

canadian league of composers

bulletin

winter 2004

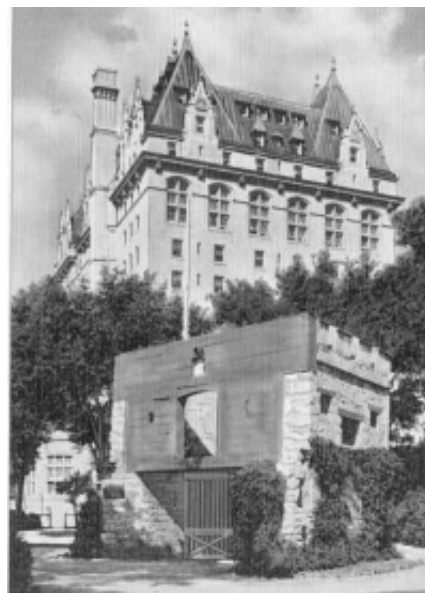
REPORT ON THE CANADIAN LEAGUE OF COMPOSERS INVOLVEMENT WITH THE ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN CHORAL CONDUCTORS' CONFERENCE "PODIUM 2004"

by *John Burge*

The Canadian League of Composers scheduled our 53rd Annual General Meeting in conjunction with the Association of Canadian Choral Conductors' Biennial Conference which took place during the 2004, May long weekend, in Winnipeg. The Conference was billed as, PODIUM 2004 SONORA BOREALIS, and most events were presented at the Fort Gary Hotel with the large evening concerts taking place in nearby churches and other venues. In recent years, the CLC has piggybacked our AGM in a similar fashion with such organizations as SOCAN, The Open Ears Festival, Orchestras Canada and the New Music Presenters Conference (Montreal) and this past event proved to be just as successful.

As I have mentioned before, the Canadian choral community has a strong record of supporting Canadian music and having the CLC Executive present for this conference is excellent opportunity to work with the ACCC on issues of mutual interest. To help achieve these goals, the CLC was fortunate to receive a Creators Assistance Grant from Heritage Canada. This program is administered by the SOCAN FOUNDATION and has proven to be a real financial life-line for our organization over that past few years. With this funding the CLC was able to sponsor the Saturday night Reception for all Conference delegates and to which all CLC members living in the Winnipeg area were also invited. The grant also subsidized travel costs for our executive committee and members of the Canadian Composers/Conductors Panel to come to Winnipeg.

The CLC's Annual General Meeting took place on the Sunday morning with the Sunday afternoon of the conference featuring a panel discussion comprised of two Canadian choral conductors and two Canadian composers. The CLC benefitted enormously by being represented on the panel by composers, Ramona Luengen, from Vancouver, and Harry



"Podium 2004" - continued...

Freedman, from Toronto. The choral conductors were Lenard Ratzlaff, Chair of the Department of Music at the University of Alberta, and Kathryn Laurin, Dean of Fine Arts at the University of Regina. I was the Moderator for the panel and the topic given to us was, "Challenge and Opportunity: Composing and Performing Canadian Choral Music in the 21st Century." I joined the ACCC a few years ago and, as a delegate to the conference, attended a number of the sessions and concerts. I can, therefore, report knowledgeably that the attendance level was very high for the Composer/Conductor panel session and many conductors spoke to me afterwards of the benefit of having a forum of this kind at a PODIUM conference.

The panelists began by describing a success story that they had had with a Canadian composition or with a Canadian choir. Because the creation of any art form involves risk-taking on some level and, as we all know, sometimes the most valuable lessons are the ones learned from our errors, the success stories were followed by a description of a negative experience. The panelists then proceeded to pick up on comments made by each other and further questions were provided by myself and from the floor. The conversation and discussion was wide ranging and there was certainly much humour and mutual respect.

The CLC executive meet collectively for a full day of discussions on the Saturday. I have been a member of the CLC executive since 1993 and this is only meeting I can recall in which every member of the executive was able to attend. Considering that not one member of the executive actually lives in Winnipeg (Patrick Carrabre, the representative for Saskatchewan/Manitoba, resides in Brandon) and that the meeting was taking place on a holiday weekend, I find this a remarkable occurrence. Many items were discussed and reports on the most important of these will be found in upcoming BULLETINS. One of the advantages of arranging for the CLC AGM to coincide with another organization's event is that it allows us to intersect with people who represent important cultural institutions. In this case, Russell Kelly, Head of the Music Section of the Canada Council, was speaking at an information session for the PODIUM Conference.

The CLC had been trying to arrange a meeting with Mr. Kelley and, on hearing of our presence in Winnipeg, he was able to attend the CLC's council meeting for 1.5 hours. This proved to be a remarkably candid discussion that touched upon many points but the majority of the conversation dealt with the Music Commissioning Program. Certainly he understands that the program is underfunded. He also suggests that, with the potential for increased Federal funding occurring around the Canada Council's 50th anniversary celebrations in a few years, this anniversary may be a good time to rectify the situation. We also exchanged views and opinions on other Canada Council programs and he expressed interest in helping us undertake an evaluation of our own corporate structure and to investigate better ways to represent our own membership more effectively.

Returning to the actual scheduled Conference events, there were, of course, many fine concerts. Many of these programs included performances of Canadian compositions. Because I know that I could not possibly compile a complete list of these works, I probably shouldn't mention any composers whose music was performed by name, but I would like to comment specifically on the National Youth Choir Concert. This is always an important event at ACCC Conferences as the choir is drawn from singers representing regions across the country. Kathryn Laurin was this year's conductor (Lenard Ratzlaff conducted the choir in 2002) and she commissioned two new works for the concert from CLC members, Mark Sirett and Alain Perron. This year's choir was a talented group and the commissioned works were given superb performances. It is worth pointing out that the choir had already performed this program a number of times at venues in Western Canada prior to the Conference performance so they were very well rehearsed. Also on this program, the prize winning compositions from the ACCC Canadian Composition Competition were performed. Winning composers, Allan Bevin and Jeff Smallman, were both in attendance and spoke enthusiastically of having their music performed before a packed audience comprised mostly of choral conductors. As part of their prize, their works will be published by Cypress Press. This concert was broadcast on CBC's program, Choral Concert, the following week. It is worth adding that, Winnipeg composer, Sid Robinovitch, also had a commissioned work premiered at the conference and he was also much involved in other sessions.

The wonderful thing about moving the AGM across the country is that you get to meet and hear comments from different CLC members. In Winnipeg I spoke at some length with James Harley, Ken Nichols, Bill Puhra, David Scott, Michael Parker and Jim Hiscott at some of the different sessions that the CLC was involved in. The next ACCC conference will take place in Victoria in 2006 and, while it will likely prove to be financially prohibited to have a full meeting of the CLC executive, I do think that the CLC should try to be involved in the conference in some fashion.



BULLETIN

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TRANS IT

World New Music Days 2004 November 3-12, Switzerland

events with Canadian works:

□ **4/11**

- 14.30 h, Lucerne, BOA Halle: Chamber Music Compositions.

Ensemble Antipodes. 1. UK: Bryn Harrison: *low time patterns*. 2. **Canada: Melissa Hui: *Come as you are***. 3. Germany: Claus St. Mahnkopf: *Hommage à Daniel Libeskind I*, 4. China: Wang Xi-Lin: *Oktett op. 45*.

8/11

- 14.30 h, Biel, Stadtkirche:
Chamber Music Compositions. Matthias Ziegler (flute), Philippe Racine (flute); Ensembles (flute) HMT Winterthur/Zürich; Daniel Glaus (organ). 1. Germany: Gerald Eckert: *Klangräume II*. 2. **Canada: Christian Calon: *Souffles primitifs***. 3. Australia: Dominik Karski: *Glimmer*. 4. Brazil: Jorge Antunes: *Eoliolinda*. 5. Switzerland: Presentation: dynamic organ (prototype 3)

9/11

- 17.00 h, Genève, Les Délices de Voltaire (Cinéma):
Electronic Music and Short Movies: (Project: Hannes Schüpbach). 1. **Canada: David Berezan: *Cyclo***. 2. Iceland: Rikhardur H. Fridriksson: *Lidan II*. 3. Argentina: Julieta Szewach: *Clamor, Silencio e Infinito*. 4. USA: Steven Kazuo Takasugi: *The Jargon of Nothingness*

The CLC wishes to thank for their support:

The SOCAN Foundation

and our members!

Due to errors and omissions in the 2004 Directory, the CLC has prepared a corrected version. Please discard your previous directory. The CLC regrets any confusion resulting from the change.

CLC Infrastructure

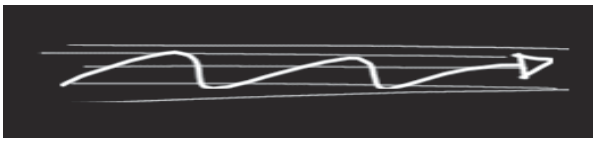
In the fall of 2003 the Canadian League of Composers Council began discussions regarding the League's efficacy. Through our short discussions on council, it quickly became apparent that the breadth and depth of the discussion required more time and focus than the full executive council had on hand.

Subsequently, a committee was formed to examine the league's effectiveness and to formulate possible solutions. Members of this committee are Micheline Roi, Keith Hamel and Andre Ristic. This committee did a brief overview of operations and identification of key issues. Upon consideration of the committee's report, the League Council is strongly considering pursuing infrastructure development of the League.

The League council met briefly with the Canada Council's Russel Kelly at the Executive Council meeting in Winnipeg last spring. The Canada council has agreed to provide some funds to hire a consultant. This consultancy will begin the process of revisiting the League's vision, mandate and infrastructure and will pursue funds in order to complete an in depth examination of the League's operations and to propose a course of action.

The committee is now in the process of considering proposals from possible consultancy candidates.

Micheline Roi



ISCM REPORT Slovenia 2003

In late September 2003, as Canadian delegate to the International Society for Contemporary Music, I travelled to Ljubljana, Slovenia to join 47 other member countries attending the World Music Days. Over the course of 9 days, I took part in the abundant concert activity that was spread throughout this small, beautiful country. As well, I attended ISCM General Assembly meetings as representative of the Canadian Section, and took part in selecting the top work by a young composer, which was a \$10,000 (USD) prize awarded to Australian composer Matthew Bienick. With at least four concerts a day, often with each in a different location, delegates and audience experienced the festivals in the Slovenian capital of Ljubljana, the eastern city of Maribor, the coastal towns of Piran and Portonoz, St. Mary's Church on the Island at Bled, and in the stunning Postojna Cave.



As usual, the quality of works varied, spanning the whole range from selected old works and misplaced student pieces to those by significant active composers from around the world. Performances ranged from small local and student groups to recognized touring ensembles such as the BBC choir, het Nieuwe Ensemble, Klangforum Wien, and Les Percussions de Strasbourg. The sheer bulk of concerts, meetings, and travel made for non-stop activity.

The Canadian works selected for performance by the Slovenian jury were *Refraction* (for violin, clarinet, and piano) by former Canadian delegate Keith Hamel (now on the ISCM International Executive Committee). No longer the delegate, *Refraction* was Hamel's first submission to the World Music Days, and a group of young musicians gave an adequate performance of his work in a church in Piran. More rehearsal time would have benefitted this work, which was originally composed for musicians of the Ensemble Intercontemporain. The other work by a Canadian composer was *Tjak!* for youth choir by Stephen Hatfield, who was not present at the World Music Days. *Tjak!* was brought to the festival by one of the featured youth choirs; with the work already in their repertoire, they gave a very strong performance in the main concert hall of the World Music Days central conference location, the Cancarjev dom.

One of the most impressive aspects of the festival was the degree of print, radio, and television coverage of the concerts. No matter how remote or central the location, a crew was almost always on hand to document the concerts, interview guest composers, and retransmit the ISCM World Music Days throughout the broadcast schedule. A television crew of at least four cameras was often present for the orchestral concerts, the choral, and the string quartets, for example. Excerpts of the World Music Days concerts were presented on television news broadcasts, and selected concerts were broadcast live, in their entirety. By mid-festival, it was announced that 110 print articles had made the local and national newspapers.

In the past few years, there has been little correlation between the works selected by the Canadian section and the Canadian works presented at the World Music Days. With my appointment as delegate, I feel that it is important to have a more accurate representation of Canadian music through the works heard. When presented with this problem at the General Assembly meeting, the Executive Committee identified plans for an ISCM touring ensemble, which would perform some of the national section works at the World Music Days festival, and tour these works in addition. Given the financial and organizational complexities of having the World Music Days in a different country each year, there is increased interest in adding ISCM concert activities outside of the boundaries of the World Music Days. Similarly, the Canadian Section is interested in increasing concert activity, forming working relationships with ensembles, and making greater effort to disseminate selected Canadian works. In addition, we plan to make the selected Canadian works available to ensembles and presenters, in order that their selection is made more meaningful through subsequent performances.

Paul Steenhuisen



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