

ICM  
INSTITUTE  
FOR  
CANADIAN MUSIC  
*NEWSLETTER*

Published by the Institute for Canadian Music, Faculty of Music, University of Toronto  
Editor: Robin Elliott

The Canadian Musical Heritage Society

The Canadian Musical Heritage Society (CMHS) has been a leading research institution for the past 21 years. It was founded in 1982 with the aim of publishing a multi-volume anthology of historical Canadian music. By 1999 the 25-volume anthology had been completed, with professionally edited scores of some 1500 works composed before 1950. The individual volumes are organized by genre, and each volume opens with a scholarly essay and critical notes on the repertoire by the volume's editor. For the initial volumes much of the music was copied by hand, but CMHS began using music notation software programmes in the mid-1980s; music for the later volumes was often newly engraved.

In 1997 a two-volume *Historical Anthology of Canadian Music* (HACM) was produced; it contains 122 works from the Canadian Musical Heritage series, arranged chronologically from *Jesous Ahatonhia* (ca. 1648) to Godfrey Ridout's *Ballade* for viola and strings (1938). Another project was a web-based *Inventory of Notated Canadian Music to 1950*, created initially in co-operation with the National Library of Canada. This database contains over 30,000 items, with works by 342 Canadian composers and authors.

As the vast majority of compositions published by CMHS have never been recorded, and as 95 per cent of Canadians do not read music, CMHS launched a recording project to make the works more accessible. Two CDs were issued in the *Série Lavallée Series*, one of songs (*Le Souvenir*, CMC-CD 5696, 1996) and one of

choral music (*Noël*, Marquis Classics 77471 8122728, 1998), but the funding necessary to sustain this project on an ongoing basis was not forthcoming.

In a meeting in Ottawa on 12 April 2003, the Board of Directors of CMHS gave Clifford Ford, the CMHS's Executive Secretary for its entire history, the mandate to continue the publication and sales projects of CMHS through his company Clifford Ford Publications, with effect from 1 June 2003. A new project will be *Performing Our Musical Heritage*, a graded series of educational pieces, the first volumes of which are to be published later this year. Good luck to Clifford Ford Publications (<http://cliffordfordpublications.ca>) as it prepares to continue the activities of CMHS.

The next issue of the *ICM Newsletter* appears in September; deadline for submissions is August 15th.

**Institute for Canadian Music  
Faculty of Music  
University of Toronto  
Edward Johnson Building  
80 Queen's Park  
Toronto, ON M5S 2C5**

Tel. (416) 946 8622

Fax (416) 946 3353

Email: [ChalmersChair@yahoo.ca](mailto:ChalmersChair@yahoo.ca)

Web page: [www.utoronto.ca/icm](http://www.utoronto.ca/icm)

The Juno Awards  
Corel Centre, Kanata, Ontario  
6 April 2003

For each award, the first item is the 'of the year' award title, the second is the artist, and the third is the 'song' or *album*

Aboriginal Recording: Derek Miller: 'Lovesick Blues'  
Album: Avril Lavigne: *Let Go*  
Album Design: S. Goode/M. Dempster/N. Garcia/M. Malandrucolo: K-OS *Exit*  
Alternative Album: Broken Social Scene: *You Forgot It In People*  
Artist: Shania Twain  
Blues Album: Jack de Keyzer: *6 String Lover*  
Children's Album: Fred Penner: *Sing with Fred*  
Classical Composition: Bramwell Tovey: *Requiem for a Charred Skull*  
Classical Solo or Chamber: Marc-André Hamelin: *Liszt Paganini Studies*  
Classical Solo with Lg Ens: James Ehnes, MSO, M. Bernardi: Bruch Concertos  
Classical Vocal or Choral: Les Violons du Roy: Mozart *Requiem*  
Contemporary Christian/Gospel Album: Toronto Mass Choir: *Instrument of Praise*  
Contemporary Jazz Album: Richard Underhill: *tales from the blue lounge*  
Country Recording: Shania Twain: 'I'm Gonna Getcha Good!'  
Dance Recording: The Sound Bluntz: 'Billie Jean'  
Francophone Album: Daniel Bélanger: *Rêver mieux*  
Group: Sum41  
Instrumental Album: Robert Michaels: *Allegro*  
International Album: Eminem: *The Eminem Show*

Jack Richardson Producer: Alanis Morissette: 'Hands Clean'/'So Unsexy'  
Juno Fan Choice Award: Shania Twain  
New Artist: Avril Lavigne  
New Group: Theory of a Deadman  
Pop Album: Avril Lavigne: *Let Go*  
Rap Recording: Swollen Members: *Monsters in the Closet*  
R&B/Soul Recording: Remy Shand: *The Way I Feel*  
Recording Engineer: Denis Tougas: 'Everybody's Got A Story'/'Double Agent'  
Reggae Recording: Sonia Collymore: 'You Won't See Me Cry'  
Rock Album: Our Lady Peace: *Gravity*  
Roots & Traditional Solo Album: Lynn Miles: *Unravel*  
Roots & Traditional Group Album: Zubot & Dawson: *Chicken Scratch*  
Single: Avril Lavigne: 'Complicated'  
Songwriter: Chad Kroeger/Nickelback: 'Hero' | Nickelback: 'Too Bad'/'How Your Remind Me'  
Traditional Jazz Album: Renee Rosnes: *Life on Earth*  
Video: Ante Kovac & Matthew Good: 'Weapon'  
Vocal Jazz Album: Diana Krall: *Live in Paris*  
World Music Album: Jaszcz Raz: *Balagane*

While positioning itself as the Canadian equivalent of the Grammy awards, the Juno Awards ceremony of CARAS (the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences) is truly a celebration of English-language mainstream popular music artists. One measure of this is the number of spin-off awards that have been created to honour musicians neglected by the Junos: ADISQ Awards for Quebec artists, East Coast Music Awards for musicians of Atlantic Canada, Canadian Country Music Awards, Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards, Canadian Reggae Music Awards, Vibe Awards (for Canadian gospel music), and so on.

A glance at this year's compilation CD (*Juno Awards 2003*, EMI Canada 7243 5 82698 2 6) confirms this bias: all of the 15 tracks are popular music songs, and only one is in French. The televised version of the awards ceremony, held this year at the Corel Centre near Ottawa and hosted by Shania Twain, was devoted to popular music acts. Fewer than a dozen of the 37 awards were presented on air, and all were for popular music artists. Jazz and classical music award winners, for instance, were dealt with in a 45-second spot just after a commercial break. The one classical musician who participated in the broadcast, violinist James Ehnes, somewhat incongruously co-presented the award for best R&B/Soul Recording of the Year.

It was certainly a successful formula to create an audience for the event: the 18,500 tickets for the show were sold within an hour of becoming available on the internet. This reflects the fact that Canadian popular music is no longer an oxymoron. Many Canadian artists now measure their record sales by the million and a select few, such as Shania Twain, Céline Dion, and Alanis Morissette, sell CDs by the tens of

million. In a recent article Linda Lister wrote about the 'cult of celebrity' which creates and sustains the huge success of these singers.<sup>1</sup> In the old days, Juno Awards were seldom given to such artists, whose career is largely carried on abroad, but that rule no longer holds.

This year's ceremony provided further tribute to the business acumen of Vancouver manager Terry McBride, whose Nettwerk Management has guided the careers of Sarah McLachlan, Bare Naked Ladies, and dozens more. McBride was inducted into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame (as was Tom Cochrane), and his latest protégée, Avril Lavigne, won four Junos. That's as many as Neil Young, two more than Leonard Cohen or Joni Mitchell and three more than Glenn Gould.<sup>2</sup> Over the past year the 18-year-old Lavigne (b. 27 Sep. 1984 in Napanee, Ontario) has leapt from obscurity to international fame and fortune on the strength of a single CD, her debut album *Let Go*, which had sold 12 million units by the time of the Juno ceremony.

Aspiring Avril Lavignes may have a tougher time of it in future, as new recording and distribution technologies take hold. 'If selling CDs was my only source of revenue right now I would be very bummed,' McBride said recently.<sup>3</sup> But in the meantime he, and the artists he manages, and for that matter the Juno Awards, are cashing in while the going is good. *R.E.*

<sup>1</sup> Linda Lister, 'Divafication: the deification of modern female pop stars,' *Popular Music and Society* 25.3-4 (Fall/Winter 2001): 1-10.

<sup>2</sup> These artists all had (or still have) major careers abroad and thus were shunned by CARAS in former years.

<sup>3</sup> Alexandra Gill, 'Canada's leading music man,' *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto, 5 April 2003): R9.

## Karl Steiner, Canadian Apostle of the Second Viennese School

by Albrecht Gaub  
Hamburg, Germany

On 20 June 2001, the pianist Karl Steiner died in Belleville, Ontario. The *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* and the Newsletter of the Arnold Schönberg Center in Vienna both published obituaries,<sup>1</sup> but in Canada Steiner's death passed virtually unnoticed. Steiner had been living in Canada for fifty-two years, he had been affiliated with the Faculty of Music at McGill University for most of this time, he had been heard on the CBC regularly, and there had even been three documentaries about him on Canadian television. But although he had found increasing recognition in Vienna, he was very disappointed with the Canadian music scene, from which he gradually withdrew in his last years. Who was this man, who was considered to be worthy of highest honours in Austria and yet is not mentioned once in the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, not even in passing?



Karl Steiner, Montreal, 18 October 1999  
Photo: Albrecht Gaub

him to teach music. In his earlier years Steiner also tried his hand at composing, in a style resembling Hanns Eisler and Kurt Weill, as he would recall. Although he later claimed to have been 'far too liberal' to develop Communist sympathies, he did collaborate with artists from the *Arbeiterbewegung* such as the stage director Franz Ibaschütz, for whom he wrote incidental music. Nothing of this work survives. In 1937 Steiner opened a music school of his own, organized within the social-democratic *Volksbildungsverein 'Apolloneum'*, but the Nazi invasion on 10 March 1938 put an end to his teaching efforts. After *Reichskristallnacht* he was interned in the Dachau concentration camp near Munich for some months. An uncle of his bailed him out. By way of France, Steiner emigrated to Shanghai, one of the few places he could access without a visa. Steiner taught music there intermittently and

### AN EXPATRIATE PIANIST FROM VIENNA

Karl Steiner was born in Vienna on 12 March 1912. His father owned a clothing store. After taking his *Matura* (Austrian high school degree) Steiner studied musicology at the University of Vienna with Egon Wellesz, Robert Lach, Alfred Orel, and others. Among his fellow students there was the violinist Joseph Berliawsky, whom he would meet again in Canada. Steiner did not take a doctorate, but otherwise he pursued practically the same programme Ida Halpern (then still Ruhdörfer) had begun about five years earlier; when I asked Steiner whether he knew her, it turned out that he had never heard her name. At the same time, Steiner took private piano lessons, but because of the Austro-German institutional separation of musicology (taught at universities) from practical music making (taught at *Musikhochschulen*) he could not take a degree in performance. Finally he succeeded in obtaining a diploma in music education from the Viennese *Staatsakademie* as an external candidate, which legally allowed

tried to support himself by playing in bars and dance halls; for several years he hardly touched a piano. The Jewish community of Shanghai included musicians like the Joachim brothers, Herbert Ruff, and Erwin Marcus, all of whom Steiner would meet again in Montreal.

After the communist revolution in China the European refugees in Shanghai were cast adrift again. Steiner contemplated a return to Austria, but when he learned how devastating the effects of the Nazi regime had been, he abandoned the idea. His entire family had perished. He would not go to Israel either; to the end of his life he remained a staunch anti-Zionist. But when Canada opened its doors again for Austrians in 1949, he took the chance. Entering the country by way of Vancouver, he was advised to settle in Montreal. He began teaching, at first privately, then from 1964 at McGill; however, he never advanced beyond adjunct faculty status in spite of Helmut Blume's support. He retired from McGill in 1989.

In Shanghai Steiner had married another Jewish refugee, Lisa Cohn of Breslau, but this was something of a marriage of convenience, even though it

<sup>1</sup> *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* 56.8-9 (2001): 78; Arnold Schönberg Center Newsletter 9 (Sep. 2001-Feb. 2002): available online at [http://www.schoenberg.at/2\\_center/newsletter\\_edition9\\_e.htm#ASI](http://www.schoenberg.at/2_center/newsletter_edition9_e.htm#ASI).

lasted until 1970. Then he married Emmy Hummel, a post-war émigré from Germany who was twenty years his junior. Steiner adopted her two sons from an earlier marriage to an Italian: Nicolino (born 1956) and Bruno (born 1963). Steiner had no children of his own. The Steiners lived in Montreal's anglophone Notre-Dame-de-Grace neighbourhood until October 1999, when a new surge of Quebecois separatism finally led Steiner (who spoke no French at all) to quit the province. He and his wife settled in Belleville, Ontario. From the mid-1990s, Karl and Emmy Steiner would spend the winter months in New Orleans, where their son Bruno had established himself.

## STEINER AND THE SECOND VIENNESE SCHOOL

Karl Steiner was introduced to the Second Viennese School by the pianist Olga Novakovic, who had been affiliated with the circle for several years before Steiner became her student in 1932. Henceforth, Steiner would always emphasize his close ties to the Second Viennese School.<sup>2</sup> Yet Steiner knew neither Schoenberg nor Berg personally, and his acquaintance with Webern was rather superficial. In the case of Schoenberg, who had been living in Berlin since 1925 and who left Europe just one year after Steiner's introduction to Novakovic, this is not particularly surprising; Berg, however, is another matter. Steiner related that Novakovic made him study Berg's Piano Sonata early on; he prided himself in having been one of its first interpreters, and Novakovic seems to have treated him as her favourite student. It is strange, then, that she never introduced Steiner to Berg. Of course Berg died early, but there would have been no less than three years during which such an encounter could have taken place. Steiner recalled that he once played Berg's sonata at a concert; the following day, Novakovic summoned him and told him, 'You have to play it more slowly.' She had discussed the sonata with Berg the night before. As to Webern, Steiner attended some of his lectures on the history of music, but again there is no evidence of a personal encounter. To Steiner's credit it must be said that he was always frank about this. But how then did he justify his claim of a close affiliation with the circle?

The answer is that to Steiner the Second Viennese School was always more than just Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern. He viewed the composers he called its 'second generation' as integral members: Hans Erich Apostel, Hanns Jelinek, Eduard Steuermann, Julius Schloss, Philipp Herschkowitsch (Herscovici), and some others. These Steiner actually knew; he was especially close to Apostel, whose *Sonatina ritmica*, Op. 5 (1934) he played early on (as the second pianist after Novakovic, who premiered it), and later to Julius

<sup>2</sup> In Austria the Second Viennese School is now usually referred to simply as 'The Viennese School.'

Schloss, whom he met only in exile, in Shanghai. After the war Steiner resumed his correspondence with Apostel, Jelinek, and Steuermann; in the case of Apostel, he succeeded in luring him to Canada for a visit. Consequently, it was this 'second generation' whose music was especially dear to Steiner and which he promoted almost single-handedly. There was, however, another member of the circle, and a fairly prominent one, that Steiner shunned: Hanns Eisler. Eisler, after his breach with Schoenberg in 1925 (i.e. before Steiner could have met him), was, quite obviously, a renegade, a traitor to the aesthetics of Schoenberg, something Steiner could never forgive.

## STEINER'S AESTHETICS

Steiner's repertory as a pianist was not confined to the music of the Second Viennese School. In his choice of earlier music, however, he was nevertheless guided by the preferences typical of the school. As one would expect, he championed Bach and the music of the Viennese classics. Typically Viennese was his neglect for much music composed outside the German-speaking area, a neglect that even extended to 20th-century music. Steiner's admiration of Stravinsky was confined to his dodecaphonic period, and when I asked him about his opinion on Messiaen, he answered brusquely, 'He comes from a different tradition; he does not belong to us.'<sup>3</sup> Quite apart from the question of national traditions, sensuality, playfulness and virtuosity (even in music of indisputable greatness) were things Steiner disliked. He used to say, 'Romantik interessiert mich wenig' (Romanticism interests me little), thus dismissing most 19th-century music. Steiner held some sympathies for Brahms and even Chopin, but as he defended the ideal of 'absolute music' uncompromisingly, Liszt, Wagner and many others were anathema to him. Once, searching for common ground, I discussed Beethoven's sonatas with Steiner. He was unhappy about my admiration for Opp. 53, 57, and 106: 'Why always the virtuosic sonatas?' For the ascetic Steiner, virtuosity was almost a sin: at best, it detracted from the content; at worst, it tried to conceal its absence. Music of unabashed sensuality made him no less uneasy. 'At age fourteen,' he once remarked on TV, 'I admired Tchaikovsky, but later I became more mature.'

For Steiner, the Second Viennese School also included a specific tradition of performance, which he

<sup>3</sup> Whenever Steiner spoke to me of 'us,' he included me in some conspiracy; frequently he would say, 'Wir müssen zusammenhalten' (We must stick together). He took it for granted that I, as a student of Viennese-trained Constantin Floros (whose writings on Berg Steiner approved of) would share his aesthetic convictions.

sought to preserve. His correspondence with Apostel, Jelinek, Schloss, and Steuermann shows his almost obsessive quest for authenticity, for rendering a score exactly as the composer wished. A report on the courses Steiner gave in Vienna in June 1997 sheds light on his pianistic ideals:<sup>4</sup> Making the structure of a composition audible was Steiner's foremost goal; he said, 'The perception of the intended meaning is the fundamental prerequisite for playing this music [of the Second Viennese School].' In terms of technique, he advocated a 'fluent' style of playing that should emphasize horizontal lines, using 'natural rubato.' According to him, the pedal should be used sparingly, as little as possible. He always warned against romanticizing Berg, frequently referring to Novakovic and also to Josef Polnauer, another member of the circle. As to the Russian piano school and its Canadian representatives (notably Lubka Kolessa), he spoke of them only with disdain.

Steiner had a good sense of humour, but as any true believer, he did not permit jokes about what was holy to him. And music was a dead serious matter to him. He felt offended by any kind of popular or 'light' music, and not only by its post-war North American manifestations; unlike the Joachim brothers, he took no delight in playing 'light' music in Shanghai. As happy as Steiner was about being courted by Vienna again in his last years, he was furious about the fact that these efforts at rehabilitation of expatriate musicians were not confined to the Second Viennese School, but also extended to composers like Erich Wolfgang Korngold. 'Das muss bekämpft werden' (This has to be fought against) was his standard comment on Korngold. On the other hand, Steiner was equally critical of post-war developments like the total serialism of the Darmstadt school, electronic music, and new attempts to transcend the boundaries of absolute music. What he advocated was, basically, traditional music, 'tönend bewegte Form' in Hanslick's sense, only with tonality replaced by dodecaphony.

### STEINER'S CANADIAN MISSION

After settling in Canada, Karl Steiner took it upon himself to systematically introduce and promote the music of the Second Viennese School to the Canadian public. Hartmut Krones, Professor of Musicology at the Universität (until 1999 Hochschule) für Musik in Vienna, holds that outside Austria the 'second generation' of the school never had a more zealous champion than Karl Steiner. In his teaching, Steiner regularly used twelve-tone music from the earliest possible stage. Essential to

Steiner's teaching was Jelinek's *Zwölftonfibel* (Twelve-tone Primer), Op. 21, published in 1953, which is both an introduction to twelve-note composition and to playing music written in that idiom. Of course Steiner was in need of pedagogical repertory. At his suggestion, Schloss wrote two cycles for beginners (1958-59), to which he later added his *23 Impressions* (completed 1964); similarly, Steiner prompted Otto Joachim to write his twelve *Twelve-Tone Pieces for Children* (1959). And of course, he welcomed Webern's *Kinderstück* after its belated discovery in 1963.

As the case of Otto Joachim shows, Karl Steiner's work was not without effect on Canadian music. Steiner also established contacts with younger composers, mostly French-Canadian, whose aesthetic outlook was similar to his and whose music he played, even premiered; Gilles Lefebvre was one of them. The *Six Preludes on a Tone Row* (1963) by William Keith Rogers was another favourite of his. At McGill, he established a lasting friendship with Bruce Mather. On the other hand, Steiner seems to have ignored dodecaphonic composers in other regions of Canada, even John Weinzweig. In the 1960s Steiner wrote articles and gave lectures with the goal of convincing Canadian schools to add a compulsory training in twelve-note music to their curricula, but these efforts were in vain.<sup>5</sup>

There was one ally from the old Viennese days: Franz Kraemer, another refugee, had studied composition with Berg and was in fact closer to the Second Viennese School than anybody in Canada. (Incidentally Kraemer's estate, acquired by the National Library of Canada after his death in 1999, contains an unpublished cycle of five dodecaphonic piano pieces composed in 1934.) But soon after Kraemer had settled in Canada he gave up his artistic career in favour of an administrative one. As a CBC executive, Kraemer championed Steiner's work; Steiner frequently performed on the radio, mostly the music of the Second Viennese School. Otherwise, Steiner was rarely heard or seen outside of Montreal, which may also explain his absence from the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*. He was never introduced to Helmut Kallmann, who heard Steiner's name for the first time in 1999. Yet various Canadian TV channels, including the CBC, aired documentaries on Steiner between 1985 and ca. 1996. There is a brief mention of Steiner in the collective volume *A History of the Austrian Migration to Canada*, published in 1996,<sup>6</sup> and Arthur Kaptainis mentions him in his 1998

<sup>4</sup> Ulrike Fendel, 'Die Interpretation der Klaviermusik der Wiener Schule. Symposion mit Karl Steiner (18.-20.6.)' (Interpretation of the Piano Music of the [Second] Viennese School. A Symposium with Karl Steiner [18-20 June]), *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* 52.9 (1997): 48-50.

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., the article in the Canadian Federation of Music Teachers' Associations *Newsbulletin* 19.1 (Nov. 1964): 2.  
<sup>6</sup> Frederick C. Engelmann and Manfred Prokop, 'Achievements and contributions of Austrian-Canadians,' chapter 12 of *A History of the Austrian Migration to Canada*, ed.

article on musical refugees from Nazi Germany and Austria, 'Generation EX.'<sup>7</sup> On the Austrian side, Christian Baier wrote a short article on Steiner in 1988.<sup>8</sup> Steiner also has an entry in the book *Orpheus im Exil* (Orpheus in Exile) from 1995.<sup>9</sup>

In contrast to Steiner and Kraemer, soprano Ruzena Herlinger, who in 1929 had commissioned the aria *Der Wein* from Berg and who lived in Montreal from 1949 as well, did not do much to disseminate the legacy of the Second Viennese School in Canada. She no longer appeared in public, and her students hardly performed the respective music, least of all *Der Wein*. Steiner used to refer (with a smile) to the memoirs of Hans Heinsheimer, where Herlinger is described as 'a Viennese lady of Czech descent, whose financial resources unfortunately far surpassed her vocal qualities.'<sup>10</sup> As to Alfred Rosé, who lived in London, Ontario, he had known members of the Second Viennese School, but he had never subscribed to its aesthetics. Hence Steiner had good reason to regard himself the true standard-bearer of the Second Viennese School in Canada.

Like Steiner, Otto Joachim believed that dodecaphony was the only artistically valid method of composing contemporary music and thus seemed Steiner's natural ally. Indeed Joachim entrusted the pianistic tuition of his son Davis to Steiner, and his *12-Tone Pieces for Children* were expressly written for his son's lessons with Steiner. But the Steiner-Joachim relationship was always purely professional and, at times, strained. Steiner used to remark that Joachim was a late convert, who in Shanghai still had expressed his inability to understand dodecaphony. For his part, Joachim rebuked Steiner: 'He speaks of the Viennese School. He was the student of some woman in Vienna and has never met Webern and so on ... The only one he was in touch with was Apostel. And he tried and even succeeded to bring Apostel here. And now Steiner is the one who understands everything about dodecaphony, with his Jelinek and his Apostel, and all the others do not exist.'<sup>11</sup>

---

Frederick C. Engelmann, Manfred Prokop and Aranz A. J. Szabo (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1996): 164.

<sup>7</sup> Arthur Kaptainis, 'Generation EX: German and Austrian expatriates of the war years changed the cultural landscape of Canada,' *The Gazette* (Montreal, 19 December 1998): D1-D2.

<sup>8</sup> Christian Baier, 'Karl Steiner,' *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* 43 (1988): 678.

<sup>9</sup> Walter Pass, Gerhard Scheit, and Wilhelm Svoboda, eds. *Orpheus im Exil: Die Vertreibung der österreichischen Musik von 1938 bis 1945* (Vienna: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 1995): 362.

<sup>10</sup> Hans Heinsheimer, 'Begegnung mit einem Riesen. Alban Berg' (Encounter with a Giant), *Melos* no. 11 (1969): 463 (translation A.G.).

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Albrecht Gaub, 26 September 1999 (unpublished).

In 1985, on the occasion of Berg's hundredth birthday, Steiner organized a concert with music by Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern in McGill's Pollack Hall. It accompanied an exhibition on the Second Viennese School that was organized by the Austrian Government. But in the course of time Steiner grew more and more embittered. At McGill, he believed himself to be surrounded by enemies, especially after the retirement of Helmut Blume; he went so far as to accuse a colleague of having wilfully destroyed some of his recordings. Of course the continuing public indifference towards most of the music he championed did not make him feel better. A few days before leaving Montreal, he gave a lecture (poorly attended) at McGill, which he called his 'testament.' (It was on the occasion of this lecture that I personally made Steiner's acquaintance.) Titled 'Interpretation of the Piano Music of the Viennese School,' it was practically the same lecture Steiner had given in Vienna on 19 June 1997. Thanks to Edward Laufer's intervention Steiner also appeared at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music, together with Hartmut Krones of Vienna, for a series of masterclasses and lectures.

Towards the end of his life Steiner attracted more attention in his native city than in Canada. He first returned to Vienna in 1981, and then more and more frequently. He gave courses (master classes) in Vienna in 1997 and 2000; in 2000 Austria awarded him the Ehrenkreuz für Wissenschaft und Kunst I. Klasse (Cross of Honour in Arts and Sciences, First Class).<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, he never became a member of the Order of Canada (let alone a *Chevalier du Québec*). The only true professional friend he won in his last years was Hartmut Krones. Krones organized Steiner's trips to Vienna and also assisted Steiner with his last public appearance, the two master classes (on 'Piano Music of the Viennese School' and 'The Lied of the Viennese School') that he gave at the University of New Orleans in February 2001.

## STEINER'S LEGACY

Karl Steiner taught the piano from about 1937, when his ill fated school in Vienna opened, almost to the very end of his long life. But for some unknown reason it is extremely hard to find a professional pianist who numbers Steiner among his teachers. Some of his many students, including his adopted son Bruno, showed exceptional gifts early on. They won prizes in prestigious competitions, and did so performing the music Karl Steiner championed. But once they had grown to adulthood, all of them seem to have abandoned their pianistic careers. Davis Joachim is of course a professional musician, but he is not a pianist.

---

<sup>12</sup> See *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* 55.8-9 (2000): 80.



Paul Helmer, once Steiner's colleague at McGill, remembers a certain Simon Aldrich (identical with the clarinetist of the same name?). As to Steiner's sons, the older became a singer who now maintains a teaching studio in London, England. Known as Johann Nikolaus Steiner for years, he later broke with his stepfather and adopted his birth name of Nicolino Giacalone again. On his (somewhat extravagant) personal web page the name of Karl Steiner is not mentioned.<sup>13</sup> His brother Bruno, who continues to use the name of Steiner, first turned to rock music (very much to the distress of his father) and later, in New Orleans, established himself as a physiotherapist. The impact of Karl Steiner's latter-day master classes is as yet unknown.

Steiner made quite a lot of recordings – at McGill, for the CBC and also in Germany. But in his lifetime, he only published one album of two compact discs, entitled *Music of the Second Generation of the Second Viennese School*, which was issued by Centaur Records of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 1995 (CRC 2241/42).<sup>14</sup> It is a compilation of recordings made from 1956 to 1985; despite the title, Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern (and indeed William Keith Rogers) are also represented, and besides piano music, there are some songs by Berg and Apostel and a Suite for flute and piano by Schloss. In many instances these were world premiere recordings. As such, they were warmly welcomed by the press, but certain doubts about the quality of the music (especially Schloss's) and some criticism of Steiner's playing, albeit slight, infuriated Steiner. It is difficult to judge Steiner's pianistic achievement on the grounds of the album, as it includes only one familiar work that has been recorded by a significant number of other pianists (Berg's Sonata). Meanwhile the Universität für Musik in Vienna is to issue another CD with Steiner playing music from the standard repertory (Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, etc.), which should at last make such an assessment possible. Hartmut Krones is also preparing a volume including some of Steiner's papers. So far, only one example of his writing has been published, a short article on Julius Schloss, written in German.<sup>15</sup>

In 1972 Steiner arranged the sale of the estate of Schloss to McGill University. Today, the 'Julius Schloss collection' occupies a special room in McGill's Marvin

Duchow Music Library. Besides Schloss's own papers it includes letters from Schoenberg and other Viennese celebrities. Still, Steiner continued to keep part of Schloss's legacy, including letters from Berg, in his own possession. Steiner subsequently grew angry with McGill because the university did not devote itself to the systematic promotion of Schloss and his music. His new friendship with Krones and his apparent reconciliation with Austria prompted his decision to sell the rest of the Schloss estate to the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna in 1999. After Steiner's death his own archives went there as well. Included in his archives are letters and dedicated scores (partly in manuscript) from Apostel and Jelinek.

*Die Arbeit wurde mit Unterstützung eines Stipendiums im Rahmen des Gemeinsamen Hochschulsonderprogramms III von Bund und Ländern über den DAAD ermöglicht.*

*This study was made possible with a grant of the Federal and State governments of Germany by way of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) within the framework of the Hochschulsonderprogramm III.*

*Ed. note:* Albrecht Gaub was born in 1967 in Stuttgart. He completed a doctoral degree in musicology at the University of Hamburg in 1997 with a dissertation on the ballet-opera *Mlada*, a collective work by members of the Russian Mighty Handful and the ballet composer Ludwig Minkus. Dr. Gaub spent 15 months in Canada (1999-2000) on a post-doctoral fellowship. During this time he studied refugee musicians from the Third Reich who managed against great odds to settle in Canada. An earlier article based on his research in Canada is 'Nördlich der unbegrenzten Möglichkeiten: von den National-sozialisten vertriebene Musiker im kanadischen Exil,' *Das Orchester* 49.3 (2001): 2-7.



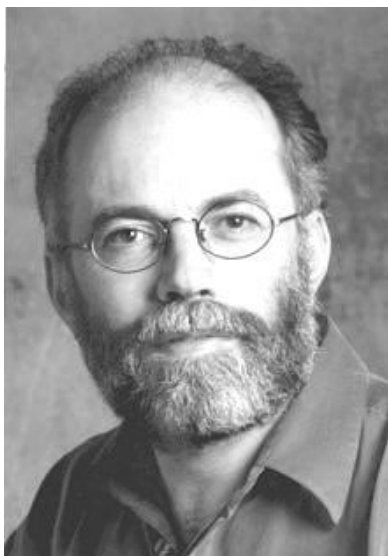
<sup>13</sup> See <http://www.nicolinogiacalone.com>.

<sup>14</sup> The recording was coordinated by Don McLean of McGill University; he also wrote the liner notes. Reviews: Hartmut Krones, *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* 50.10 (1995): 721; Claude Gingras, *La Presse* (14 October 1995): D6; James H. North, *Fanfare* 19.2 (Nov/Dec 1995): 486-7; Arved Ashby, *American Record Guide* 59.2 (Mar/Apr 1996): 226-7 and Arthur Kaptainis, *The Gazette* (Montreal, 13 July 1996): C7.

<sup>15</sup> Karl Steiner, 'Julius Schloss,' *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* 43 (1988): 677.

## Milestones: Hatzis (50), Nimmons (80), and Weinzweig (90)

Christos Hatzis was born in 1953 in Volos, Greece. In 1982 he completed his PhD in composition at SUNY Buffalo and moved to Canada. At first he worked as a nightclub musician with Greek bands and composed when time permitted. In 1995 he became an associate professor, and in 2003 a full professor, in the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto. His work is inspired by the idea of 'cultural convergence,' or the cross-fertilization that occurs when different musical cultures come into contact. He has written a series of works inspired by Inuit throat singing; some of these have been recorded on a recent 2-CD set devoted to works by Hatzis (CBC Records MVCD 1156-2, 2002).



Christos Hatzis

Photo: Cylla von Tiedeman

The year-long celebrations of Hatzis's 50th birthday included a concert in Walter Hall, University of Toronto, on March 21st, the day of his birthday. The concert ended with four movements from his stunning work-in-progress, *Constantinople*. Begun in 1999 as a commissioned work for the Gryphon Trio, the work is evolving into a 90-minute multimedia music theatre piece for soprano, alto, piano trio, and multi-channel audio playback. The singers must be vocally versatile, as the work calls for a variety of Western and Middle Eastern singing styles. *Constantinople* will be further developed in workshops at the Banff Centre this year and next, with performances at Banff, London, and the Olympic Festival at Athens planned for 2004. It is certain to be a landmark in Canadian music theatre.

Hatzis's most recent choral work, *Light (Arctic Dreams 2)*, is to be premiered on July 2nd in St. John's by four children's choirs from around the world as part of *Songbridge*. *Songbridge* is a UNESCO project and is part of Festival 500 *Sharing the Voices*, an international choral festival held in Newfoundland. R.E.

Performer, composer and educator Phil Nimmons is 80 on 3 June 2003. The International Association for Jazz Educators recently named him to its Jazz Education Hall of Fame, and in October 2002 he was presented with the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards for lifetime artistic achievement. He has taught at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music for 30 years. At a concert on 8 February 2003 by the U of T Wind Ensemble and Concert Band he received a Distinguished Service Award from the Music Education Division of the U of T Faculty of Music. He was also the featured soloist in a performance of Eric Whitacre's *Ghost Train Triptych*, and his work *Skyscape (Sleeping Beauty and the Lions)* was performed. The creation of the Noreen and Phil Nimmons Fund to support guest lecturers to enrich Music Education programme offerings was announced at this concert, to honour Phil and his late wife. Another celebration of Nimmons took place on 9 April 2003 when he was honoured at a concert by the U of T 10 O'clock Jazz Orchestra. Patricia Shand

John Weinzweig's 90th birthday (11 March 2003) was celebrated in Toronto by a party at the Canadian Music Centre, two concerts, and a number of articles.<sup>1</sup> The University of Toronto Contemporary Music Ensemble, under the direction of Gary Kulesha, presented 'John Weinzweig: A Celebration' on 19 March 2003 in the university's Walter Hall. The concert, performed for the most part by student musicians, included works written between 1942 and 1975. Highlights included a wonderful performance by soprano Kristin Mueller, accompanied by Kulesha, of *Private Collection* (1975) and an equally engaging performance of *Divertimento No. 4* for Clarinet and Strings by soloist Peter Stoll.

New Music Concerts presented 'Pioneers! O Pioneers!' at the Glenn Gould Studio on 23 March. The concert included old and new works by Weinzweig and two of his most illustrious pupils, Harry Freedman and John Beckwith. Freedman's *Phoenix* for string quartet, Beckwith's *A New Pibroch* for Highland pipes, strings, and percussion, and Weinzweig's *Prologue to a Tango* for mezzo-soprano and four violins were the three new works on the programme, each one a fine addition to the composer's catalogue. The superb soloists were piper Michael Grey and mezzo-soprano Jean Stilwell. A composite portrait of the three composers by Charles Pachter was unveiled before the concert began. R.E.

<sup>1</sup> See Robert Everett-Green, 'A tribute to unsung heroes,' *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto, 22 March 2003): R7; Daniel Foley, 'John Weinzweig at ninety,' *Ontario Notations* 9.1 (Winter 2003): 1, 9, 12; Colin Eatock, 'The three amigos,' *Words & Music* 10.1 (Spring 2003): 20-21.



Canadian Music Historic Sites  
Number Two in a Series

Eaton Auditorium / The Carlu, Toronto



Eaton Auditorium (1931-1977) / The Carlu Concert Hall (2003- )

Designed as the flagship store of the Eaton empire, the seven-storey Eaton's College Park building opened at 444 Yonge Street, at the corner of College Street, on 30 October 1930. Originally designed to be a 36-storey skyscraper, the building was scaled back to just seven floors due to the effects of the Great Depression. The French architect Jacques Carlu (1890-1976) was hired to design the seventh floor of the building (and also, at the same time, the top floor restaurant for the Eaton store in Montreal). Carlu was Professor of Advanced Design at M.I.T. at the time, and had earlier worked on projects in Calgary and Ottawa. He is credited with introducing the 'ocean liner' style to Canada that was a forerunner of the streamlined Art Deco style (known as *Style moderne* in French) prevalent in the 1930s.

The Seventh Floor, as it was known, included a huge foyer, the Eaton Auditorium (with 1200 seats, 800 on the main floor and 400 in the balcony), and two smaller rooms, the Round Room Restaurant and the Clipper Room. Eaton Auditorium was officially opened on 26 March 1931 with a recital by the Australian soprano Florence Austral, along with her husband, the flutist John Amadio. Also featured in this opening concert was Ernest MacMillan, who provided a number of solos to demonstrate the auditorium's fine Casavant organ. The auditorium featured 'walls of pale gold fabricoid, bird's eye maple panelling and lighting set between bands of ebonized wood' and its acoustics were 'as excellent as those of Massey Hall.'<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, after the auditorium was renovated in 1951, its acoustics were found to be less than ideal.

<sup>2</sup> Joan Parkhill Baillie, *Look at the Record: An Album of Toronto's Lyric Theatres 1825-1984* (Oakville: Mosaic Press, 1985): 203.

Eaton Auditorium hosted numerous important musical events between 1931 and its closure in 1977. It was home to the Women's Musical Club of Toronto for over 30 years, and saw performances by the National Ballet of Canada (its first event, in 1951), the Royal Conservatory Opera School, and the Eaton Operatic Society (even though there was no orchestra pit). Glenn Gould made his public solo debuts there as an organist (12 Dec. 1945) and also as a pianist (20 Oct. 1947) and he continued to make recordings there even after the auditorium was closed to the public in 1977. Dozens of distinguished international musicians performed in Eaton Auditorium over the years, among them Marian Anderson, Duke Ellington, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Paul Robeson, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, and Ravi Shankar.

When Eaton's moved its flagship store four blocks south to the Eaton Centre in 1977, College Park continued to have shops, restaurants and offices but the Seventh Floor was boarded up. The building changed hands several times, from A.E. LePage to London Life, and finally Great West Life Realty, the current owner. After ten years of lobbying by The Friends of Eaton Auditorium, led by Eleanor Koldofsky, the auditorium was declared to be a heritage site in 1986.

In 2002 two Toronto developers, Jeffrey Roick and Mark Robert, obtained a 30-year lease and spent \$8.5 million restoring the Seventh Floor to its original splendour. All that is missing is the Casavant organ, which was removed in 1977 and was later sold to First Baptist Church in Dallas. The Carlu, as the Seventh Floor is now known, officially reopened after 26 years of inactivity with a black-tie event on 3 May 2003. It remains to be seen, however, whether musical events will feature as prominently in The Carlu's future as they have in its past.

R.E.

## Reviews

Walter Pitman. *Louis Applebaum: A Passion for Culture*. Toronto: The Dundurn Group, 2002. 512 pp., illus. ISBN 1-55002-398-5. \$39.99 (cloth).

The acronyms NFB, CBC, CLC, OAC, FCPRC and SOCAN partly summarize the centres of influence of the composer Louis Applebaum (1918-2000) – to which SSF could be added, if the Stratford Shakespearean Festival ever used a short form. He was an inspired idea man, a constant champion of artistic creativity whose trademark attitude in meetings was ‘let’s get on with it’.

The new biography by Walter Pitman, a fellow arts mandarin, benefits from interviews with Applebaum during his last years, and with numerous other associates. It covers in careful detail the cultural ventures and struggles in which Applebaum played an often-central role - the National Film Board, CBC Television, and the Canadian League of Composers in the 1950s, the Stratford music programs in the 1960s, the Ontario Arts Council in the 1970s, the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee in the 1980s, the merging of ProCan and CAPAC as SOCAN in the 1990s. In tracing the ups and downs of these involvements, Pitman is sometimes over-careful and over-detailed, making his work longer and denser than would seem appropriate, more like a series of minutes than a readable biography: one imagines Applebaum calling out, ‘let s get on with it.’

Chapter 18 is headed by a quote from Applebaum: ‘I want to be remembered as a composer.’ However, this chapter, with its 25 pages, measured against 45 for the two-chapter account of the FCPRC, falls short of fulfilling his wish. Aside from general notes of approval (‘two fine compositions,’ ‘another fine piece’), the chapter consists of a résumé of works’ titles and circumstances of their writing, with brief quotations from newspaper criticisms. There are no musical examples. Surprisingly, the volume contains no works-list and no discography by which readers could be led to explore Applebaum’s music.

Thus inspirations such as the sound of the shofar in his *King Lear* music, the setting of ‘Hark, hark, the lark’ in the style of Cole Porter, the passacaglia in *The Harper of the Stones*, go unmentioned. Applebaum’s compositional skill and facility were enviable. He once told me it usually took him twenty minutes to complete a page of orchestral scoring. When I asked how he did that, he replied, ‘I just never change my mind.’ Pitman recounts (p. 367) that Applebaum was once asked how long it took him to write a Stratford background score. He said with a wink, ‘it takes a few hours ... but say a couple of weeks’ – i.e. for publication, the latter, exaggerated, answer would be more impressive. In music, too, he liked to ‘get on with it.’

A list of small errors, including misspelt names, wrong identifications of individuals in the text (and several times in the photo captions), and incorrect locations and dates, comes to over two dozen items – surely a sign of inadequate copy-editing and proofing. The extended opening paragraph of Chapter 1 sets the scene of Applebaum’s birth-year, the final year of ‘that horrendous struggle,’ World War I. Similar social or historical backgrounds occupy inordinate space in later chapters, often with similar clichés (Chapter 16: ‘the vitriolic fury of Canadians at the Liberal Government’s lack of action in the face of economic turmoil...’). The notes and index make up twenty per cent of the book, the latter in almost unreadable small type. The notes were evidently motivated partly by the need to acknowledge sources and partly by the questionable need for even more background (e.g., note 5 on page 485 takes up two-thirds of a page).

Louis Applebaum, gifted creator, compelling personality, and one of the great musical movers and shakers of Canadian life in recent times, deserved better.

*John Beckwith*

### THREE STRATFORD FANFARES

Crisply (♩ = 80)

Trpt I  
Trpt II  
Trpt III  
Trbn I  
Trbn II  
Trbn III  
S.D.

©Northdale Music Press Limited, 1993. First published in 1966 by Leeds Music (Canada) Limited.

Michael Barclay, Ian A.D. Jack, and Jason Schneider. *Have Not Been the Same: The CanRock Renaissance, 1985-1995* (Toronto: ECW Press, 2001). xii, 757 pp., ill. ISBN 1-55022-475-1. \$29.95 (paper).

Amid the vast desert of literature on Canadian music (both classical and popular), an oasis, large or small, is a welcome sight. The appearance of an in-depth examination (over 700 pages) of a mere decade of the alternative/punk music scene in Canada promises to quench the thirst of many a reader of Canadian cultural history. In *Have Not Been the Same*, Michael Barclay, Ian Jack, and Jason Schneider collaborate to explore the explosive growth of Canadian rock music that occurred between 1985 and 1995, ten eventful years that witnessed a major transformation in the way that Canadian musicians felt about themselves, their national identity and their ability to create music with a distinctive voice. The three authors (music journalists and musicians themselves) piece together a rich mosaic of engaging stories drawn primarily from interviews with Canadian musicians, producers, and club owners.

Barclay, Jack, and Schneider highlight a number of factors that contributed to the so-called 'CanRock Renaissance.' They cite the blandness of mainstream music in the 1980s as a catalyst that led many to explore more engaging musical experiences. This, combined with the strong 'do-it-yourself' attitude common in the alternative music scene, fostered a subculture defined by bands determined to perform and record their own distinctive brand of music, bypassing established venues that were provided (and restricted) by the corporate music world. These musicians found regional outlets for their creative expression through the campus radio stations that began to appear across the country, and many eventually achieved national exposure on two CBC late-night shows, *Brave New Waves* and *Nightlines*. The counter-cultural energy of MuchMusic in its early years, combined with the force of the CRTC's Canadian content regulations, provided additional exposure for many young artists through the broadcasting of their music videos.

The authors describe with fine detail the uneasy tension that has existed between mainstream rock/pop and the alternative/punk scene in this country. Every chapter exudes sympathy for the struggles of the young artists, enthusiastically charting their successes and disappointments as they toiled in relative obscurity on the fringes of the music industry. The result is a vivid portrait of a subculture that has received little attention (critical or otherwise) in this country.

The opening two chapters provide the strongest moments in the book, painting a stark picture of the cultural climate that gave birth to the 'CanRock Renaissance.' The remaining fifteen chapters present

thematic collections of narratives (illustrated with numerous photographs) that focus on such bands as The Rheostatics, Skinny Puppy, Spirit of the West, Sloan, The Tragically Hip, and Blue Rodeo; regional music scenes in Montreal, Vancouver, and Halifax; and the emergence of a number of independent record labels. Occasionally, developments are presented in the context of events in the United States at the time, contrasting the cultural and economic climates of the two countries and demonstrating how a number of Canadian alternative bands actually anticipated similar developments in the United States. Although the authors tend to avoid mainstream and established artists, they do describe the influential roles some of them played in fostering the development of distinctive Canadian musical voices among the younger crowd. The authors highlight the challenges of the 'cultural baggage' that many Canadian rock musicians had to address; for a number of bands in the late 1980s, success involved coming to terms with cultural identity issues raised by the successes of their musical predecessors of the 1960s and 1970s.

Early in the book, the authors reveal their scorn for mainstream rock and pop music in North America, condemning it as a vacuous artistic movement and a negative, hegemonic cultural and economic force. While the sympathy expressed toward the alternative subculture(s) helps them to present a compelling case for the importance of the alternative/punk movement in this country, it leads to the frequent dismissal of positive contributions from the mainstream music industry. In terms of corporate elements, the authors tend to consider valuable and positive only those activities that are themselves subversive and anti-establishment-oriented, taking place in obscure, dark corners of various corporate empires.

One of the challenges of presenting any subject as painstakingly as the authors do here is to maintain a sense of direction and unity. After the initial two chapters, the narrative leads the reader through myriad winding paths and alleys that often cross many times, with no clear road map. At times, amidst the many shining gems of personal accounts of artistic struggle and success, the overall point the authors are trying to make is forgotten. For readers interested primarily in the many first-hand accounts of particular events, this might not be a problem, but the overall focus is clearly weakened by the approach.

The accompanying annotated bibliography is extensive and is organized according to chapter, with

over 900 recordings listed. Unfortunately, the annotations are uneven in quality; while many entries include detailed comments that explain the content and significance of the recordings, others are terse and cryptic, requiring a degree of familiarity with the materials that many readers will likely not possess. Since the authors make the point that these bands toiled in obscurity, the bibliography represents a lost opportunity to share valuable insights about these recordings with a readership that would likely be interested in exploring the actual music that is discussed within the pages of the book.

Despite its shortcomings, this book is still a valuable contribution to Canadian popular music literature. While it does reveal clear biases in terms of artists who receive coverage, the authors are upfront about the reasons for their choices, and the issue of bias fades to the background when the larger message of the book is considered. Collectively, the stories of these musicians demonstrate how a new generation of confident, talented artists succeeded in energizing the music scene in Canada through their determination and inspired leadership.

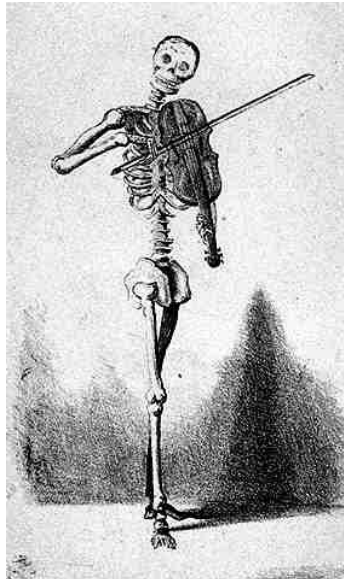
Andrew M. Zinck

Ashley MacIsaac. Decca Records CD 4400189212, recorded in 2002 and released in March 2003. \$12.99.  
Web: <http://www.ashley-macisaac.com>.

In many different cultures stories exist, in literature and legend, about the devil, death, and the violin. Tartini's *Devil's Trill* sonata, Paganini's pact with satan, C.F. Ramuz and Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du soldat*, the Quebec folk tale of the Hangman's Reel (Reel du pendu), François Girard's film *The Red Violin* – all are variations on a common theme: the violinist (or violin) whose powers are so amazing that they can only be explained by recourse to myth. Devilishly talented and devil-may-care Ashley MacIsaac is the present-day incarnation of the type of violinist that gave rise to such stories.

The photo of MacIsaac on the cover of the booklet for his most recent CD already provides evidence of this. His piercing gaze is strangely haunting, and the photo is more than a little reminiscent of the work by an anonymous British artist titled *Death Plays the Violin* (pictured above). Except, of course, for the fact that MacIsaac plays the violin backwards: he holds the instrument with his right hand and bows with his left. In the world of classical violin performance this is exceedingly rare, due to the visual disruption caused when one violinist is bowing in the opposite direction to the rest in an orchestral setting. In addition, left-handed violins, with the strings reversed and internal components built in the mirror image, are rare and, needless to say, none of the greatest luthiers made any. In the majority of cases, left-handed classical violinists play this way due to an injury to their left hand, as was the case with Rudolf Kolisch, for instance. Left-handed playing is less rare among fiddlers, but it is still enough of an exception to brand MacIsaac as unconventional.

But left-handedness is one of MacIsaac's lesser unorthodoxies. At 28 years of age, he already has a long and vivid history of controversy in his past, most



Anonymous (British) *Death Plays the Violin*  
Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco

of it given wide publicity in the media. *Fiddling with Disaster*, the title of his autobiography (which is due out next month), sums the matter up nicely. In this regard, MacIsaac follows in a long line of musicians persecuted for their private life. He is granted a degree of latitude in such matters by the media; indeed, his frank comments about his sex life and drug use have often made for 'good press' in the past. But the media exposure was a double-edged sword: it created and sustained his celebrity for a while, but then turned against him when his actions became too unorthodox for the general public.

Erna MacLeod has written about MacIsaac's troubled relationship with the media in a recent article that

has something of the tone of an obituary for his career.<sup>1</sup> It is certainly too soon to declare MacIsaac finished. His 1995 major label debut, *hi how are you today?*, sold some 350,000 copies. That is an impressive figure for a fiddle recording, but small beer in the pop music world to which MacIsaac so obviously aspires. Fiddlers just don't make the top-40 play list, and so in addition to playing violin throughout this CD, MacIsaac sings on six tracks. His is not a great voice; he should leave the singing to Mary Jane Lamond, whose Gaelic vocals for 'Sleepy Maggie' were a highpoint on *hi how are you today?*. Lamond is heard here in one of the best songs, 'To America We Go,' which she co-wrote with Roger Greenawalt, who also produced and performs on the recording. Purists might find the drum beats and electric bass lines too heavy on many tracks, but lovers of sensational violin playing will find much to delight in. MacIsaac's return is most welcome.

Robin Elliott

<sup>1</sup> Erna MacLeod, 'Ashley MacIsaac: star image, queer identity, and the politics of outing,' *Topia* 8 (Fall 2002): 19-42.