

New Music Concerts and Two New Hours present

# All Canadian, eh?

*I don't even know what street Canada is on.*

—Al Capone

On Saturday May 26, 2001 at 8:00 pm (following an Illuminating Introduction at 7:15) New Music Concerts and Two New Hours on CBC Radio Two present the final concert of NMC's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary season, an evening of finely crafted homemade music at Glenn Gould Studio entitled *All Canadian, eh?*

The concert showcases the works of five composers from across Canada, representing the variety of compositional approaches and cultural backgrounds that help define our national fabric.

Pianist Eve Egoyan is the featured soloist in the Toronto premiere of *The Seven Sides of Maxine's Silver Die* (1998) for piano and nine instruments by renowned composer and teacher Rudolf Komorous of Victoria, B.C. Ms. Egoyan specializes in the performance of new solo piano works which have been heard on CBC's *Two New Hours* and abroad on the BBC. She has appeared as a soloist in festivals in Kobe, Montréal, Ottawa, Paris, San Francisco, St. John's, and Vancouver, and has been presented by Debut Atlantic, Music Toronto, and Soundstreams Canada among others. Eve has performed the North American premieres of works by composers Gavin Bryars, Maria de Alvear, Masahiro Miwa, Karen Tanaka, and Judith Weir. Her first solo CD, *the things in between*, received excellent reviews and was included in The Globe and Mail's 1999 "Top Ten" list.

Rudolf Komorous, born and educated in Prague, Czech Republic, emigrated to Canada in 1969. In 1971 he joined the faculty of the School of Music at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, and later became its Director. From 1989–1996 he served as Director of the School for the Contemporary Arts, Simon Fraser University.

Komorous' involvement with the Czech avant-garde in the 1950s and '60s led to a close association with painters, sculptors and

writers. This circle, known as the "Smidra Group", was influenced by Dada and surrealism. Their motto was the "aesthetic of the wonderful" through which common materials could be transformed into something sublime, mysterious or even magical.

Komorous has an extensive catalogue of compositions for orchestra (including four symphonies), solo instruments, voice and ensembles. His works have been featured at music festivals including the Venice Bienalle, Warsaw Autumn, Prague Spring and Donaueschingen. His two operas were produced in Vancouver, Toronto, Buffalo, Victoria, and New York.

Mr. Komorous has appended the following introduction to his score:

*The most precious object in her capricious repository was a seven-sided die made of silver, its six edges inlaid with blue-brushed ivory.*

*Some academicians, including several mathematicians of note, considered the image of a six edged seven-sided perfect cube absurd; its physical manifestation therefore spurious.*

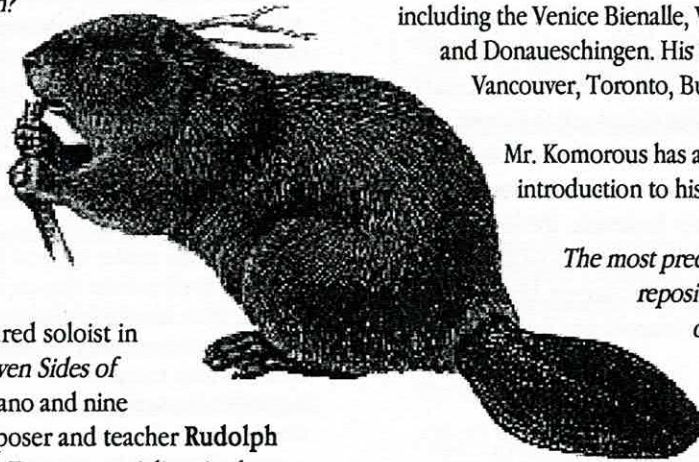
*But Maxine knew better.*

Wilhelm Emmet Cafu:  
*Basic Principles of Fluidic Geometry*  
(Antwerp, 1864)

*The beaver is a good national symbol for Canada. He's so busy chewing he can't see what's going on.*

—Howard Cable

NMC Artistic Director Robert Aitken joins soloist Trevor Tureski in the Toronto premiere of *Entendre marcher un ange...* for flute / alto flute and percussion (1998) by Brian Cherney. This work was originally written for flutist Andrée Martin and percussionist Paul Vaillancourt, who premiered it at the Sound Symposium in St. John's, Newfoundland in July 1998.



The title refers to an early play of Maurice Maeterlinck, *L'Intruse* (1891), in which the use of silence, short fragments of conversation and acute sensitivity to the sounds of the night contribute to an atmosphere heavy with foreboding, exemplified in the following lines from the play:

*La père:* Il y a un silence extraordinaire.  
*La fille:* On entendrait marcher un ange.

Canadian composer Brian Cherney studied composition with Samuel Dolin at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto and with John Weinzwieg at the University of Toronto and received graduate degrees from the University of Toronto in both composition (M.Mus. 1967) and musicology (Ph.D. 1974). Since 1972 he has been on the staff of the Faculty of Music at McGill University in Montréal, where he teaches composition, twentieth century analysis and twentieth century music history. Since 1995 he has been chairman of the Composition Area.

Since 1974 alone, Cherney has written nearly sixty pieces, which have been performed and broadcast throughout Canada and also in Europe, the United States, South America and Japan. He has received commissions from many organizations and performers over the years, including the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, La Société de musique contemporaine du Québec, the Esprit Orchestra, the 1990 New Music America Festival, Le Nouvel ensemble moderne, Amici, the Pierrot Ensemble, the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, Strings of the Future, Rivka Golani, Lawrence Cherney, Louis Philippe Pelletier, Robert Aitken, Antonio Lysy, Vivienne Spiteri, Marc Couroux and Julie Anne Derome.

In 1979 Cherney's String Trio, a CBC 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 is presently working on a new piece for the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, to be performed November 22, 2001 as part of the Massey Hall New Music Festival.

*When they said Canada, I thought it would be up in the mountains somewhere.*

—Marilyn Monroe

Born in Toronto in 1970, **Chris Paul Harman** studied classical guitar, cello, and electronic music with Barton Wigg, Alan Stellings, and Wes Wraggett respectively. He was the Grand Prize winner at the CBC Radio National Competition for Young Composers in 1990. He has also represented Canada at the International Rostrum of Composers in Paris on several occasions. In 1998, his orchestral work *Blur* was awarded first prize at the duMaurier Arts Limited Canadian Composers

Competition with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. Most recently, his work *Let Me Die Before I Wake* was jointly awarded first prize with Gary Kulesha's *Symphony* at the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra's *Best of the 90s* competition. His works have been performed by the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, the Kitchener Waterloo Symphony, the Toronto Symphony, the Tokyo Symphony, the Windsor Symphony, the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, the CBC Vancouver Orchestra, the National Arts Centre Orchestra, the National Youth Orchestra, the Composers' Orchestra, the Esprit Orchestra, and l'Orchestre de Chambre de Radio-Canada.

*AMERIKA* — Notes by Chris Paul Harman.

*AMERIKA* was commissioned by David Jaeger, through the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, for premiere on the final concert of the 2000-2001 season of New Music Concerts in Toronto.

The final concert of New Music Concerts' 2000-2001 season is called "All Canadian, eh?" In response to this, I felt moved to create a work using source material that was distinctly non-Canadian. As such, I decided to use the principal melodies from Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story*. The title of course comes from the song whose lyrics feature "I want to live in America." This irony is further encapsulated in the title, whose spelling with a "k" is used by the Japanese, the Dutch, and others.

Stylistically, the source material for the piece never really manifests itself in more than an abstract way. In the opening section, there are playful figurations which may recall the cha-cha, or other moments from Bernstein's musical. The romantic elements from songs such as "Somewhere" are magnified to a degree that becomes rather grotesque. As the work progresses, the identity of the source material is very subtly hinted at, but is never allowed to be released from its context of abstraction.

The structure of this piece is in keeping with the kinds of large scale "fragment structure" pieces I have been working with in the last three years. To this end however, I have endeavoured to create a greater overall disparity between the lengths of sections (ranging from 6 to 60 seconds), as well as the stylistic sensibility within each individual section. The climax of the piece is not attained by dynamic, rhythmic, or harmonic intensity per se, but rather through an extended period where several closely spaced consecutive sections move away from disparity to homogeneity.

*In any world menu, Canada must be considered the vichyssoise of nations—it's cold, half-French, and difficult to stir.*

—Stuart Kate

Also receiving its world premiere is *NorthEaster* by **Yannick Plamondon**, commissioned by New Music Concerts with the assistance of the Laidlaw Foundation and the Conseil des arts et lettres du Québec. Plamondon's music has been described by pianist and author Marc Couroux as an art that "draws its breath

from a rigorous questioning (and plundering) of his Québec heritage and his affinity for a potential "unsanctioned" culture off the beaten track...in so doing, he manages to throw a spanner in the ubiquitous dialectic between the self-made American frontiersman and the dutiful inheritor of unwieldy European mantles. Sedimental culture? Perhaps. But it is one which still has a palpable distance to go before its ultimate entropic termination..."

Born in 1970 in Québec City, Plamondon studied composition with Armando Santiago and analysis with Roger Bédard in Québec and computer-assisted composition with Serge Provost in Montréal. Since 1996, Yannick Plamondon has been extremely active as a composer, working with some of the most prestigious ensembles and soloists throughout Canada and Europe: Le Nouvel Ensemble Moderne (Montréal), the Netherlands Radio Kamer Orkest, the Québec Symphony Orchestra, Ensemble Contemporain de Montréal, Trio Fibonacci, Ensemble KORE, the KIEV New Music Ensemble and the Mendelssohn Chamber Orchestra (Leipzig). His works have been broadcast internationally and have won many prizes, including the 1995 National Arts Centre Prize, the 1998 NEM Forum, The CBC Competition for Young Composers (chamber music 1999) and the International Rostrum of Composers (UNESCO) in 2000 (as part of the official selection). He was also a finalist in the Gaudeamus Music Week Composition Competition in 2000.

*NorthEaster\** — Notes by Yannick Plamondon  
For Patrick St. Denis (*translation by Marc Couroux*)

[...] What kind of civilization can we hope for when the stock market is the foundation of our nation?

"Exxon Valdez, the movie."

This work begins with a deep feeling of failure, with the shame I have for my own species, the human race. It stems from my inability to exclude myself from the horrors of civilization, even though I don't believe I consciously contribute to the multifarious horrors that take place throughout the world on a daily basis.

The worst part of it all is that nowadays, it is totally impossible to ignore what happens around us. While all the information at our disposal enables us to become fully conscious, our apathy is ever more obvious, providing the most irresponsible of us with an unlimited freedom in the exercise of unreason. I believe we will live through a century of guilt and deep remorse.

Long ago, there existed many ways to interpret the world around us. One of the most essential functions of our tradition consisted, among other things, in evaluating the pertinence, the originality, or the value of individual opinions. Even though non-linear and always at the mercy of censorship, the random turns of history and other incalculable factors, the

continuum of human knowledge had been erected upon an assimilation, in the largest sense, of whatever individual experience could offer of use.

More and more, it appears to me that this process has been gradually splitting apart, even though it continues to operate by systematically entertaining the illusion of "evolution" as the motor of human "improvement".

But who's at the helm?

It is easy for me to experience this on a daily basis, and to observe that this process has by and large favored the emergence of the "human machine": a productive contraption, hungry for speed, opulence and other "values of excess".

Thus, this work is a formalistic incarnation of the lines of force derived from this intuition.

It is a chromatic mix of terror, of formal distress engendered by a lyricism developed according to inorganic criteria, of virtuosity and its most questionable products, of narrative paradoxes, of sedimented information — in short, a theatre of panic in the face of the absurd.

This composition is meant as the abstract expression of a reflection on the brutality of our environment, at least, the one we have willingly accepted to live in.

Inaction sanctions the worst possible outcome. Art is laughable when it pretends to expand consciousness. The spectacle is no longer taking place on stage for the clowns are sitting in the audience.

Who is being entertained?

*\* What is a Northeaster? Originating in the Gulf of Mexico, due to several factors associated with land/water temperature contrasts, these weather systems often intensify (lower pressure in the core of the system) as they reach the coast. These storms are sometimes called "bombs" because of their rapid intensification rates. As the storms move up the coast, they produce high tides and waves along the coast and sometimes heavy rains (or snow) inland. If these storms encounter a high pressure system over New England (called a blocking high), they may slow down in forward speed and linger along a particular stretch of shoreline, building up tides with the eastward winds pushing against the coast. The pressure gradient between the high and low pressure systems can also produce extreme wind speeds in areas where the pressure gradient reaches a maximum. Slow-moving hurricanes often kill themselves.*

*Canada is the only country in the world that knows how to live without an identity.*

—Marshall McLuhan

In 1995 young composer **Rose Bolton** became the first recipient of the H.C. Aitken Prize, the top award in a New Music Concerts composers competition. Her *Incidental Music of my Mind* is a six movement work for large chamber ensemble composed in 1998 which will receive its first professional performance by the NMC ensemble conducted by Robert Aitken.

Ms. Bolton holds a Master of Music degree in composition from McGill University and earned her Bachelor of Music at the University of Western Ontario where she studied the violin as well as composition. Her teachers have included composers Denys Bouliane, John Rea, Alexina Louie, Peter Paul Koprowski and Jack Behrens. This fall she was one of five "Génération 2000" composers commissioned for the Ensemble Contemporain de Montréal's first national tour; their appearance here was hosted by New Music Concerts as our contribution to the Massey Hall New Music Festival. Ms. Bolton is also a member of the Canadian Electronic Ensemble, where she composes improvisatory works for their concert series. In addition to her activities as a composer, Ms. Bolton performs regularly as a fiddler, playing the traditional music of the Maritimes, Quebec, Ontario and Ireland as well as American influenced country and bluegrass.

Among Ms. Bolton's sources of inspiration for her music is the sonic environment. Having spent many summers camping and canoe tripping in northern Ontario's Canadian Shield regions, the natural sounds of the forests have made a permanent impression on her. Her first compositions were electro acoustic works for tape, in the tradition of the musique concrète composers, and although she now writes mainly for live media, her compositional style reveals her first interest in musique concrète. Some of her works, such as *Incidental Music of my Mind* (1998), are inspired by the sonic environment of the city; and lately, although these "sonic" themes are still present, her compositions are beginning to venture beyond simply the imitative, becoming inwardly contemplative.

*Incidental Music of my Mind* — Notes by Rose Bolton.

*Incidental Music of my Mind* consists of six movements that make up a series of musical tableaux, which take their inspiration from activities or situations encountered in everyday life.

Movement I is largely arrhythmic and is gradual in its accumulation of momentum. The harmonies are meant to allude to the haziness and freshness of early morning sunlight shining through mist.

Movement II represents the city sounds and rush hour traffic. It evokes the sensation of stepping out from a quiet home into the busy street.

Movement III is about the human being as machine, and the passage of time while performing necessary mechanical tasks. It is about the daily grind, and the effort required to persist with one's work. Near the end of the movement, a melodic phrase emerges which represents the mind starting to drift.

The fourth movement is the shortest, and also evokes the passage of time (heard by a "clock tick" played on the vibraphone), but during a period of rest. The tune played by the clarinet and bassoon independently of the ensemble represents the mind drifting, and the individual's freed imagination.

Movement V focuses on the inspired creative imagination at work. The tune that first appeared in movement III is developed and exaggerated.

The final movement represents closure and repose, where the music slowly winds down. Material from earlier movements is distorted to evoke human perception of memories of sounds that occurred over the course of the passing day.

New Music Concerts acknowledges the generous financial support of **Roger D. Moore**. *All Canadian, eh?* is a proud participant in the **Toronto 2008 Expect the World Festival**. For tickets (\$20/10) please call the **Glenn Gould Studio Box Office at 416-205-5555**. The Studio is located at **250 Front Street West** in the CBC Broadcast Centre.

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