

CANADIAN LEAGUE OF COMPOSERS

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT 2003-2004

The 53rd Annual General Meeting of the Canadian League of Composers is being presented today, May 22, 2004, in Winnipeg in conjunction with the Association of Canadian Choral Conductors biennial conference, PODIUM 2004 – Sonora Borealis. Canadian choirs and choral conductors have a wonderful tradition of supporting Canadian compositions through commissions, premieres, repeat performances and recordings and this is an excellent opportunity to build on these strengths. This is the first time that the CLC has met simultaneously with the ACCC and the structure of our interaction follows the same arrangement that we used when we joined forces with Orchestras Canada in 2000. The CLC has been fortunate to receive a Canadian Heritage, Creator's Assistant Grant through the SOCAN Foundation that has helped to fund a reception following the Friday evening concert and a panel presentation on the Sunday afternoon. The panel's topic is, "Challenge and Opportunity: Composing and Performing Canadian Choral Music in the 21st Century." The conference will be described in an upcoming CLC Bulletin.

As always, I begin this Report with our mission statement and a list of the members on our Executive Council. The Council of the Canadian League of Composers strives to represent the best interests of composers in Canada. As appropriate, we address these concerns to government, arts councils, broadcasters, performers, performing rights societies and the Canadian Music Centre. We collect and disseminate information of interest to composers and inform them of matters that effect their lives as artists in Canada. It is important to remember that the work we do is volunteer work and in this respect I am continually grateful to everyone who has given their time, knowledge and advice freely on behalf of the CLC during the past year. In particular, what we have accomplished this year is due largely to the dedication of our elected Council members who, moving from East to West, are: Clark Ross for the Atlantic provinces; Tim Brady, Jerome Blais and Andre Ristic from Quebec; John Burge (President), Omar Daniel (Treasurer), Micheline Roi (Vice-President) and Paul Steenhuisen from Ontario; Patrick Carrabre from Saskatchewan/Manitoba; David Eagle (Secretary) from Alberta; and finally, Janet Danielson and Keith Hamel from British Columbia. All of us on the Executive are very appreciative of our paid Administrator, Mitchell Kitz. Most of our discussions and work are carried out by email these days but it always proves advantageous to meet together in person on occasion. The CLC Executive had one face-to-face meeting in Toronto on the weekend of November 1-2, 2003. President Emeritus, John Weinzweig, was able to attend some of the Toronto meetings.

The CLC received funds this year from many sources: The annual dues paid by members; the SOCAN Foundation operating grant of \$6,500 which continues to be an annual source of support; Canada Council funding to administer the Canadian Section of the International Society of Contemporary Music; charitable contributions from our members. We were also successful in receiving two Government of Canada Creator's Assistance Grants from Heritage Canada (administered by the SOCAN Foundation). The first grant was for \$20,000 and covered funding for the various meetings between the CLC and the newly created Pan-Canadian Music Coalition. The reason for the second grant is that the application deadline for the Creator's Assistance Program was moved forward two months in 2004 (from April to February). This meant that we could apply for funding to cover the ACCC events already described above as well. In fact, if the deadline hadn't moved forward, it is unlikely that we could have funded this Winnipeg meeting. The grant was for \$9,500. In today's economy, without being able to access these funds it would be impossible for the CLC Executive to meet even once a year. While I sometimes feel like I am spending too many hours writing grant applications, it always seems worth it after we have had a successful meeting.

Last year's AGM took place on March 8th, 2003 and this has meant that today's President's Report actually covers about 14 months of activities. Some of the organizations that we monitor on a regular basis are listed below with a brief summary of important matters that were addressed between March, 2003 and May, 2004.

American Federation of Musicians - Canadian Office

This has been a quiet year for the AFofM and the CLC.

Orchestras Canada

Since my last report, Orchestras Canada has appointed Dan Donaldson as their new Executive Director. I have not yet had the pleasure of meeting him but we have exchanged correspondence on a few occasions. Tim Brady and Micheline Roi were both kind enough to attend on behalf of the CLC, the Orchestras Canada 2003 Conference entitled, "Soundings," in Toronto last June. It is very important that the CLC be represented at these kinds of events because for many of our members, orchestral performances of their music constitutes the largest portion of their royalty cheque, especially if the concert has been recorded and broadcast by CBC or SRC. Also, as many of you know, orchestras can lean to the conservative side of programming, and having composers attend these meetings allows us to promote our cause in a very tangible and audible way. Micheline also made a presentation at one of the sessions on the topic of, "Artistic Vision and Connecting to the Community." A synopsis of Micheline's address was published in the Winter 2004 Bulletin along with an overall summary of the conference written by Tim.

Association of Canadian Choral Conductors

As mentioned above, this is the first time that the CLC has met with the ACCC. In fact, I am presenting this Report during a session that is open to membership from both groups. Since this Report is written prior to the start of the Podium 2004 Conference in Winnipeg, any commentary on the event will be saved for a later time. I would, though, like to thank the ACCC for being so supportive of this initiative and in particular, Andree Dagenais, who helped with the organization of the CLC events.

In a couple of hours, I will be the Moderator for the already-mentioned panel. I am grateful to the panelists, Harry Freedman, Kathryn Laurin, Ramona Luengen, and Leonard Ratzlaff for agreeing to help out with this presentation.

SOCAN - Copyright Board of Canada

The CLC has a very good relationship with the SOCAN administration. In the past, I personally have relied on the excellent advice of the two, long-serving SOCAN Board members representing Classical composers: Victor Davies and Alexina Louie. Alexina has been particularly helpful over the years but she was not, however, re-elected to the SOCAN Board last spring. Immediately following this election, I contacted Victor Davies and the newly elected Classical Representative, Paul Cram, to make sure they were on the watch for any decisions or changes that may adversely effect Classical composers. There appears to be no dark clouds on the skyline at this point and certainly, we have been very well served by the SOCAN Foundation in recent years. CLC Executive member, Jerome Blais, was good enough to attend the SOCAN Annual General Meeting last year in Montreal on behalf of the CLC.

There are no decisions pending from the Copyright Board of Canada that concern CLC members at this time. I can report, though, that two new judges were recently appointed to the Copyright Board of Canada. As there are only three judges in total, this constitutes a significant change and I am sure that SOCAN is wondering which way the wind will blow when they submit proposals to increase the concert or broadcast tariff license fees.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation/Radio Canada

Last year's President's Report described the CBC Producers/CLC Roundtable that was held in Toronto in the fall of 2002. The setting up of this very successful event, which was also funded by a Creator's Assistance Grant, was the result of many years of working with Janet Lea, then Head of English Radio Music. Last fall, Janet Lea moved to another position in the CBC (Director of Cultural Programming in BC) and Mark Steinmitz was appointed Head of English Radio Music. Mark had in the past been Executive Producer for ON STAGE and had attended the CBC/CLC Roundtable. After a few postponements, Micheline Roi and I were able to meet with Mark and his immediate boss, Kim Orchard at CBC Headquarters in Toronto. This meeting covered a wide range of topics and Kim Orchard in particular seemed interested in the CLC as an organization and how we viewed our relationship to the

CBC. CBC Radio is currently undergoing an intensive review of their own programming and is examining ways to increase the audience base which made our meeting timely. Mark also mentioned that he is going to be looking at their music commissioning program. Following the meeting, I submitted a brief outline of the strengths of the CBC commissioning program and suggested some improvements that would greatly help out our membership (putting more dollars in the program to start). It is also worth noting that the CBC has undergone another series of cuts such that it is unlikely that they will have a National Producers meeting in the near future that we could tie into again to stage another Roundtable meeting.

The CBC, with the CMC, also produced five more entries in the Composer Portrait Series during the past year: John Beckwith, Norma Beecroft, Talivaldis Kenins, Gilles Tremblay and Robert Turner. This is an ongoing project that includes a superb documentary CD. There are now 15 titles in this series and I would encourage all members to support this endeavour. I myself have a complete set of these discs in my office at Queen's University and I lend them out to my own composition students for further study and to increase their knowledge of Canadian music. Both the CBC and CMC deserve much credit and congratulations for producing such a fine product.

The Canadian Music Centre

The CMC is one of the most important National organizations for our membership. Over the past few years, Elisabeth Bihl, the CMC's Executive Director, has been improving the way they deliver their services through projects such as the digitization of scores and recordings and their vastly improved website. The CMC's continuing organization of the Professional Reading Projects across the country have provided a wonderful opportunity for composers to hear their music in an informal rehearsal setting and receive immediate feedback from the musicians. The successful Composer Portrait Series has already been mentioned. Elisabeth Bihl and I usually meet a few times a year, most recently during the Pan-Canadian Music Coalition Presentation that took place on Nov. 2, 2003, in Toronto.

This year's winner of the 2003 Friend of Canadian Music prize was Mary Gardiner. The CLC provides the funds for this \$1000 prize with the CMC taking care of the publicity, the compiling of nominations and the jury process. Elisabeth and I were able to present this award to Mary in person at the reception following the Pan-Canadian Music Coalition Presentation.

We are also fortunate to have a number of CLC Council members who serve in a similar capacity at the CMC: Keith Hamel is the President of the CMC's National Board of Directors while Omar Daniel occupies a position on the CMC's Regional Council a Council on which Micheline Roi also serves in the capacity as the CLC's observer.

Arts Councils

Many of our elected Council members act as regional representatives to their respective Provincial Arts Councils. For those provinces where we do not have direct Executive representation we are fortunate to have CLC members monitor their own provincial cultural scene. Alasdair Maclean is the CLC's Executive Council Liaison for New Brunswick and Monte Keene Pishny-Floyd is the Liaison for Saskatchewan.

If you have been carefully reading the last few Bulletins, you will recall an article on the Canada Council's Music Commissioning Program written by their Music Officer, Shannon Peet, and a follow-up letter that I sent to the Canada Council that was printed in the subsequent CLC Bulletin. To summarize, the Canada Council is looking at ways to improve this program given the increasing number of applications while the CLC's position has basically been, "...improving the program simply requires additional funding." There have also been suggestions of providing commissioning funds on an annual basis directly to performing organizations that have a stellar reputation for commissioning and premiering Canadian music such that they can forego the existing jury process. To facilitate a discussion of these matters, the CLC Executive has been fortunate to have arranged a meeting with Russell Kelley, Head of Music at the Canada Council, during our Saturday meeting in Winnipeg yesterday. I am anticipating that we will report any proposed changes to the Canada Council's commissioning program in an upcoming Bulletin.

Pan-Canadian Music Coalition

The driving forces behind this initiative are Tim Brady, Aimé Dontigny and Mireille Gagne from Quebec, Jim Montgomery from Ontario, Therese Costes and Michael Matthews from Manitoba and Jordan Nobles from BC. Tim Brady, Jim Montgomery and Michael Matthews are current CLC members and, while Tim is still on the CLC's Executive Council, both Jim and Michael have served on the CLC's Executive Council in the past. The purpose of this new organization is to help develop and advocate for "living Canadian art music" nationally and internationally. The proposal for creating this group was described in much more detail in the Winter 2004 Bulletin. The Creator's Assistance Grant described above was obtained by the CLC to help get this group started. Funding was used for two different Toronto meetings to prepare the group's initial mandate and to have an open meeting for individuals in Toronto to attend a presentation made by Tim Brady and Jim Montgomery. This Toronto presentation allowed for the coalition to get an anglophone response to their ideas as the initial concept came out of last year's New Music Presenters Conference which took place in Montreal in March, 2003.

It was decided in the discussions following the Toronto presentation, that it would be very advantageous to have a further round of meetings that would be scheduled in conjunction with the Winnipeg New Music Festival in January, 2004. As there were some funds still remaining in the grant, the CLC got permission to apply these to the travel expenses for the Winnipeg Meeting. In addition to the already-mentioned, Tim Brady, Aimé Dontigny, Therese Costes and Jordan Nobles, DB Boyko (BC), Paul Cram (NS), Jennifer Waring (ON) and Clark Ross (Nfld), attended the Winnipeg meeting to deal with the process of formally establishing this organization. More information about this group will be carried in a future CLC Bulletin. If all goes well, I do know that they are planning to have an official launch at the 2005 Open Ears Festival in Kitchener, Waterloo.

International Society of Contemporary Music

As you may recall from last year's President's Report, long-serving CLC Executive member, Keith Hamel, was elected to the ISCM's own Executive Committee. As was pointed out at the time, this is the first time that a composer from North America has been elected to this council in the 80 year history of the ISCM. CLC executive member, Paul Steenhuisen, has been Canadian ISCM Representative for the past year.

Both Paul and Keith attended the 2003 World Music Days which took place in Slovenia and the ISCM 2004 World Music Days will take place in Switzerland this fall. An unprecedented 3 Canadian works proposed by the ISCM Canadian Section have been chosen for performance in Switzerland: Melissa Hui's COME AS YOU ARE, David Berezan's CYCLO, and Christian Calon's SOUFFLES PRIMITIVES. The ISCM 2005 World Music Days will take place in Zagreb. The Winter 2004 Bulletin described the new process by which scores were selected for the Canadian nominations of pieces to be performed at the 2005 World Music Days.

University Composition Positions

Just over a year ago, it was brought to my attention by a number of CLC members, that a non-Canadian composer had been hired for a tenure-track position at the University of British Columbia. The CLC believes strongly that all Canadian universities must follow the federally legislated hiring guidelines that are laid out by Human Resources and Development Canada (HDRC). Simply put, these guidelines state that a qualified Canadian must be given preference for any position. Unfortunately, recent changes to the HDRC guidelines have made it far too easy for employers to sidestep this rule. These changes were primarily designed to help industry and the sciences address hirings in areas where a certain skill set may not be available within the Canadian pool of applicants. Applying this process to a university appointment in the Humanities, let alone to the Fine Arts, seems quite unjustifiable to us.

On behalf of the CLC, I wrote letters to various levels of Administration at UBC and after not receiving a satisfactory justification for this appointment of a foreign composer, the CLC began working with the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) to find ways of bringing this situation to the attention of the Federal government and the public. This process was described in detail in the CLC's

Winter 2004 Bulletin. In terms of federal politics, the changeover of the Jean Chretien to the Paul Martin administration, coupled with the pending election call, has meant that no one appears interested in looking into this matter. After many months of work by myself and Jim Turk, Executive Director of the CAUT, this situation has finally made it into the news with feature articles appearing in the Vancouver Sun, National Post and the Globe and Mail a few weeks ago. In all three papers, additional discussion of this topic was carried out in the Letters To The Editor section. Janet Danielson, in fact, had two excellent letters of her own printed, one in the Vancouver Sun and another in the Globe and Mail.

What made these articles so powerful in their argument that some injustice had taken place at UBC, were the number of qualified Canadian composers who had come forward as having been overlooked. Composers such as Linda Bouchard, James Hartley, Rodney Sharman, and Paul Steenhuisen, have provided the CAUT with copies of their resumes to help the CAUT make a strong case to the government that HRDC is not enforcing their own guidelines or that the guidelines are inadequate. Indeed, at the time that the press became interested in covering this story, the University of Victoria had hired a non-Canadian for a tenure-track Composition/Theory position. The CLC is currently investigating this hiring as well.

It is quite apparent from the account in the press, and from the emails that I have received personally, that the university situation of hiring non-Canadians or landed immigrants is not a problem exclusive to Music departments. As many of our members will know, tenure-track composition positions seem to come up so infrequently these days that all composers with an ear to academia know of job postings and the resultant appointment often well in advance of any official announcement. A university position in the Fine Arts allows the professor time and even funding, to pursue their creativity through their research and surely it should be culturally important to provide Canadians with this opportunity. It is for this reason that I believe so many CLC members are upset and why it is possible for us to rally such a strong case. There simply does not exist in other academic disciplines, a national organization like the CLC. The result is that we can follow the increasing trend of hiring foreign professors with a higher degree of scrutiny even though the statistics indicate that the problem is worsening throughout all disciplines.

It worries me, however, that we will only be able to create a modest storm of publicity and that universities will simply say nothing and weather it out. Certainly the prospect of taking legal action is far too daunting and expensive and I have been advised that the only value of a lawsuit is political – the attention it draws to the issue being of primary importance – but if there is little or no prospect of success, legal action can be costly and even backfire. I do intend to pull together all of the articles written on this topic and send them to Ann Dowsett Johnson, editor of the MACLEAN'S magazine, University Ranking Issue, to see if they would be interested in doing a feature article on this subject.

Communications

Mitchell Kitz, our Administrative Assistant, handles all day-to-day communications and continues to work on our Webpage <<http://www.composition.org>>. A sub-committee has recently been formed to investigate possible changes to the administrative infrastructure of the CLC and to examine better ways for us to deliver our services to our membership.

The CLC publishes our Bulletin three times per year in English and French and this remains our primary means of providing information on the CLC's activities to our membership. Janet Danielson has been serving as the editor of the Bulletin for the past year and has been doing a wonderful job. We are always interested in hearing from you and I would encourage anyone who wants to share relevant information or ideas with other composers to consider submitting an article.

Relationships With Other Service Organizations

CLC Executive Committee Member, Janet Danielson, is also Chair of the Association of Canadian Women Composers. We are also in contact with Steven Naylor, President of the Canadian Electroacoustic Community. Additionally, David Eagle and Keith Hamel are both members of the CEC.

Commissioning Rates

In January of 2003, the CLC raised the suggested minimum rates for the first time since 1998. While there was some realignment of categories, overall, the rates increased by about 30%. It is unlikely that the CLC will raise rates in the immediate future until we can better gauge the funding situation at the Canada Council and Provincial Arts Councils.

As was stressed in last year's President's Report, it is very important that composers continue to have as many organizations or performers as possible submit music commissioning applications so that the volume of applications remains high. This will allow us to argue that additional funds need to be added to the program. I realize that this can be a discouraging process but it is really the only tool that we have available that will help us to lobby for additional commissioning dollars.

Membership

For this past year, I am happy to report that the following composers have joined the Canadian League of Composers: Rose Bolton, Brian Current, John Gray, Colin Mack, Landis Maitland-Whitelaw, Justin Mariner, Eric Morin, Michael Oesterle, Jeff Smallman, Jeff Vidov. I would ask that all CLC members encourage talented Canadian composers who aren't members of the CLC to consider applying for membership.

In Memoriam

It is sad to report that during this past year, Lothar Klein passed away. Lothar taught for many years at the University of Toronto and I personally remember his warm manner and his inspired orchestration class.

Conclusion

This Report is at best a summary of some of the things that we have been occupied with over the year. There are many more items that haven't been included simply because they haven't yet become issues of urgency or priority. For example, I know that Micheline Roi recently attended a meeting of the Canadian Copyright Coalition and this organization may become important in the future, but for now we can only contribute to its discussions and goals.

I would like to conclude by wishing all CLC members a productive summer but with lots of moments of contented relaxation. If you feel that there is a matter that the CLC should be involved in or, if a letter of support from the President of the CLC would be of benefit, please do not hesitate to contact me or any other members of the executive.

Respectfully submitted,

John Burge
May 22, 2004
Fort Gary Hotel
Winnipeg, MB