilated and went beyond them. Busoni must have recognized this when he heard Sorabji's first piano sonata played by its composer in 1919. He was struck also by the sonata's harmonic complexity, ornamental profusion, and demonic technical demands, all of which are typical of Sorabji's music.

Sorabji's known works (from 1915 to 1980) number about 100, of which just over 50 are for piano solo. Among these 50-plus pieces are 11 or more which probably last over two hours. In addition, his Jami Symphony (over 800 pages of full score) and Symphonic High Mass (about 1000 pages) may be the largest and longest works of their kind. The enormous intricacy and length of many of his works reflect his interest in Eastern arts, especially Persian and Indian. They also obviously militate against performance, making almost unnecessary the ban he imposed from about 1936 to 1976 on public performances of any of his works at all.

The reasons for the ban are complex but relate chiefly to Sorabji's low opinion of musicians generally and his observation in the 1930's that performers and listeners did not even come close to comprehending his music. Elaborations on these points may be found in many forceful articles (especially in the New Age and New English Weekly) and in his equally lively books, Around Music (1932) and Mi contra Fa (1947).

In any case, performances now of both his published and unpublished works are increasing every year. Eventually, after his greatest works are recorded well, Sorabji may be recognized for the fascinating, original, and profound creator he is.



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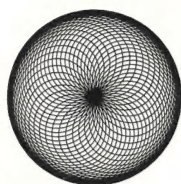
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