



new music

C O N C E R T S

FALL SERIES '88

new music

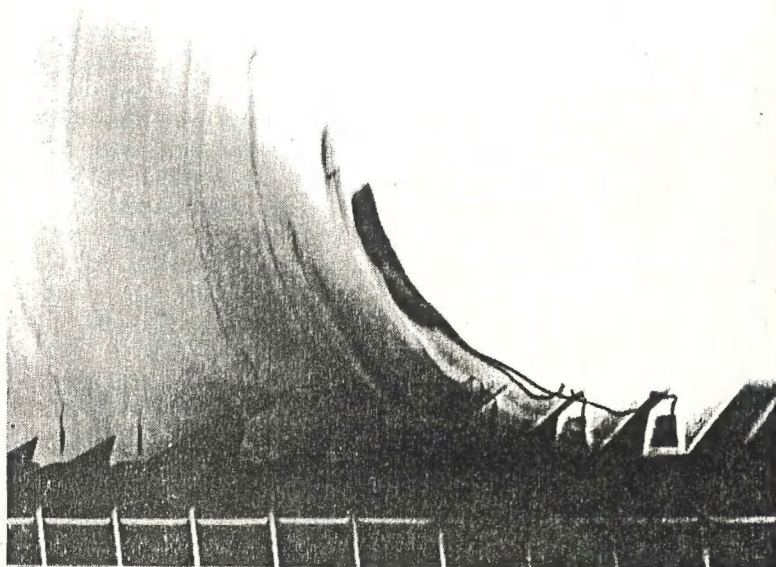
C O N C E R T S

FALL SERIES '88

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13 8PM

KANADIAN KEYBOARD SPECTACULAR

With guest artist **LOUIS PHILLIPE PELLETIER**
Music for multiple keyboards by **JOHN BECKWITH, SERGE GARANT,
BRIAN CHERNEY, CLAUDE VIVIER & COLIN McPHEE**



JOHN BECKWITH

One of the most prolific of Canadian composers, JOHN BECKWITH's career has included the roles of pianist, teacher, lecturer, university administrator, writer, editor, newspaper critic and columnist, broadcaster and board member of many musical societies. A tireless worker on behalf of Canadian music, BECKWITH was honored in 1984 by the Canadian Music Council as its "Composer of the Year", and in 1987 he became a member of the Order of Canada. He was appointed first holder of the Jean A. Chalmers professorship in Canadian music (1984), and is founding director of the Institute for Canadian Music, a teaching and research program in the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto.

JOHN BECKWITH was born in Victoria, B.C. in 1927, where he studied piano from the age of 6 and sang in choirs. At 18, he moved to Toronto and continued piano studies with Alberto Guerrero. A Canadian Amateur Hockey Association Award enabled him to study composition in Paris with Nadia Boulanger (1950-52), and he returned to Canada to work with John Weinzweig and Mieczyslaw Kolinski.

BECKWITH's music reflects his long interest in Canadiana, in the turn-of-the-century rural Ontario and other regional musical traits. His text for **Les Premiers hivernements** (1986) draws on writings by the first Europeans to winter in what is now Canada. Other works demonstrate his wide knowledge of literature, his humour and a lifelong curiosity about the world of theatre.

From November 28 through December 4, CJRT-FM will mount a week-long retrospective of JOHN BECKWITH's compositions, including a major revival, the **Concerto Fantasy** for piano and orchestra (1960). His new "detective opera" **Crazy to Kill**, with libretto by James Reaney, will be given a workshop presentation at the Banff Centre later this month, and a full-dress production at the Guelph Spring Festival next May. His choral suite **Harp of David** (1985) will receive its Toronto premiere next June during the International Choral Festival, in a performance by the Vancouver Chamber Choir.

Keyboard Practice, for four performers and ten different keyboard instruments, was commissioned by New Music Concerts on a grant from the Ontario Arts Council. The first performance took place in Toronto in November 1979.

The ten instruments called for are: a regal (a renaissance reed organ), a harmonium, a clavichord, a two-manual harpsichord, an upright piano, a grand piano, a celeste, an electronic piano, an electronic practice keyboard, and a dummy keyboard. The ensemble mixtures (from one to seven instruments sounding at a time) are a reminder of the diversity of sound-production devices to which the keyboard mechanism has been applied over the five or six centuries since its invention--metal percussion, plucked strings, reeds, electronic currents, etcetera. Other possible instruments were eliminated either because of their lesser flexibility (full pipe-organ, pianola, accordion) or because of their deviation from regular keyboard arrangement (mbira, practice-carillon, toy piano, typewriter).

The components in the eventually-selected "keyboard orchestra" have little in common besides their performing mechanism; therefore, the music proceeds via contrasts, collage-like juxtapositions, interruptions, and layered textures. At one point two of the performers enact a piano duet routine I once enjoyed seeing Victor Borge do on television. In another passage--a moment of low energy this time--the players "converse" softly on seven instruments simultaneously, each with two hands on different keyboards.

Since the sounds used are closely reminiscent of particular segments of musical literature, each performer has one historical quotation in the course of the piece: the clavichord an "Alman" from the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book; the harpsichord an early-18th-century "piece croisée," Couperin's "Le Tic-toc-choc;" the grand piano Liszt's "Au bord d'une source;" and the upright piano a vintage piano rag from the early 20th century, Charles L. Johnson's "Cum-Bac." The quotation sections are part of a succession of free variations, fifteen in all, based on an initial theme, which explore not

only the range of timbres in the ensemble but also some of the standard performing gestures associated with the action of fingers on keys: chords, broken chords, scales, turning figures, tremolos, ornamentation devices, etcetera. There are also some pitchless sounds (tapping, knocking).

The title is taken from J. S. Bach's **Clavierübung**. It was typical of Bach to classify some of his most profoundly imaginative keyboard works as mere "practice." The collection contains such masterworks as the **Partitas** and the "**Goldberg**" **Variations**. I probably have my nerve using the title, and do so only as a homage to Bach, whose keyboard music has seldom been far from my thoughts and my fingers.

John Beckwith

BRIAN CHERNEY

Born in Peterborough, Ontario, in 1942, BRIAN CHERNEY studied composition with Samuel Dolin and with John Weinzweig and received degrees in both composition (Mus.M.) and musicology (Ph.D.) from the University of Toronto. In 1966 and 1969 he attended the Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik in Darmstadt, West Germany, where he attended lectures given by Ligeti, Stockhausen and Kagel, among others. Since 1972 he has been on the staff of the Faculty of Music at McGill University in Montreal, where he is now Professor of Music.

His music has been performed and broadcast throughout Canada and in the United States, South America, Japan, Europe and Israel. He has received commissions from many organizations and individuals over the years, including the Stratford Festival, the Société de musique contemporaine du Québec, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Alliance for Canadian New Music Projects, the York Winds and the the Esprit Orchestra.

In 1979 CHERNEY's String Trio, a C.B.C. commission, tied for first place among the "recommended" works at the International Rostrum of Composers in Paris. In 1985 he was awarded the Jules Léger Prize for New Chamber Music for River of Fire, a work for oboe d'amore and harp. He has just completed a new work for the German ensemble Trio Basso, commissioned through the Canada Council. On October 22, five of his recent works will be performed at the Music Gallery in Toronto.

In the Stillness of the Seventh Autumn (1983) BRIAN CHERNEY

Commissioned as the test piece for the 1984 Eckhardt-Gramatté National Competition for the Performance of Canadian Music, with the aid of a grant from the Canada Council, **In the Stillness of the Seventh Autumn** was composed during October and November of 1983.

There are seven sections which grow progressively longer as the piece unfolds, each section except the last being introduced by the same 8-note chord which "resolves" to a transposition of the same chord near the end of the piece. The seventh and longest section begins with a

slowly rising sequence of chords covering the entire range of the instrument. Fragments of this sequence are anticipated in earlier sections of the piece. Throughout the work the passing of time is marked by the gradual unfolding (approximately every minute) of a large symmetrical harmonic field which moves from the extremes of the keyboard towards the centre - *f*, midpoint of the piece - and back to the extremes at the end. Other harmonic material introduced in the early sections of the piece becomes, near the end, the basis of a three-layered complex of recurring sonorities which were intended to suggest the distant tolling of bells. **In the Stillness of the Seventh Autumn** is the second in a series of pieces which include the word "stillness" in the title. The use of the word "stillness" was originally suggested by several lines from near the end of T.S. Eliot's **Four Quartets**: "At the source of the longest river/ The voice of the hidden waterfall/ And the children in the apple-tree/ Not known, because not looked for/ But heard, half-heard, in the stillness/ Between two waves of the sea." Brian Cherney

NEW MUSIC

BY BRIAN CHERNEY

WORKS

River of Fire (1983)
Gan Eden (1983)
TORONTO PREMIERE
Accord (1985)
TORONTO PREMIERE
Epitaph (1986)
Déploration (1987-88)
WORLD PREMIERE

PERFORMERS

Bernadine Blaha, piano
Lawrence Cherney, oboe,
oboe d'amore, English horn
Erica Goodman, harp
Moshe Hammer, violin
Joseph Petric, accordion
Peter Schenkman, cello
Vivienne Spiteri, harpsichord

PERFORMANCE

October 22, 1988, 8 p.m.
Music Gallery
1087 Queen St. West
Tel.: 534-6311
Tickets: \$8 & \$6

SERGE GARANT

SERGE GARANT died on November 1, 1986 from complications resulting from a cancerous brain tumour. His untimely death shocked the musical community in Canada and abroad, for whether he was acting as either a critic, a teacher, a radio broadcaster, a conductor or a composer, his life-long commitment to contemporary music had ended and the new music community, in particular, had suffered a major loss.

In tribute to SERGE GARANT, Robert Aitken wrote:

"SERGE GARANT was one of the most important musical figures of our generation, not only due to the music he composed, the performances he directed, the radio programs he produced, or the composition and analysis classes he taught but because of the example he set. His highly principled artistic life served a catalytic function for musical activities across the entire country and even those Canadian musicians who did not know him personally or even experience his finely hewn music making, felt his presence."

Born in Quebec City in 1929, GARANT studied composition first with Claude Champagne in Montreal, then attended Olivier Messiaen's analysis classes in Paris in 1951-2 concurrently studying counterpoint with Andrée Vaurabourg-Honegger. There he became increasingly interested in serial techniques and specifically the pointillistic music of Webern. On his return to Quebec, he continued his studies in counterpoint while working as a jazz pianist. He soon joined forces with Gilles Tremblay and François Morel to organize concerts of contemporary music, specializing in works of Webern, Messiaen and Boulez. These concerts led to the formation of a group "Musique de notre temps", which presented two seasons of concerts.

When the Société de Musique

Contemporaine du Quebec was founded in 1966, GARANT was appointed its music director, a post in which he remained until his death. In 1967 Garant began teaching analysis and composition at the University of Montreal, and many of Quebec's leading young composers today received their training from him.

GARANT has conducted in Toronto, Vancouver, Quebec City, Montreal and many other Canadian cities. He was awarded many prizes in his lifetime, and in 1980 was made a Member of the Order of Canada.

CAGE D'OISEAU

SERGE GARANT

Cage d'Oiseau was originally written in 1962 for soprano and piano on a text by St-Denys-Garneau, but waited until 1967 to receive its premiere in this form in a series organized by the Groupe des Rencontres Musicales. It was rewritten for piano solo under the title Piece pour piano no.2; Cage d'Oiseau. The work is serial but the rhythmic spacing is left up to the performer as the specific note durations are only approximately indicated in the score.

CLAUDE VIVIER

CLAUDE VIVIER was born in Montreal on April 14, 1948, and died in Paris March 7, 1983. In his brief life, he produced many fine and significant compositions. He created a bold and distinctive voice through the power of his music.

His many achievements were well recognized. Virtually all his mature works received performances, across Canada and in Europe. He received commissions from the most prominent performing groups in Canada, including the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, the Festival Singers, New Music Concerts, ARRAYMUSIC, the Société de Musique Contemporaine du Québec, the CBC Vancouver Chamber Orchestra, as well as the Secretary of State for Cultural Affairs of France. Renewed support by the Canada Council for his studies in Europe and his travels to the East testified to his acknowledged talent and promise. In 1981 he was named Composer of the Year by the Canadian Music Council.

VIVIER's first contact with making music came when, as a child, he sang mass in his school choir. From 1967 to 1970 he attended the Conservatoire de Musique de Montréal, studying composition with Gilles Tremblay and piano with Irving Heller. He then spent several years studying in Europe, where his teachers included Gottfried Michael Koening at the Institute of Sonology in Utrecht, Paul Mefano in Paris, Karlheinz Stockhausen and Hans Ulrich Humpert in Cologne. Returning to Montreal in 1974 for the premiere of his "Lettura di Dante" given by the SMCQ, he taught musical improvisation and language at the Montmorency CEGEP in Montreal, served as conductor of the new music ensemble at the University of Ottawa, and, for the summer of 1976, took up the post of composer-in-residence with the National Youth Orchestra.

At the end of 1976, VIVIER set off on an extensive research trip to the East, including Iran, Bali and Thailand, which was to have great impact on his music. His spiritual searchings were clarified, and his ways of articulating them in his music were refined. The result was the distillation of his mature style, as heard in such works as "Shiraz".

A complex individual, both dynamically outgoing and inwardly contemplative, VIVIER's presence was always felt: the shrill cackle of his laughter, the flamboyance of his mode of dress, his inextinguishable verve and energy, and his insatiable inquisitiveness and enthusiasm. He once signed a letter in English: "CLAUDE VIVIER, Composer of Music, and dean of his own university in the city of Dreams and Joy."

SHIRAZ

CLAUDE VIVIER

Invoking a magical city, **Shiraz** was written in August, 1977. About the work, VIVIER wrote:

"Shiraz, a city in Iran--a pearl of a city, a roughly cut diamond--inspired me to write a piano piece which is itself cut by an idea: the movements of the hands on the piano keyboard.

It is written strictly for four voices, with each hand playing two voices. It develops in various directions, always homophonically, from which a two-voice counterpoint gradually emerges. Then there is a return to abrupt movement, followed by the finale in choral style.

This work is dedicated to the marvellous pianist Louis-Philippe Pelletier, and indirectly to two blind singers I followed for many hours in the marketplace of Shiraz."



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COLIN MCPHEE

COLIN MCPHEE was a pioneer among Western composers in turning to Asia for inspiration. His *Tabuh-Tabuhan* for orchestra (1936) has become legendary as an early attempt to fuse the sounds of the Balinese gamelan with those of the Western orchestra, and his *Music in Bali* (1966) still stands as the primary ethnomusicological study of the island's music. MCPHEE was inspired to travel to Bali after hearing gamelan recordings in New York during the late 1920's. As he later confessed: "The clear, metallic sounds of the music were like the stirring of a thousand bells, delicate, confused, with a sensuous charm, a mystery that was quite overpowering. At the time I knew little about the music of the East. I still believed that an artist must keep his mind on his own immediate world. But the effect of the music was deeper than I suspected, for the day came when I determined to make a trip to the East to see them [the gamelans] for myself."

Born in Montreal in 1900 and raised in Toronto, MCPHEE'S talent was recognized early by family and teachers. While a child he studied piano and composition with Ernest Farmer at the Hambourg Conservatory and as early as 1915 was hailed in a local newspaper as "an unusually gifted young Toronto boy...He has a fine feeling for rhythm and an instinct for harmony, with a melodic inspiration surprising for a lad still in knicker-bockers." (MCPHEE treasured this unidentified clipping and still owned it at the time of his death in 1964.) Another youthful triumph came in 1916 when his piano work, *Water Nymph* was published in The Canadian Journal of Music. McPhee then went on to study in Baltimore at the Peabody Conservatory and in Paris with Isidore Philipp (piano) and Paul Le Flem (composition). In between the Baltimore and Paris years, he returned home to work with the renowned Liszt pupil Arthur Friedheim. On 15 January 1924, his *Second Piano Concerto* was premiered by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

In 1926 MCPHEE settled in New York and immediately became an important part of the new music scene. There he was closely involved with Aaron Copland, Carlos Chavez, Henry Cowell, Virgil Thomson and others who were challenging musical tradition, and there he heard the recordings that would change the course of his life.

MCPHEE and his new wife, the anthropologist Jane Belo, sailed for Bali in 1931 and remained there, off and on, for most of the decade. They built a native-style house in the remote mountain village of Sayan and became part of an important community of Western anthropologists, which also included Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson. Immediately MCPHEE began to meet local musicians and, as he recalled in *A House in Bali* (1946), he spent his days driving across the island, pursuing "the sound of music, [which] seemed forever in the air." During the next few years MCPHEE transcribed hundreds of gamelan compositions and sponsored orchestras to revive dying musical styles. Two of them, the *Gamelan semar pegulingan* of Peliatan and the *Gamelan angklung* of Sayan still play together today. The latter was started for small boys in MCPHEE's village.

The gamelan transcriptions performed this evening are from a group of some three-dozen such pieces prepared by McPhee while in Bali. They were a vital part of his working method and represent an oasis between composition and literal transcription. MCPHEE brought a Steinway grand into his Sayan home, and used it as a tool in transcription: "In the afternoon Lebah [MCPHEE's principle informant] would sit down near the piano, to play phrase by phrase some g'nder melody while I wrote. Or he would pick up a drum to show me the rhythm in a certain part of the music. Seriously, leisurely, we worked together till sundown." The subtleties of gamelan tuning are submerged in these transferrals to the piano, yet MCPHEE effectively captured the "aerial and aeolian" spirit of the music, with its brilliant percussive resonances, delicate linear layering, and supple rhythmic swing. These transcriptions were arranged by MCPHEE for a performance by George Balanchine's Ballet Society in January 1947.

Although he never returned to Bali, the island's music and culture permeated the rest of his days, as he later wistfully acknowledged: "Everyone carries within him his own private paradise. For me it was Bali, for I had lived there a long time and had been very happy."

notes courtesy of Carol Oja
Assistant Professor of Music
Brooklyn College, City University,
N.Y.

LOUIS-PHILIPPE PELLETIER

LOUIS-PHILIPPE PELLETIER was born on August 7, 1945. An artist who is always looking for music which will challenge both him and musical tradition, he pursued classical as well as jazz studies. He spent three years in Paris with Claude Helffer, and took master classes in Aix-en-Provence with Stockhausen, Harald Boje and Aloys Kontarsky.

In 1979, M. PELLETIER won first prize in the International Arnold Schoenberg competition in Rotterdam. Following this victory, he was invited to perform in Germany, London and the U.S.A. In 1980, the Canadian Music Council named him, along with Teresa Stratas, Canadian Musician of the Year.

LOUIS-PHILIPPE PELLETIER has been heard with most major Canadian orchestras including Montreal, Vancouver and Quebec. He is a frequently invited guest on Radio-Canada, CBC, BBC and Radio-France. He records for the labels Radio-Canada International, McGill University Records, Société Nouvelle d'Enregistrement and Centrediscs.

With a penchant for contemporary music, LOUIS-PHILIPPE PELLETIER is one of the most sparkling interpreters of the moderns. His repertoire includes works of the second Vienna school (Schoenberg, Webern, Berg) as well as of 20th century French and Canadian composers (Debussy, Messiaen, Vivier, Bregent, Cherney).

As a classicist, he has a broad and open vision of the works of the masters of piano literature. His recent recording of the Fantaisie of Schumann show his control over the traditional repertoire, to which he brings a charged contemporary vision.

M. PELLETIER is represented by LATITUDE 45 ARTS PROMOTION, Montreal.

BERNADENE BLAHA

Canadian pianist, BERNADENE BLAHA, whose concert appearances have taken her throughout North America, Europe, Mexico, Bermuda and Jamaica has also performed as soloist with many major orchestras, including the Hamilton, Calgary, Edmonton, Montreal and Houston symphony orchestras. She has been a regular guest on CBC radio networks, as well as having recorded for WQXR radio in New York City. Last summer, she was invited to perform the opening orchestra concert and solo recital at the XXIX International Chopin Festival in Marianske Lazne, Czechoslovakia.

Recently, Miss BLAHA was a top prize winner in The Young Keyboard Artists International Piano Competition in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Other awards include: first prize in the Montreal Symphony Orchestra Competition, the Masterplayers International Competition in Lugano, Switzerland, and the 11th Annual International Piano Competition in New York City. This award resulted in two highly acclaimed recital appearances at Carnegie Recital Hall and the Lincoln Centre Library. With cellist, Elizabeth Dolin, she won first place in the duo category of the City of Florence International Chamber Music Competition in Italy in October, 1986.

From Brantford, Ontario, BERNADENE began her formal piano studies at the age of three and gave her first public performance the following year. She continued as a scholarship student of Boris Berlin at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto and studied with Mme. Ania Dorfmann at the Juilliard School where she graduated with a Master of Music degree in 1981. Miss BLAHA has participated in the master classes of Marek Jablonski and Gyorgy Sebok at The Banff Festival of the Arts where she has recently been appointed a faculty pianist in the summer program.

MARC WIDNER

MARC WIDNER graduated with honours from the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto in 1979, receiving the W.O. Forsyth Graduation Scholarship. His teachers have included William Aide, Boris Berlin, Pierre Souvairan and Greta Kraus, among others. Prior to his graduation, WIDNER was the recipient of two Canada Council grants, and was awarded Third Prize in the Geneva International Piano Competition. In the same competition he also won the special prize for the best performance of a contemporary Swiss work.

He has made many recordings for the CBC and its French language network, and has performed extensively in Toronto and Ontario with New Music Concerts as well as during its tour of the United States, including performances in New York, Washington and Chicago. MARC WIDNER has appeared as guest soloist with the Orford Quartet, York Winds, Jeunesses Musicales, Nexus and the Mozart Chamber Orchestra. He has also presented solo recitals in Cleveland, in Chicago, at the Shaw Festival and at Harbourfront.

MARC WIDNER is currently Assistant Professor in the Music Program of the Department of Fine Arts, Brock University in St. Catharines.

VALERIE WEEKS

VALERIE WEEKS, one of Canada's outstanding harpsichordists, has performed extensively as a soloist and chamber musician throughout Canada, the U.S.A., and Europe. She was the second prize winner in the first Edinburgh International Harpsichord Competition, and has received many other major prizes and awards, including the Grand Prize of the 1978 CBC Talent Competition. She holds a Bachelor of Music degree in performance from the University of Toronto, where she studied with Greta Kraus; she has also studied with Gustav Leonhardt and Kenneth Gilbert with support from the Canada Council. Frequently heard on CBC radio, recent solo appearances include performances with the Calgary Philharmonic and the Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra.

BARBARA PRITCHARD

BARBARA PRITCHARD studied music at the University of British Columbia with Robert Roger, at Ljungskile Folkhögskola in Sweden, and at the Eastman School of Music with David Burge. She was a participant in the Banff Centre's Winter Cycle in 1986/87 and in 1988, and worked there this past summer as the faculty pianist for the Composer's Residency program.

Ms. PRITCHARD has been involved in solo and ensemble recitals in Vancouver, Banff, Rochester, New York and Ljungskile, Sweden. She has performed with such artists as Robert Aitken, Pierre-Yves Artaud and Siegfried Palm, and played works by Anthony Davis, Morton Feldman, Witold Lutoslawski, Roger Reynolds and Iannis Xenakis under their direction. She is presently organizing a program of mainly Canadian repertoire for a tour of Scandinavia in Spring 1989.

Ms. PRITCHARD is especially drawn towards contemporary works, but her interests include all genres of the piano repertoire, as well as harpsichord and organ music, and choral conducting.



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— solo part

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Bagatellen

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