New Music Concerts presents

R. MURRAY SCHAFER COMPLETE STRING QUARTETS QUATUOR MOLINARI

Sunday, November 30, 2003 • Glenn Gould Studio

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R. MURRAY SCHAFER COMPLETE STRING QUARTETS

QUATUOR MOLINARI

Olga Ranzenhofer and Johannes Jansonius, violins
Jasmine Schnarr, viola Julie Trudeau, cello
Sunday, November 30, 2003 • Glenn Gould Studio
at 3:30 and 8:00 pm • Illuminating Introduction at 7:15

Programme:

R. Murray Schafer (Canada 1933):

Concert I (3:30)

String Quartet № 1 (1970) String Quartet № 2 "Waves" (1976)

-Intermission-

String Quartet Nº 3 (1981) String Quartet Nº 4 (1989)

Reception

courtesy of Bureau du Québec à Toronto

Concert II (8:00)

String Quartet Nº 5 "Rosalind" (1989)

String Quartet Nº 6 "Parting Wild Horse's Mane" (1993)

-Intermission-

String Quartet Nº 7 with soprano obbligato (1998) with soprano Marie-Danielle Parent
String Quartet Nº 8 (2001)





du Patrimoine canadien



Greetings to those taking part in the New Music Concerts - Schafer Quartet Cycle.

For more than 30 years, New Music Concerts has helped music lovers, in Toronto and across Canada, discover the multifaceted world of contemporary music. The performance by internationally renowned Canadian musicians of all the Schafer quartets is a great opportunity to discover Canada's many talented artists, and to immerse yourself in the magical musical experience they provide.

I would like to extend my best wishes to all the festival organizers, volunteers, and performing artists involved in the New Music Concerts. Through your commitment to excellence, you contribute to our diverse and vibrant culture.

Enjoy the concert!

J'aimerais saluer tous ceux et celles qui prennent part au Schafer Quartet Cycle présenté par les New Music

Depuis plus de 30 ans, les New Music Concerts permettent aux mélomanes de Toronto et du Canada de s'ouvrir aux diverses facettes de la musique contemporaine. La présentation de l'ensemble des quatuors de Schafer par des musiciens canadiens de renommée internationale est l'occasion idéale de se laisser transporter par la musique et de découvrir des talents de chez nous.

J'aimerais remercier chaleureusement tous les organisateurs, bénévoles et artistes des New Music Concerts. Par votre engagement en faveur de l'excellence, vous contribuez à la vitalité et au rayonnement de notre culture.

Bon concert!

Sheila Copps

Canadä

ince its founding in 1997, The Molinari Quartet has regularly performed R. Murray Schafer's various string quartets so that audiences may better familiarize themselves with this music, and also because they are convinced that these works form one of the major string quartet cycles of the 20th century. Performing in concert and recording all eight of Schafer's string quartets proved a momentous experience for the Molinari Ouartet. In working on this body of works with the composer, the Quartet was in effect retracing the steps of nearly thirty years of musical creation. Yet what most struck the musicians was the great sense of unity that arises from these eight quartets. Indeed, more than a set of isolated works, Schafer's eight string quartets can be viewed as a single work in eight movements. Close thematic and scenic relations bind these works together in always the most remarkable way. But above all, they continually evince a distinct spirit, and a highly personal energy and lyricism run through the entire set. With this quartet cycle, Schafer achieves that impossible synthesis of unity and diversity, of rigour and fantasy as well as of lyricism and rhythmic interplay.

R. Murray Schafer's eight string quartets hold a privileged position in his output and are considered as ranking among his most important works. The breaking-up of traditional forms, the integration of multiple sound sources and the mobility of musicians (Nos. 2, 3, 4 and 7), vocal effects (No. 3), the contribution of a pre-recorded tape source (Nos. 4 and 8) and even of extra musicians (Nos. 4 and 7), of Tai Chi movements (No. 6) or of percussion (Nos. 5 and 7) are among the innovative elements that can be found in these quartets. These extraordinary features never eclipse Schafer's music. however, for the eight quartets are, by their purely musical qualities, of great intensity and great beauty.

Written in 1970, the first quartet is the work of a young and fiery composer whose musical language already manifests a strong personality and much originality. As early as this first work, the foundations are laid for Schafer's writing for string quartet. It contains long unison sequences by all four instruments, catchy rhythmic motives, dramatic intensity, powerful lyricism. songful violin strains and the expressive use of quarter tones and glissandos. Schafer's metrical structures are at times absolutely precise and unequivocal, at times marked by wondrous freedom and breadth. Written timings acting as guides for duration allow for this type of controlled freedom. The first quartet opens with a section of uncommon intensity, lasting over four minutes. The four instruments are commingled, and each one tries as best it can to free itself from the clutches of the group. Finally it is the second violin who breaks loose, and this rift leads to a calmer, more lyrical section. Full of tranquillity, this section comes as a surprise. After some hesitation (quarter-tone glissandos), the first violin starts up on a strain over a microtonal sequence of eight notes within a half-tone interval, played by the other instruments. An expressive dialogue between the violins frames the two microtonal sections, the second of which is adorned with chromatic scales by the first violin. Then commences a rhythmic interplay giving the impression of clocks increasingly out of phase with each other. This interplay between the second violin and the viola shows that the instruments are no longer quite bound together, and that the breach has become inevitable. However, the four instruments then converge anew for a long unison sequence starting pianissimo and with hesitation. Each musician attempts once again to free himself from the clutches of the group, as if trying to jump from a train speeding ever more out of control. A new cleft leads to the coda, which takes the form of snapshots recalling the various episodes of the quartet.

String Quartet No. 2, Waves

2

Composed at Monteagle Valley, Ontario, Jan-Oct 1976.

Premiered by the Purcell Quartet in Vancouver on Nov 24, 1976.

1978 Jules-Léger Prize for new chamber music.

No-one can step into the same river twice. — HERACLITUS

The second quartet was inspired by the work of the World Soundscape Project in which Schafer studied the acoustic phenomena of natural and urban environments. This quartet is subtitled Waves, and depicts the rhythm of the breaking and backwash of the waves on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of Canada. Schafer's research has shown that the rhythm of the waves is always asymmetrical but that the time elapsed between them is almost always between six and eleven seconds. The structure and rhythm of the second quartet are based on this nautical time span. An impressionistic work replete with subtleties, the second quartet contrasts greatly with the first. Although the composer assures us that the music in this quartet is nondescriptive, one feels when listening to Waves the subtleties and murmuring of calm waters as well as the might and the surging of waves on the high seas. Eloquently rich and refined, the quartet's textures are very impressionistic and always seem to rush forward in ever-changing transformations. Schafer's writing is evocative of fluidity, using, for example, motives that intertwine, dissolve, burst forth and disperse. The many motives that run through the work are constantly reintroduced under new rhythmic guises, with new dynamics and new tempos. Like a modern Heraclitus, Schafer evokes the unceasing motion of water through dynamic undulations of crescendos and diminuendos, and through continually variegating motives. Like the natural rhythm of the waves, this quartet unfolds a succession of six to eleven second cycles. The spatial movements of the players begin only in the final minutes of the second quartet. Moreover, the physical position of the instrumentalists at the end of the work is the same as will be found at the beginning of the following quartet.

String Quartet No. 3



Composed at Monteagle Valley, Ontario, June 1981.

Commissioned by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for the Orford String Quartet.

Premiered in Boston on September 30, 1981.

The third quartet is a work filled with contrasts and is of great dramatic power. It is the only one of Schafer's eight quartets written in three movements. The work opens on an extended cadenza by the cellist, who is alone on stage. Built around the note A, this section is very dramatic and brings out microtonal frictions. These produce very powerful pulses when the tension between two notes is at its peak. Gradually, a melodic phrase emerges from the ascendancy of the tonal pole of A. Appearing alternately from the wings and from behind the audience, the two violins and the viola play highly contrasting and non-convergent passages, as though the instrumentalists were playing for themselves instead of with the group. Indeed, the writing in this movement is very horizontal and the various parts are always independent of each other. The movement ends when the four string players are finally reunited on stage, in the traditional quartet layout. The central movement has great emotional and dramatic impact. The attack of notes and accents are reinforced by vocal effects that bring to mind karate cries (b, dj, dzi). Schafer also insists the musicians yell out other sounds to the rhythm of the music (ba chi, om ba, da ba). Energy, strength and endurance are all required to carry through this movement, whose drama occasionally takes a comic turn. The unisons and mystic calm at the start of the last movement are in striking contrast to the previous music. The spellbinding quarter tones create here a very moving meditative atmosphere. The gradual breaking up of the unisons and the exit of the first violin shroud the end of this stunning string quartet in ponderous mystery. Indeed, it is in this conclusion that Schafer introduces what he calls phantom sounds, which leave the listener wondering as to the actual end of the work. Do we really hear the first violins notes D-C-A, or do we only have the impression we hear these sounds conjured up by our memory?

String Quartet No. 4



Composed at Indian River, Ontario, finished on January 5, 1989.

Commissioned for the 20th anniversary of the Purcell Quartet thanks to the support of the Canada Council for the Arts and of Mr. and Mrs. Dr. Roland Bowman. Premiered by the Purcell Quartet with Margarita Noye, soprano, and Joan Blackman, violin, in Vancouver on April 18, 1989.

After a seven-year break from string quartet writing, Schafer took up the pen again thanks to a commission from the Purcell Quartet. Begun at the end of 1988 and finished in January 1989, this work rekindles and integrates elements from his important trilogy Patria. The quartet opens on mysterious chords that underpin the first violin's initial strains from backstage. After this very lyrical beginning, dramatic tension mounts as the trio executes brilliant unison passages. The first violin then finally appears onstage to launch the dialogue. Calmness briefly returns before the lively and rhythmical outburst of the works second section, reminiscent of Shostakovich. Here, brilliant upsurges, ostinatos, glissandos and cascading pizzicatos express joie de vivre and happiness. The formal layout of this section is A - A I: the components of the first part are modified, developed and presented in new succession. The premature death of his friend, the renowned poet bp Nichol, influenced Schafer in the composition of this quartet. Not long before his death, Nichol had participated in the great cycle Patria, and had acted in the capacity of announcer. To honour his memory, Schafer integrates one of the themes played by Nichol into his quartet. The third section is heralded by three violent aggregates of dissonant chords, like blows dealt by fate. After such commotion, could the mysterious. introspective music that follows represent the composer's meditation on the death of his friend? In any case, the emotion here is very real. At the end of the work, when accompanied by the quartet's harmonics a voice and a violin sound from backstage, the atmosphere becomes unreal as if these voices were reaching us from the hereafter. We will leave the composer to conclude on the subject: "Another influence for the voice is perhaps E. T. A. Hoffmann's story, The Cremona Violin (Rath Krespel) in which a mad violinmaker has a daughter with a beautiful voice whom he never allows to sing. When she does so one night, she dies, and at the moment of her death her father's Cremona violin cracks. She had been the soul of the instrument. The singer will return again in the seventh quartet as an insane apparition."

The movements of Tai Chi are generally slow. The sixth quartet borrows and integrates into the music the characteristic spirit of Tai Chi. Following the composer's prescription, the work can be performed with or without the participation of a Tai Chi master who executes the Chinese gymnastic movements in synchronization with the music. There is no redundancy however between the intensity of Schafer's music and what can be observed of the Tai Chi master's movements. For instance, great musical energy can correspond to extreme physical restraint.

The complete sequence of Tai Chi involves 108 movements, 58 of which are different. The quartet follows the same pattern, with 108 sections based on 58 distinct ideas, themselves stemming from common themes. The manuscript score of the quartet clearly identifies each of the 108 sections by the name of the Tai Chi movement in Chinese and English.

The fluidity of this quartet's music is remarkable. Its momentum is never hindered thanks to the subtle transitions Schafer provides between the various sections. Since all the music is borrowed from the former works, we encounter in it all the rhythmic vigour, the flights of lyricism, the compositional mastery, the freedom of inflection and the rich imagination so characteristic of Schafer.

OMPOSER COMPANIONS is a program designed to help demystify the world of new music, matching audience members with professional composers who serve as personal audio "tour guides" for live concerts. To arrange to have a composer guide for an evening at no cost (courtesy of the Canadian Music Centre Ontario Region and participating new music presenters) call the CMC Ontario Office at 416–961–6601 ext. 207 or e-mail composercompanions@musiccentre.ca

7

String Quartet No. 7 with obbligato soprano Composed at Indian River, Ontario, finished on December 15, 1998.

Commissioned by the Molinari Quartet with the support of The Canada Council for the Arts, Radio-Canada (Montreal), and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (Toronto). Premiered in concert version by the Molinari Quartet and soprano Nathalie Paulin in Ottawa on May 4, 1999. Premier of the stage version by the Molinari Quartet and soprano Marie-Danielle Parent in Montreal on December 11, 1999.

A musical work at once violent and gentle, effervescent and static, expressing both distress and joy, this quartet with obbligato soprano distinguishes itself from Schafer's other works by its profound break with conventional string quartet writing.

The formal innovations in this work are apparent in the many solos, duets, trios, quartets and quintets that allow for unique and original sound effects. More than in any of the previous quartets, spatial unity has ceased to exist. The stage, backstage area, wings and aisles are as many places from whence the music comes forth. The music moves. A special harness was even contrived so the cellist could move about while playing. This opening up of the playing area serves to enhance the spacing and remoteness of sounds, quadraphony, minute time-lags and staging.

Despite the formal upheaval, the seventh quartet nevertheless maintains close ties with the entire corpus. The work's first phrase played by the cello and the viola is a reprise of the sixth quartet's very beginning. A dramatic entry of the first violin follows, declaiming a dissonant variation of Ariadne's theme. Shortly after, the return of the *Tapio* theme is easily recognizable, and will become obsessive throughout this quartet. These highly apparent quotes must not mislead us, though; each new work proposes a fresh reading and an enrichment of the musical ideas from the previous quartets. Everything leaves its mark: new material is repeated in novel guise, fresh ideas foster our understanding of familiar motives, all the sound matter imposes itself with a quasi-organic necessity. This perpetual variation of common material constitutes in our opinion Schafer's musical signature of sorts.

An obbligato soprano and the colourful sounds of percussion instruments (woodblock and cheng cheng) are here added to the classic string quartet. The structure of the seventh quartet has the string quartet as an entity alternate with the soprano's interventions. However, when the soprano sings, the quartet finds itself obliged to act as accompanist. The many interruptions imposed by the soprano upon the quartet and her strange comments (the texts of which are taken from the diary of a schizophrenic woman) clip the wings of the strings, who reassert themselves only in the absence of the singer. At the end of the work, the five musicians find themselves on stage together for the first time and endow us with brilliant and unifying music.

The meeting of two great artists, R. Murray Schafer and Guido Molinari, bestowed this quartet with an important visual element. The four primary colours so dear to Molinari are each associated with a musician and colour their individual musical lines. The red of the first violin represents fire, the blue of the second violin symbolizes water, the green of the cello is that of Tapio the Forest Spirit of the Finnish Kalevala legends and the yellow of the viola is the symbol of light. The composer explains the particular role of the soprano:

I didn't want to write a piece in which the singer sits around while the quartet plays three movements and then joins them for a glorious finale. In trying to find her role in the work I began to think of her colour (white). It symbolises purity, but it is also the colour of hospitals and therefore illness, and in ancient China it was the colour of death and funeral processions. The fortuitous discovery of some texts by an anonymous schizophrenic woman in a mental asylum gave me the solution: the singer would come and go throughout the music as an intruder, singing texts that are simultaneously sexual, musical and absurd.

For the work's complete staged version, Guido Molinari created paintings and sculptures integrated into the performance of the quartet. The Molinari Quartet wishes to thank the Cirque du Soleil for its support for sponsoring the making of the costumes by designers Yso and Denis Gagnon.

Text sung by the soprano in Schafer's 7th Quartet

Texts of a Schizophrenic Woman

1

Moan if you will
and steel and groan and cry
soar and zoom
you chugging flame
grind and roll
bring us closer, closer, closer ...
But do men know when you ask them?
They say its streamlined ... it shines...
and it goes like a bat out of hell
a bat out of hell
a bat out of hell.

2.

And why did William
Shakespeare write?
I ask you.
A simple thing ... he lived.
Each song should be as
beautiful as mine
each voice should ring as clear
but dark and evil years
good and evil years
evil and good years
are pulsing, whirling, rolling,
lagging, tossing, crying,
singing, singing, singing ...

Thanks for tossing the crystal brambles my way sir, they may come in handy, so thank you, thank you ...

It wouldn't have been the same if you had analyzed It wouldn't have been the same if you had criticized It wouldn't have been the same if you and I had our noses in the earth. If you and I were music ... I could explain. But we must wait for that, I mean the music ...

when each note is weighed
when emotions are expressed carefully
by contrapuntal —
however in the meantime just an
ordinary thanks.
By the way I like your nose.

4.

Contemplate
contemplate
Music, you're coming near
music, I wait for you
stealing softly, harmoniously ...
while others lie dreaming and wait
I hear your note-like footsteps
everywhere beating, beating, beating,
beating, stir those jarring atoms
I want music
I want to sing.

From the collection of Miss Marion Kalkmann, Director of Nursing, the Neuropsychiatric Clinic, University of Illinois. Published in L. Moholy-Nagy, *Vision in Motion*, Chicago, 1947, p. 323.



String Quartet No. 8

Composed in Munich from February 24 to March 15, 2000, and revised at Indian River from September 17 to October 12, 2001.

The work was commissioned for the Molinari Quartet by Ellen Karp, Bill Johnston and Paul Karp-Johnston to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of Fred and May Karp.

The work was commissioned to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of Fred and May Karp. This request inspired a structure in two parts. The first movement depicts the high energy and spirits of youth, while the second is a lyrical meditation, evoking the lover's look back on their past together. The Quartet No. 8 was written during the same period as *Patria VIII: The Palace of the Cinnabar Phoenix* and bears similarities with that opus. The Cinnabar Phoenix is a bird one could relate to the Firebird and which holds a message for peace in various legends from Persia and China. In *Patria VIII*, set in the T'ang Chinese dynasty (618-907), the Phoenix is sent by the gods to inhabit a palace where it will bring harmony and peace. The first movement of the Eighth quartet starts with the work s overall generative motive, consisting of a fourth and a third (D,G,E,G). This figure is expressed by the second violin and the viola against harmonic glissandi. One will hear in this beginning an echo of the very last sounds from the 7th quartet. A bird call, different from that of the Phoenix, is played by the violin immediately after.

An extensive kinetic development makes way for another free and rhapsodic violin solo, itself followed by a brief reference to the motive B-flat, A, C, B (on Bach's name) that permeates the second movement. The first movement is imbued with a Chinese motive pastiche, extracted from *Patria VIII*. This figure turns into a haunting ritornello, deliberately meant by the composer to be youthful or even childish. The nocturnal quality of the second movement has been encountered before in Schafer's quartets. Two string quartets are merged, one being pre-recorded while the other performs live. This duplication allows the composer to play with echo and distance, thus expanding the spatialization effects he has explored in previous quartets. Attention might be drawn to some of its features: the transposed name of

Bach (D-flat, C, E-flat, D) which becomes the basic material of the entire movement, the pulsating pizzicati moving back and forth from the prerecorded to the live quartet, the sharp contrast created by the middle section, marked with great excitement, the reappearance of the Chinese motive and finally the opposition between rhythmic freedom and the pulsing ostinati.

Notes by **Olga Ranzenhofer** and **Jean Portugais**.

Translation of program notes for quartets 1 to 7 by **Jacques-André Houle**.

The translation of the notes for quartet no. 8 are by **Marc Hyland**.

Murray Schafer is Canada's pre-eminent composer and is known throughout the world. In an era of specialization, R. Murray Schafer has shown himself to be a true renaissance man. Born in 1933 and raised in Toronto, Murray Schafer has won national and international acclaim not only for his achievement as a composer but also as an educator, environmentalist, literary scholar, visual artist and provocateur. After receiving a Licentiate in piano through the Royal Schools of Music (England) in 1952, he pursued further studies at the Royal Conservatory of Music and the University of Toronto, followed by periods of autodidactic study in Austria and England which encompassed literature, philosophy, music and journalism. A prolific composer, he has written works ranging from orchestral compositions to choral music as well as musical theatre and multi-media ritual. His diversity of interests is reflected by the enormous range and depth of such works as Loving (1965), Lustro (1972), Music for Wilderness Lake (1979), Flute Concerto (1984), and the World Soundscape Project, as well as his 12-part Patria music theatre cycle. His most important book, The Tuning of the World (1977), documents the findings of his World Soundscape Project, which united the social, scientific and artistic aspects of sound and introduced the concept of acoustic ecology. The concept of soundscape unifies most of his musical and dramatic work, as well as his educational and cultural theories. For his exceptional contribution to music and its communication Schafer became the first Laureate of the Glenn Gould Prize in 1987.

cclaimed by the public and the Canadian critics since its foundation in 1997, the Molinari Quartet has given itself the mandate to perform works from the 20th and 21st century repertoire for string quartet, to commission new works and to initate discussions between musicians, artists and the public. Recipient of seven Opus Prizes awarded by the Quebec Music Council to underline musical excellence on the Quebec concert stage, the Molinari Quartet was chosen in December 2000 as Music Laureate for the Grand Prix of the Montreal Urban Community Arts Council.

The name Molinari reflects well the commitment of the musicians to contemporary music repertoire, for Canadian painter Guido Molinari's name has come to represent the artistic avant-garde for over forthy years. In addition to many Canadian works, the Molinari Quartet's repertoire includes among others, quartets by Bartók, Britten, Glass, Korngold, Kurtág, Ligeti, Lutoslawski, Martinu, Prokofiev, Ravel, Scelsi, Schnitkke, Shostakovich and Webern.

The Molinari Quartet was heard twice as soloist with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra under Charles Dutoit and was invited to perform in numerous concert series and festivals including Strings of the Future (Ottawa), Musiques au présent (Québec), Festival Vancouver, Music Toronto, New Music Concerts (Toronto), Ottawa International chamber music festival, Orford Festival, GroundSwell (Winnipeg), Saskatoon Symphony Festival of New Music, Aeolian Concerts and Hill and Hollow Music (New York).

The Molinari Quartet has commissioned R. Murray Schafer's 7th quartet and has also premiered his 8th Quartet, written also for the Molinari. The Quartet has commissioned and premiered several works from Canadian composers such as Otto Joachim, Michel Gonneville, Marc Hyland, Michael Matthews, Kelly-Marie Murphy, David Scott, and Ana Sokolovic as well as giving North American premieres of many works.

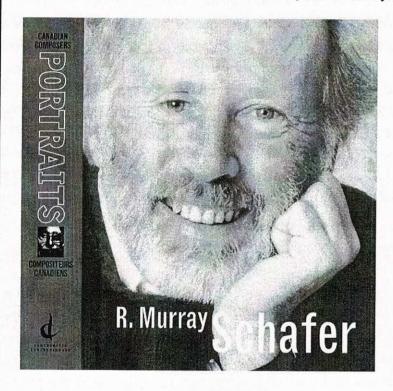
The Molinari Quartet is the only quartet to have in its repertoire R. Murray Schafer's eight string quartets and its recording of the first seven on the ATMA Classic label has received international critical acclaim. The recording received the Opus Prize for Record of the Year in contemporary, new and electroacoustic music. The Molinari Quartet recently released a new CD with the Quartet No. 8, *Theseus* and *Beauty and the Beast* by Schafer, on ATMA Classique.

In October 2001, the Molinari Quartet launched its First International Competition for Composition. Two hundred and twenty-two (222) new string quartets from thirty-nine (39) countries were received. The concert of the winning works was recorded by the ATMA Classique label and was released in May of 2003. The Second International Competition for composition was launched in May and the the scores must be received by April 1st 2004. Visit our website at: www.quatuormolinari.qc.ca

he progress of soprano Marie-Danielle Parent's career has been remarkable not only in the field of opera, but also in concerts and recitals, and she is as equally at home in the standards of the classic repertoire as in the music of contemporary composers. On the lyric stage, Marie-Danielle has shown her talents to advantage with both the Opéra de Montréal and the Opéra de Québec. In concert, she has appeared with many of the most important Canadian orchestras. A performer inspired by the contemporary repertoire, Parent sings regularly with the Société de musique Contemporaine du Québec. Beyond the concert hall, she has recently taken to the sound studio in collaboration with the Ensemble of the SMCQ, recording Gilles Tremblay's Les Vêpres de la Vierge as well as Bouchara by Claude Vivier and Clere Vénus by Denis Gougeon. A much sought-after soloist, Marie-Danielle Parent has sung at international festivals held in Lanaudière, Victoria, Vancouver, Montepulciano (Italy) and Royaumont (France). She has also worked with the Parisian Ensemble de l'Itinéraire, the Orchestre Philarmonique de Radio-France, and the Köln Radio Orchestra.

Happy Birthday!

The Canadian Music Centre extends its best wishes to R. Murray Schafer in celebration of his **70th Birthday!**



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