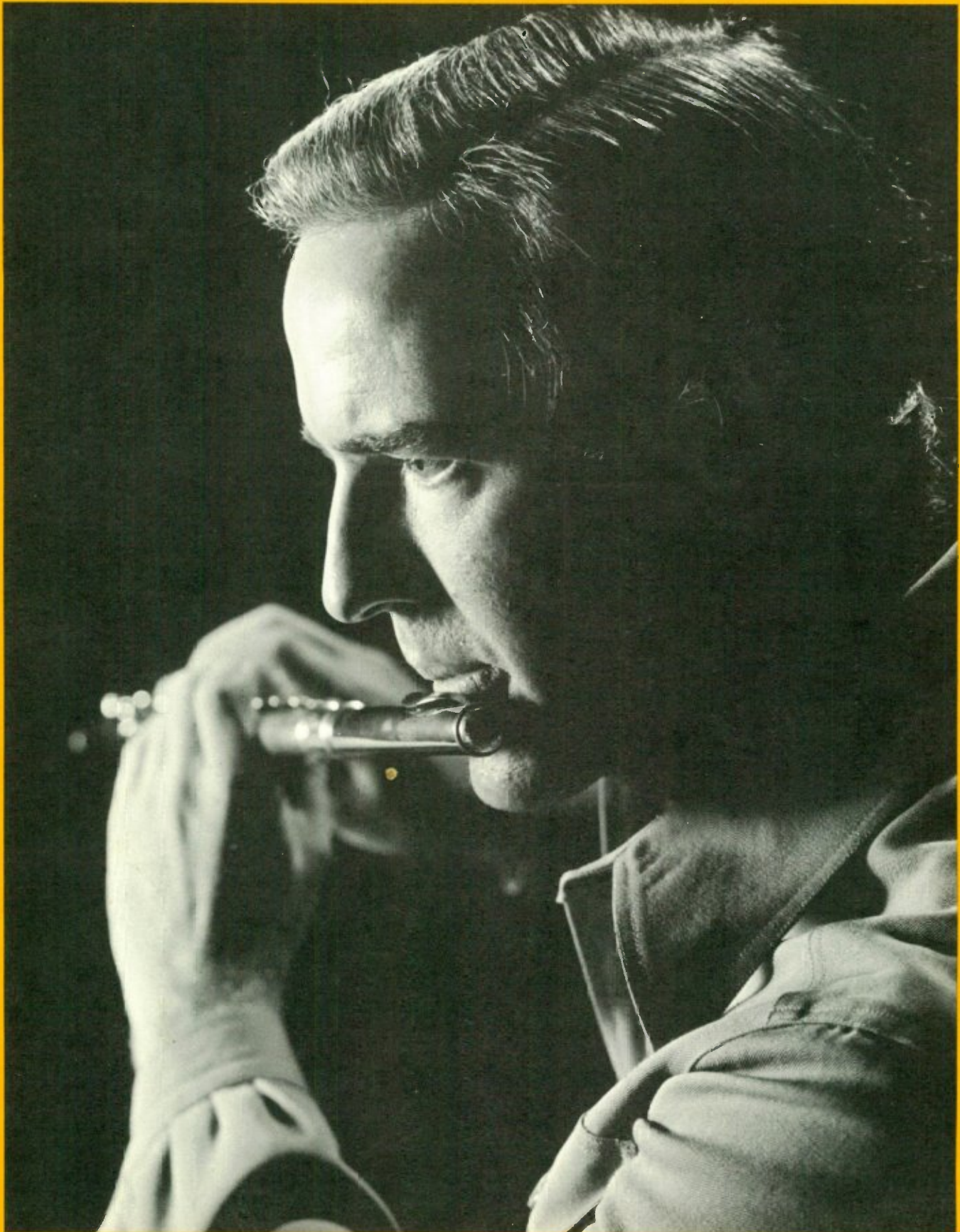


PRO
CANADA

THE MUSIC SCENE

MAY-JUNE 1978



ROBERT AITKEN



Congratulations Juno Award winners

P.R.O. Canada extends hearty congratulations to this year's Juno Award winners. From the West Coast come the members of **HOMETOWN BAND**, named the Best New Group. **CARROLL BAKER** is once again Country Female Vocalist of the Year, and **DAVID BRADSTREET** was named Best New Male Vocalist.

Fleetwood Mac's "Rumours" album, licensed in Canada by P.R.O. Canada, was named International Best-Selling Album. Also licensed by P.R.O. Canada is music by Oscar Peterson who was named to the CARAS Hall of Fame, and the Leo Sayer single, "When I Need You", International Best-Selling Single.

THE MUSIC SCENE

COMMENT

At this writing we at P.R.O. Canada are almost fully occupied in the preparations for our Awards Dinner on May 4 at the Hyatt Regency in Toronto. By the time you read this the Tenth Annual Awards Dinner will have come and gone. As always, we are pleased and happy for the award winners and regretful that we could not include all of you for your efforts and talent in furthering the interest in and acceptance of Canadian music.

We have just concluded extensive tariff hearings before the Copyright Appeal Board where we sought increases in tariff rates from the private radio stations of Canada and from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation on behalf of the radio and TV networks and their owned and operated stations. We, of course, are not yet aware of the decision of the Copyright Appeal Board but you may be assured that if increases are granted they will be reflected in increased payments of royalties to you, the creators of Canada's music.

In the meantime, your P.R.O. Canada Board of Directors has approved a royalty payment for the performance of music at "Pop" concerts. The details of this royalty payment are presently being drawn up by management and each P.R.O. Canada affiliate will receive the necessary information in order that he or she might benefit from this new performance royalty payment.

The P.R.O. Canada Committee for the Promotion of Canadian Music will be in Halifax the end of June to attend the Bi-Annual Meeting of the Association of Canadian Orchestras. The first P.R.O. Canada awards will be presented on your behalf to the Canadian orchestras which have demonstrated the most imaginative programming of contemporary music. You will of course be kept up to date on who the winners are.

Outside my window the grass is becoming green and trees are beginning to bud. I'm beginning to believe that winter has finally and reluctantly left us.

Have a Happy Spring.

Sincerely,

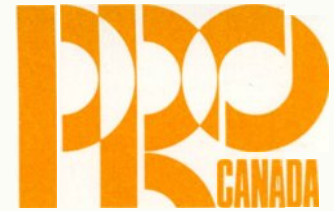


S. Campbell Ritchie
MANAGING DIRECTOR

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Cover photo of Robert Aitken by Robert C. Ragsdale, a.r.p.s. Back cover: top, rehearsing with John Cage (Hans Geerling photo); bottom, Erica Goodman.

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Tremblay, Messiaen are influences

BREGENT SEEKS TO BROADEN CONSCIOUSNESS THROUGH MUSIC

by Christine L'Heureux

MICHEL-GEORGES BREGENT is best known as the Brégent of the Dionne-Brégent group. This group is becoming more and more appreciated by fans of popular music, and their concerts draw an ever-growing audience. Their popularity is proving there is room in Quebec for something other than disco music. Dionne-Brégent attracts a young and informed audience seeking music which is complex, even abstract in its sound, but which is ever open to a possible broadening of consciousness.

Brégent says: "I am concerned with music which is expressed through sound without words. At least, that is the main preoccupation of the Dionne-Brégent group! To try to create a music which expresses all phases of life. Obviously, our music is always changing, from one show to another, from one record to another . . . just like life itself."

If one were to put a label on Dionne-Brégent's music, it might be punk: darkness exists, it would be false to see only the sun; one has to accept everything which is real, simply because it is a part of life. Once you can manage to live positively with darkness, you achieve a new level of consciousness, "Perhaps that's why I don't believe in Utopia: I think it would be extremely boring. I'm all for conflict: for me it is the opposite of amorphism, of unconsciousness, because it gives rise to that perpetual transformation which is the very essence of life."

In his musical search, loaded with philosophic concepts, Michel-Georges Brégent found some answers with Vincent Dionne, a percussionist whose work has always been marked by innovations in contemporary music. Instruments used by Dionne (sheet metal, brake drums, glass pitchers, a trumpet made out of a funnel and a rubber tube), in addition to traditional percussion instruments, combined with keyboards of all sorts (from the organ to the synthesizer), gave rise to two Capitol discs: ". . . et le troisième jour" and "Deux" — a real two-man orchestra. According to Brégent, however, this merely serves to popularize the genre.

Brégent, with his insatiable need to mould his musical concerns to his desire for change has not been satisfied only with his career with Dionne. Self-taught, he has been interested in music since the age of 12. He attended the Conservatory where he studied analysis and composition with **GILLES TREMBLAY** after composing the first of four folios of a broad Biblical fresco entitled "Testaments". In 1971, in Quebec, he made the acquaintance of Olivier Messiaen, whom he considers as his spiritual father. In 1972, the Bohemian in him took over, and in common with a whole generation discovering new values and a different way

Pierre Kandatoff

of life, a long-haired and generously bearded Brégent established a rock group with his brother Jacques. They made one recording, "Poussières de regrets", with RCA, and the group became even better known through its show at Le Patriote.

In the fall of 1973, under a Canada Council grant, Brégent went to Paris where he met Stockhausen, Méfano and Bussotti. In the following year, with his wife Christina Petrowska, he recorded the two-piano version of "Geste" for the CBC International Service. Still continuing to compose what he now calls "ascetic pieces" such as "Between Innocence and Experience" after three poems by William Blake, Michel-Georges Brégent took an equal interest in popular music, working with **LEWIS FUREY**. Since 1975 he has worked with Vincent Dionne in attempting to create an original synthesis of classical, contemporary and pop music: this has become Dionne-Brégent.

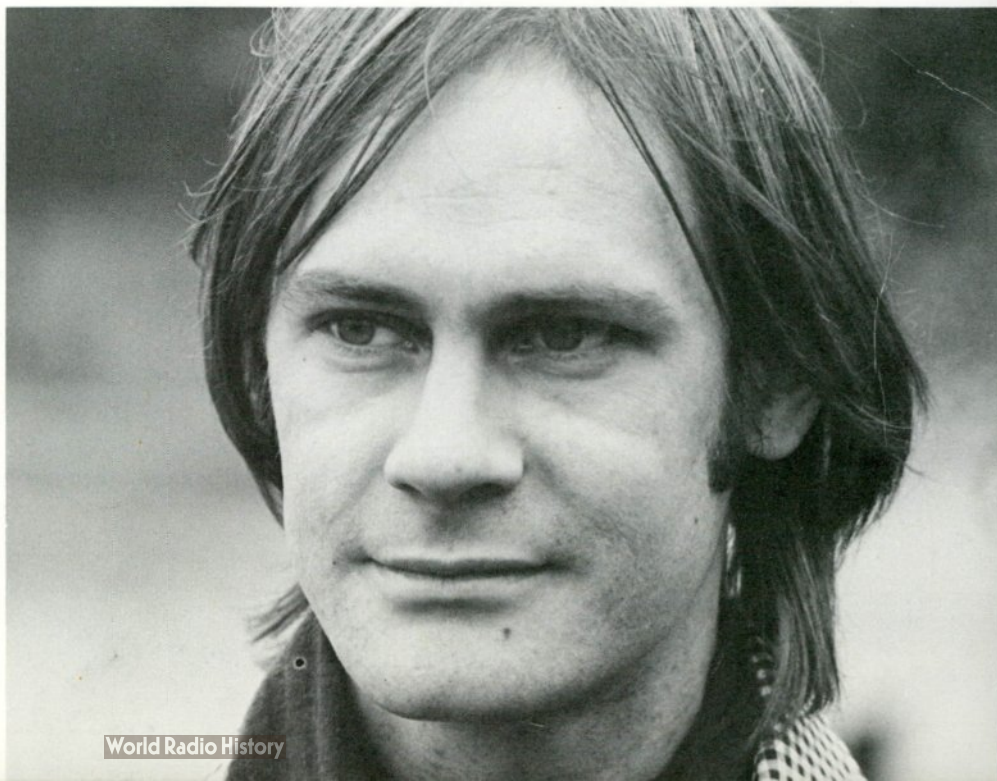
Production and creation being his main interests, his work as a musician did not stop there. There has been talk of Brégent's rejoining brother Jacques to form a completely different group which would enable him to make an old dream come true — that of putting poetry to music: the verses of Félix Leclerc, Marcel Dubé, Michel Lamarr, Verlaine — rock, jigs, space-age music.

An Aquarian, Brégent is attracted by an ever-broadening field which asks only to be better filled: harmonizing all discords, neutralizing all contradictions (hence his talk of a music of fusion). It is hardly surprising, then, to hear him say that at the same time he is winding up a work for three pianos, lighting and audience; a work structured on the grammatical conjugation of a verb and demanding the use

of a computer. "Conjugaison" has been taking shape slowly since 1968, and should soon receive its premiere in the United States. Brégent refers to the present indicative of "Conjugaison" as the absence of music, of the past indicative as the composer's creation during a certain period; of the conditional as being governed by the immediate reaction of the audience: all this is backed up with innumerable details of inescapable logic which reveal yet another side of this musician. It's hardly surprising, then, that in his own list of musical preferences we should find Messiaen, Monteverdi and Guillaume de Machaut sharing the spotlight with Frank Zappa, Emerson, Yes, Genesis and above all, "le bruit et les sons".

He is also working on the arrangement of two pieces for Claude Garden, with whom François Dompierre has collaborated. This involves the music for two children's stories and one piece, "Sur mesure", for guitar and harmonica.

Notwithstanding all this, Brégent declares that the third Dionne-Brégent disc is ready to record. Al Hajj Sayyid Abdul al Khabyr, who participated in Dionne-Brégent's latest Outremont concert, will be a part of this third record. To Brégent, Sayyid's contribution represents the opening of a new door, a new opportunity for change, that perpetual transformation so essential to him: a transformation which leads him ever further towards that total consciousness. For Michel-Georges Brégent, every gesture, every action leads him a little closer to that vertical consciousness which he calls God. Because agreeing to "do" something is tantamount to saying that you "believe in" something. And he finds it convenient to call that "something" God. ♣



Michel-Georges Brégent

U.S. deal imminent

"DISCO QUEEN" THE TITLE BUT NOT THE STYLE OF DENISE McCANN

by Marke Andrews

The livingroom of the partially restored three-storey house, located in Vancouver's beachside Kitsilano area, radiates a quaint, almost rural domesticity. The fireplace crackles as Siamese cats glide about the room. In a few hours, **DENISE McCANN** will sit down to a quiet dinner with her husband and young son, then return to put the finishing touches on a new country tune she is writing.

Domesticity? Country music? Can this be the same Denise McCann described by disc jockeys as "Canada's Disco Queen?" The attractive singer/songwriter laughs at the reference. "I don't like being categorized like that. But I realize that's the nature of the business."

The disco handle is the result of McCann's hit single "Tattoo Man". Originally written as a Top-30 rock song, the tune was overtracked with horns, vocals and percussion, lengthened from 3½ to 5½ minutes, and released on Polydor in Canada and the U.S. for the disco market. It has sold some 30,000 copies.

Denise McCann was born 28 years ago in Clinton, Ohio. Music played a major role in her early life. "My father played guitar, and we all played piano. When we used to visit my grandmother in Louisiana, we'd sing in the car all the way there and back. Mostly spirituals and Southern folk songs."

In 1967, after participating in local choirs and high school musicals, McCann moved to California where she bought her first guitar. That year she attended the Monterey Pop Festival, rubbing elbows with the stars backstage. She played coffee houses as a folk singer until 1972, when she joined her first rock band.

In early 1974, a friend sent her a plane ticket to Vancouver Island. She moved to Vancouver, where she landed a gig as folksinger at the Egress. She returned to the Bay Area but, when her car broke down during a recording date in Seattle, both she and her vehicle ended up in Vancouver, this time to stay.

The road to "Tattoo Man" was eventful. Actually, the 1977 hit was written in July, 1974, one week prior to an Alaskan tour with Taj Mahal. McCann worked the Egress again, recorded a number of jingles, gained valuable performing and touring experience with the Vancouver band Hot Crackers and, more importantly, met her future husband, independent producer Guy Sobell.

With Sobell's help, McCann made a demo tape of a countrified number called "It Still Hurts". Polydor bought the record, which caused a brief stir on the country charts, but a B side was needed. McCann sent a pair of originals, "Everyone Would Know" and "Tattoo Man". The later composition prompted Polydor's Peter Horvath, calling from Montreal, to



Denise McCann

exclaim, "This is no flip side! This is an A side!"

The follow-up to "Tattoo Man" was another successful disco song, "I Don't Want To Forget You." Both tunes, along with seven other McCann compositions, were included on the vocalist's debut album "Denise McCann" released late last year. Produced by Sobell, the record draws from the talents of Vancouver's top studio players, with guest shots from Natalie Cole's bassist Larry Ball, and the Tower of Power horn section.

Although the album contains a number of danceable songs, it is by no means a disco album. "If the album has a flaw," McCann states, "it's the fact that the songs are not all of one variety." Indeed, "Songmaker" sounds like a Bonnie Raitt ballad, while "Midnight Candles" has a distinct country flavour.

Then there is the matter of lyrics. McCann's songs avoid the cliches of boy meets — keeps — loses girl, for she is as much a spinner of yarns as a lyricist. "I like a song that either tells a story, or says something about a specific situation," says McCann, who has penned some 200 songs. "I want my songs to touch people, so they say, 'Right, I've

felt that.'" Among her favourite singer/songwriters are Betty Wright, Joni Mitchell ("a powerful imagist") and the Eagles.

Currently, Denise McCann relies primarily on studio jingles for her income. Royalties from her records have not been overwhelming, and due to Vancouver's small club circuit, live performances are sporadic. A recent trip to Los Angeles reaffirmed some old notions. "L.A. is so busy, so crazy," she states. "It's an oddity of songwriting that you write better songs when you're in an unsettled environment, where nothing can be counted on from day to day. Los Angeles is more like that than Vancouver."

Both McCann and Sobell are currently negotiating with a U.S. recording company, an arrangement likely to ensure further recording dates and personal appearances. The deal is, according to McCann, "very close to being completed."

In the meantime, the lady known to some as "Canada's Disco Queen" will continue to lead her present lifestyle: jogging, crocheting, and writing songs, the titles of which may soon be household names. ♦

Four recordings at once for flutist

AITKEN'S ARTISTIC SIDE STILL HAMPERED BY ADMINISTRATION

by Rick MacMillan

ROBERT AITKEN not only does "scarcely believable things with his flute" — as once reported David Murray of London's *Financial Times* — but also occasionally astounds his friends and associates by actually spending a few days at his home in north Toronto, between performing engagements in such varied places as Iceland, Sweden, France and Japan. Although he is unquestionably one of the world's most sought-after soloists, the 38-year-old flutist/composer does not believe that he enjoys a truly international reputation.

"I think the answer is to leave the country when you're 22 or so", Aitken concludes. "It's not that Canada's musical training is inadequate — I think the training is fantastic in this country, as good as anywhere in the world. I just feel that, as a Canadian, you're sort of working at a 40 to 60 per cent discount. It's not easy to pursue an international career because people still tend to think of Canada as a colony."

In the absence of a suitably aggressive manager, Aitken even finds difficulty in arranging adequate performance representation in the immense market of the

United States. "I'm starting to get concerts there for the first time just this year", he notes, "and it came out of attending a conference of American university composers last winter. I played virtually for free — they paid only my expenses. But out of that came so many concerts, just from being there. So now I have a one-week residency at Oberlin College and I was just at the University of Illinois, University of Maryland, with invitations to San Diego and Iowa — you know, to stay a few days and give some concerts and master classes."

Just last summer Aitken, joined by his pianist wife Marion Ross and soprano Mary Morrison who comprise Toronto's Lyric Arts Trio, was engaged in a series of three concerts in Japan, one of which consisted entirely of Canadian music. He taped a television show in Poland, a country to which he will return in November to perform with the Polish Radio Orchestra, this trip to include performances in Copenhagen and Oslo as well. The Trio has been invited for several years running to appear at Warsaw Autumn, one of Europe's most prestigious contemporary music festivals, but has been forced to decline due to busy schedules. This year it will accept for the first time, performing, as usual, a sizable quantity of Canadian music, much of which was composed specifically for the trio.

Aitken returned only last November from a European tour with two Icelandic musicians, a cellist and a pianist, during which time he also performed as soloist with the Bonn Symphony Orchestra and fulfilled a few solo engagements. Although simultaneously scheduled, the *Musicanada* series did not involve the flutist as a performer. He does, however, speak with skepticism concerning the organization and outcome of the festival. "I think it was planned too late", he remarks. "Everybody did their best but, unfortunately, this country is getting overloaded with administrators, to the extent that it's just too hard to get anything done. I wish a bit more of the administrative money which had gone into organization had actually gone into the pockets of the people who were doing the work. I'm sure the money could have been better spent subsidizing individual groups who had received special invitations to perform for established concert-giving organizations and festivals. In the end, I wouldn't say the money was wasted — it just could have been better spent."

Foreign performances are hard enough to come by, but Aitken's engagements in his own country, aside from regular appearances with *New Music Concerts* (of which he is Artistic Director) and the occasional solo recital, are sadly minimal. Although he has been engaged as soloist with most of the country's leading orchestras (he will perform the Ibert Concerto with the National Arts Centre Or-

chestra next January 30 and 31), his last appearance with his own city's orchestra, The Toronto Symphony, was in the days of Karel Ancerl.

Even arranging a reasonable fee for that performance of one of the Mozart Concertos was a difficult task, since the orchestra management, according to Aitken, initially claimed three marks against the concert's success: "The performance is to be an uncondemned one, it's the first concert after Christmas, and it features the flute; therefore," they predicted, "no one will come, so how can we pay more?" As it turned out, the performance was completely sold out. Following Aitken's performance, after intermission, the hall was half empty. "So, in fact, they had come for the flute concerto", the artist gloats.

Aitken's cosmopolitanism is no more apparent than in the fact that two of his four current recording projects are foreign productions. The first, for the Japanese Denon PCM label, features the complete music for solo flute or with piano accompaniment of Kazuo Fukushima. The disc, with pianist Yuji Takahashi, should be available in Canada at any time through the distribution efforts of the Toronto audio firm Tri-Tel Associates.

The second of these foreign recordings is with the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra and is of a flute concerto by Atli Heimer Sveinsson, a work awarded the Nordic Prize.

A Canadian project to be released shortly is a recording of truly international interest: Bach's three flute sonatas with harpsichordist Greta Kraus. This will form part of the second set of releases from Canada's direct-to-disc label, Umbrella, distributed by Superior Electronics Inc. of Montreal.

In Toronto the flutist has completed recording sessions for a future issue on the Melbourne label of his own "Plain-song" for solo flute and **GILLES TREMBLAY's** ". . . le sifflement des vents porteurs de l'amour . . ." for flute and percussion. Completing the second side will be works by Fukushima, Swedish composer Jan W. Morthenson and Icelandic composer Thorkell Sigurbjörnsson.

One of the Nova Scotia born flutist/composer's busiest activities is his involvement with *New Music Concerts*, now completing its seventh season. The 1978-79 season will be highlighted by visiting composers Sylvano Bussotti and, perhaps, Witold Lutoslawski, as well as premieres of newly commissioned works by **JOHN BECKWITH**, Gabriel Charpentier and Alex Pauk, to name a few. "It's incredible the amount of work that goes into each concert", says Aitken. "Every concert is a crisis. As soon as we get through one we start on the next."

The time-consuming nature of *New Music Concerts*
Continued on page 14



Arnold Matthews



NEXUS

A United Nations of music

NEXUS' MUSIC UNFOLDS WITHOUT PREPARATION

by Michael Schulman

"Write about 800 words on Nexus." What an easy assignment!

Nexus was founded in 1971 and has been busy ever since, presenting concert-workshops in Toronto schools; appearing on CBC-TV's *Music to See*; touring Canada, Japan and the U.S.; being artists-in-residence at the University of Toronto, York University, Wesleyan University, Courtenay Music Camp and Chautauqua Institution; recording the soundtrack for the film "The Man Who Skied Down Everest" as well as other recordings. (74)

Merely listing the particulars of this six-man percussion ensemble uses up over 600 words. For instance, here's a list of the different kinds of music they play: contemporary classical; African, Russian and Mexican ethnic music; five-and-drum music, ragtime, even Spike Jones. (118)

Next, a list of *some* of the instruments they use to fill the stage, the eye and the ear: all sorts of drums, tablas, tom-toms, tam-tams, gongs, cymbals, bells, chimes, xylophones, vibraphones, marimbas, maracas, tambourines, triangles, wood-blocks, rattles, ratchets, clappers, snappers, castanets, windchimes and whistles. (163)

They also use instruments made from anything and everything, of every conceivable colour, size and shape: cow-bells, musical saws, garbage can lids, radiator caps, brake drums, hollowed-out tree trunks, cake molds, glass salad bowls, ceramic flowerpots, cardboard

packing tubes, bullwhips, stones, a starter's pistol, a metal Coke sign gong, and a Pringles can with beans inside. (220)

The exotic instruments come from all over the world: China, Japan, India, Tibet, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, Morocco, Uganda, Nigeria, Ghana, Mali, Rhodesia, Brazil, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Trinidad and Mexico, as well as North America (Indian rattles and Eskimo drums). (265)

The players rap, tap, strike, stroke, caress, whack, thwack, wiggle and jiggle all these instruments with sticks, mallets, fists, fingers and violin bows. The result is a kaleidoscopic collage of rustles, rumbles, booms, buzzes, clicks, clangs, jingles, jangles, shimmers, tinkles, thumps, rat-a-tats, roars, dings, donges, snaps, crackles and pops. (314)

Now, something about the six performer-composers:

BOB BECKER has performed with the Steve Reich Ensemble, Paul Winter Consort and at the Marlboro Music Festival. He has studied the music of Java, Ghana and India, and is currently on the Faculty of Music at Toronto's York University. Becker did most of the arrangements and solos on Nexus' recent "Ragtime" LP on the Umbrella label. (374)

BILL CAHN is principal percussionist of the Rochester Orchestra. His compositions for Nexus include "Tides", "The Stringless Harp" and "Voices in the Silvery Night", the last two featuring the ensemble with orchestral accompaniment. (407)

MICHAEL CRADEN has performed with

Harry Partch, **PAUL HORN** and **MOE KOFFMAN** and has improvised music for theatre, dance and films. He is also a talented painter and sculptor and has taught at the Three Schools of Art in Toronto. (447)

Robin Engelman is the former principal percussionist of the Toronto Symphony. He has also been associated with the symphony orchestras of Louisville, Milwaukee, Rochester and San Francisco. He has taught at the Eastman School of Music, Ithaca College, the University of Toronto and York University. (492)

Russ Hartenberger holds a Ph.D. in World Music and is a professor of percussion at the University of Toronto. He has been a member of the symphony orchestras of Oklahoma City, Puerto Rico and New Haven, and has performed with the Steve Reich Ensemble, Paul Winter Consort, World Band and at the Marlboro Music Festival. (547)

JOHN WYRE is the timpanist of the Toronto Symphony and has also been associated with the orchestras of Milwaukee, Oklahoma City, Rochester and San Francisco. His composition "Bells", for solo percussion and orchestra, has been conducted by Lukas Foss, Seiji Ozawa, Boris Brott and Kazuyoshi Akiyama. Two other works, "Utau Kane Nowa" and "Bernie", were performed by Nexus and the Festival Singers. This April, Wyre's "Connexus" was scheduled for a world premiere by Nexus and the Toronto Symphony, conducted by Andrew Davis. (629)

I've just enough of my 800 words left
Continued on page 12

Jazz ambitions being fulfilled in Toronto

KENTON AND BASIE BANDS A PART OF SAM NOTO'S EXPERIENCE

by Ken Waxman

"I'd give up a studio gig any time for a jazz job," trumpeter **SAM NOTO** told me sincerely earlier this year as we sat in a downtown Toronto greasy spoon. It was not far from the studio where he had just finished recording music for the CBC-TV series *Side Street*. "My dream is to make all of my living playing jazz music, but I know that's impossible."

Perhaps. But since the chunky, greying big-band veteran moved to Toronto from the United States a few years ago, he's been able to squeeze a healthy quotient of jazz-playing into the steady diet of studio sessions, show work and jingle gigs which make up a musician's life there. He's a member in good standing of the Boss Brass big band, plays clubs and concerts with his own quartet, and often teams with tenor saxophonist **STEVE LEDERER** in a hard-bop band. Then there are the albums he has made for Xanadu, the New York-based jazz label, which not only showcase his playing, but often pair him with jazz legends such as trumpeter Red Rodney and tenor saxophonist Dexter Gordon.

In all it's a pretty satisfying life for the 47-year-old trumpeter who before this always seemed to be doing something else when he wanted to play jazz.

Born in Buffalo, New York, Noto, who began playing at 12, was 16 and studying to be a printer when he decided music was more important. From then until the early '50s he was constantly on the road with what he describes as "Mickey Mouse bands", playing what he could.

In 1953 a serious bus accident just outside Buffalo resulted in injuries to members of the brass section of the Stan Kenton band. Acting on the recommendation of the local musician's union, Kenton, who needed replacements in a hurry, called Noto. His work so impressed Kenton that he was added to the band.

Still, while Noto was with Kenton until 1960, he had to spend most of his time playing lead trumpet. He only got a chance to play jazz after Kenton unexpectedly showed up at an afterhours jam session and heard him. In the end though, Noto left Kenton. "I didn't want to be a big-band trumpet player".

An attempt to put together a combo with a couple of fellow Kentonites had

fallen through in the mid-'50s. He worked short stints with the bands of Billy May, Louis Bellson and Woody Herman. He stuck close to Buffalo, taking whatever jobs he could: night club floor shows; lead a quartet at a burlesque house ("customers would come out and rave about the band instead of the strippers," he remembers); and in leaner times drove a cab and did factory work.

Then in 1964 he answered another emergency call from Toronto's Palais Royale to sub for an ailing trumpet player in the Count Basie band. Noto returned to Buffalo after the last set, but the next morning Basie phoned, demanded to know where he'd disappeared to, and offered him a job. He stayed with Basie for another six months.

Back in Buffalo he formed his own quintet and in '65 bought a restaurant and turned it into a late-night jazz spot. The club soon folded.

He seriously considered giving up music for good. But just in the nick of time a friend got him a job in a Las Vegas hotel band, and Noto spent the next eight years playing in groups up and down The Strip. Although his salary was often \$500 a week, he was still unsatisfied.

In 1973 a two-week booking at Toronto's Bourbon Street club convinced him of the musical (and jazz) opportunities in the city, and a few months later he moved his wife and four kids north of the border.

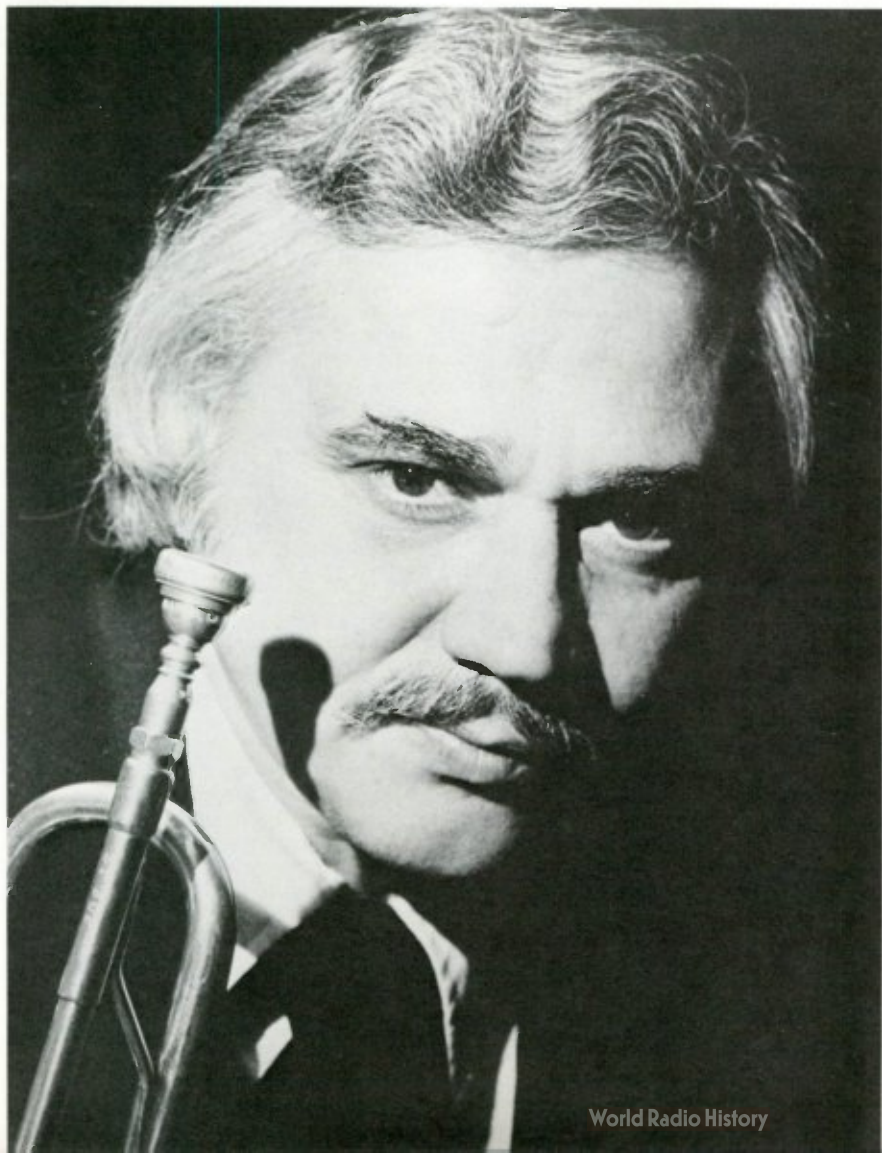
His Vegas experience did have one beneficial side effect though. He became friends with Red Rodney, another bop veteran who was also working The Strip. Rodney had a recording contract, and after the two worked out two trumpet arrangements of some bop classics, Noto recorded them with Rodney on an album titled "Super Bop" on the Muse label.

Then producer Don Schlitten, who had supervised the Muse dates, formed his own Xanadu label and signed Noto as one of his first artists.

Until then Noto had written infrequently. He didn't own a piano, and thus had to play the tune out on his horn and then transfer it to copy paper. But with a recording contract he became more serious. He bought a piano, began writing, and except for a few ballads, has written all the tunes on "Entrance", "Act One" and "Notes to You", his three Xanadu albums.

While he works with some of New York's top musicians on his records, there's still something else he'd like to try: "What I'd really like to do is make a record with some of the guys who I play with in Toronto," he says, and his face becomes animated with the thought.

And what better way to show that Sam Noto, long-time travelin' man, has finally found a home? ♦



Sam Noto

"First Borne" pays for itself

MIRTH ON WAY TO SUCCESS DESPITE PROPHETS OF DOOM

by Chris Cobb

They all said it couldn't be done, but Mirth went ahead and did it anyway.

And now, three months after the release of the trio's exciting premier album, "First Borne", Mirth is looking nowhere but ahead—ahead to more recordings and to a blossoming concert career. This promises to be a success story, not carried forth by a series of lucky breaks but by sheer determination, hard work and the knack all three have of turning deaf ears to prophets of doom.

Mirth is **DAVID JAMES BOWEN**, **PAT WATSON** and **ALISON REYNOLDS**. Before joining forces with Bowen 18 months ago, Sudbury's Watson and Reynolds were already a well-known duo with appearances throughout Ontario including opening for Gino Vannelli at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. David James was, and still is, a performer with a devoted following.

Mirth had been writing and performing together for little more than six months when they decided to head for the studio. One session in Ottawa produced a few rough cuts which were greeted with varying degrees of strained enthusiasm by those in the money and (allegedly) in the know. Friends said the tapes were good but could be better so the trio threw them away late last summer and started again, this time in Hamilton. The result was "First Borne", released on Dapah Records, a company Bowen and an Ottawa partner formed strictly against the advice of most everyone they asked.

"We were fortunate," recalls Bowen, "that the people we really respected supported us from the start. Others said we just weren't big enough to form our own label and record our own album, but 'First Borne' has nearly paid for itself already and its only just starting to reach people." Certainly popular-music critics have supported the release.

To get this far in such a short time, David James, Pat and Alison have done everything from sticking posters onto record store walls to hand delivering their album to reviewers and radio stations. And, of course, they've been playing music.

Ah yes, the music . . .

Bowen describes the band's sound as eclectic ("its an accurate description and I like the word" he says). Certainly, both the album and Mirth's concert work agree with that description.

"More and more, people are wanting to hear a variety of music when they pay to go to a concert," he reasons. "We are aiming for that because it is the natural way for our music to go. We want people to come and see Mirth and hear rock, blues, bluegrass, country, ballads, the lot. A total show."



Mirth

All three are writers and accomplished musicians (Pat and Alison both have classical music training). But they write separately and wait until a song is finished before getting together for a critical assessment. Each has an intense dislike for what Bowen terms "empty headed" songs. They strive ruthlessly for originality.

"We can be totally honest with each other," says Pat, "and have reached the stage among the three of us where we can criticise and take criticism. As individuals, we realize the other guy has only got the best interests of the band at heart."

Yet, admits Bowen, this striving for originality, especially in previously unused chord patterns and good lyrics, is like pulling teeth. "Think of it. You write a song, think it's pretty good and then someone tells you it's not so good after all because so and so used that chord progression in this or that song. And damn it, even though you know they're right and have to start again it takes an awful lot of pride swallowing."

The classical influence filters through into much of Mirth's music. Pat's often delicate piano and Alison's haunting cello and flute work have been praised

for bringing a tasteful quality to the group sound.

After a second eclectic album, David, Pat and Alison will start planning for their third studio project which will be classically oriented.

"We want to use those long melodies that classical music has," says Bowen. "But instead of using rock as the base and growing into classical, we will do it the other way around. It's a different approach but one which holds great possibilities."

Immediate plans for Mirth include trips into pastures new — Quebec and the Maritimes. They want to get out onto the road and tour for a couple of months before launching into another recording project.

For emerging musicians who have been frustrated by the machinery of the industry, Mirth's story should be heartening. The threesome may not have always followed conventional roads during their comparatively brief career together, but the determination and confidence they have in their own talent promises to take them a long way.

And anyone who is tempted to bet against that should remember the story of David and Goliath. The little guys do win occasionally. ♣

MUSIC IN CANADA

BRUCE COCKBURN is scheduled to perform at the Stratford Festival July 3 as part of the festival's all-Canadian series of concerts. A concert by Cockburn at Montreal's Theatre St. Denis was a triumph for the singer/guitarist/composer earlier this year. Reviewer Matt Radz reported in the *Montreal Star* Bruce's music had a "solid stranglehold" on the overflow audience . . . Stonebolt's album for Parachute Records, a subsidiary of Casablanca Records in the U.S., is expected before summer. The West-coast group has been together seven years and consists of **RAY ROPER, DAVE WILLS, DAN ATCHISON, BRIAN LOUSLEY** and John Webster. Their single recording, "Queen of the Night", was written by **ADAM MITCHELL** and was a top single pic in *Billboard* in February . . . Winnipegers **RON PALEY** and **TIM THORNEY** have signed recording contracts with London Records of Canada. Recently Paley's jazz-oriented "Boxton" album, and Thorney's "Thorney's Latest Album" (a rocker) were available on custom pressing in Winnipeg and sold about 2,000 each in four months . . . Vancouver recording artist and composer **ALEXIS** is moving to Toronto, bringing with her original music in the pop-blues vein . . . The Irish Rovers came up with points in the recent Canadian Recording Industry Association release announcing February record certifications. Their MCA album "The Unicorn" has reached platinum status, as has the group's single by the same title . . . **ERIC ROBERTSON** has completed a score for a CBC-produced feature film entitled *Tyler*. Producer is Ralph Thomas. *The Mitt*, a

new Cedar Films production by Michael Brownstone, which has appeared on CBC television, also features music by Eric . . . Writer/performer **BARRY STAGG** lives in Halifax now, the location where his latest single and upcoming album for RCA were recorded. "Like You and Me (My Love)" backed by "Sanctuary" were recorded at Audio Atlantic, with Al Feeney, engineer. The single precedes Barry's album, titled "Barry Stagg". Both contain all-original material. Barry appeared on CBC-TV's *Canadian Express* in March . . . *Variety's* review of "A Bistro Car on the CNR" began: "This delightful and unpretentious musical romp, which features some 22 songs, should, by word of mouth alone, be insured a healthy run, with probable offshoot productions, and hopefully an original cast album." The musical, originally titled "Jubilay", has music by **PATRICK ROSE**, lyrics by **MERV CAMPONE** and **RICHARD OUZOUNIAN**. Ouzounian also directed. The show opened March 23 in New York's Playhouse Theatre. Hopefully the *Variety* review spells the production's future . . . Both sides of **TED DAIGLE's** Broadland single were written by affiliate **WAYNE ROSTAD**. "Being Satisfied" is backed by "Face in the Mirror". Wayne, himself, has had released his own tune "Baby, Lady, Poet & Writer of Songs," backed by "It's Time To Go Easy On My Mind", written by **MIKE THOMPSON**, again on Broadland. Quality distributes . . . Well before the Hometown Band was awarded its Juno as best new group last year, the Canadian musical press was raving about the group's initial album, on A&M. Joe Sornberger of the *Edmonton Journal*

was typical. He wrote, "Throughout the cuts, there seems to be a sense of joy on this album. Possibly the joy of a bunch of talented musicians finding each other and being able to co-create very good, interesting music. It's nice to see something like that happen now and then. It's nice to hear something work. Because this album is certainly worth getting excited about." Hometown Band includes **SHARI ULRICH, CLAIRE LAWRENCE, GEOFF EYRE, DOUG EDWARDS, ROBBIE KING** and **EDDIE PATTERSON** . . . **MERLE FISCHER's** initial album for Quality, "I Don't Believe In If Anymore", and her single, "How Do You Make Someone Happy", are powerful examples of this lady's writing and singing abilities. Winnipeg producer **BOB BURNS** is responsible for bringing Merle back to performing after she dropped from the business to begin raising her family . . . P.R.O. Canada staff members have noted with sadness the passing of three affiliates in recent months. **BILL KENNY**, 63, had lived in the Vancouver area for about 25 years and was an original member of the world-known Ink Spots. Pianist **BILL BUTLER** died in Toronto at the age of 51, and **SARA-ELLEN DUNLOP** lost her fight with cancer in Toronto. Sara Ellen continued her career until just weeks before her death . . . **MEL ATKEY** and Mark Telford co-produced the 1978 Deltassist Telethon, raising nearly \$3,000 for a service organization in Delta, B.C. **TOM NORTHCOTT** was included among the performers. Atkey and Telford are currently collaborating on a musical . . . **BILL** and **SUE-ON HILLMAN's** latest album, on Maple Grove Records (P.O. Box 280, Strathclair, Man., R0J 2C0), was recorded during two summer tours of England, in 1976-77. The two did 30 one-night stands on each tour . . . "She has a big, rich voice that just tears through country-rockers," wrote Joe Sornberger,

Stonebolt



Edmonton Journal, after hearing **LAURA VINSON** and Red Wyng's album. The album is titled "First Flight" and Sornberger believes "we could have a famous lady on our hands". A recent single by Red Wyng is "Sun Always Shines", written by Laura, and released on Royalty Records... A French adaptation of a Christmas song by **STEVE** and **ELIZABETH RHYMER** of Granville Ferry, N.S., has been picked up by Nana Mouskouri and released by Philips as her latest single. Distributed by London, the release is re-titled "Alleluia". The new French lyrics do not reflect the Christmas season. The original tune, "Light of the Stable", was recorded by Emmylou Harris and re-released the past two Christmas seasons... **HEATHER HAIG's** manager **GEORGE PETRALIA** took the time to write to *The Music Scene* mentioning he believed the country writer/performer was not getting the publicity due her. He was right. Heather is just 19 but those who have seen and heard her perform know it is only a matter of time before hers will be a familiar name. The Canadian industry sat up and took notice a few years ago when **CARROLL BAKER** was introduced nation-wide via CBC-TV and the Juno Awards. When a similar break comes for Heather Haig she will be ready. She has performed in jamborees and clubs throughout Ontario. Her latest release is "Honestly I Love You" written by **DON GRASHEY** and **JERRY PALMER**. The flip side, "Could It Be", was penned by **JACK PLEDGE** and **BILL BARNHART**. The single is on Cloud Burst Records (P.O. Box 1066, Oshawa, Ontario, L1H 9Z9)... **DAVID WARRACK's** exciting new musical "Praise" opened in Toronto April 11. His talents as writer, composer, arranger and musical director were evident in the wide variety of tunes, although they had been well established earlier in a number of successful revues. While working on "Praise" David is also busy with his original score for the musical "Windsor" to have its world premiere in Charlottetown this summer. As well, he will participate in P.R.O. Canada's Musical Theatre Showcase in Toronto May 11... Singer/songwriter **SHERISSE LAURENCE** teamed with Cal Dodd to co-host the CTV special *Circus* broadcast April 16. Her first album, "Sybarite", has been released and her single, "It's Not Me You're Dreamin' About", was the tune that won for her a semi-finalist award in the professional country category of the American Song Festival... The Acadian group Beausoleil-Broussard (**ISABELLE ROY**, **JACQUES SAVOIE**, **JEAN-GABRIEL COMEAU** and **CLAUDE FOURNIER**) and **ROBERT PAQUETTE** represented Canada at the Spa Song Festival in Belgium this spring... **KEN TOBIAS** has written the lyrics and sung the title song for an Italian film *A Silver Saddle*. He also wrote the lyrics and sang "Two Hearts", in the same film. An earlier song, "Siren Spell", was included on the soundtrack of *Ecco Noi, Per Esempio*, a hit film comedy released internationally. Ken performed and was interviewed extensively in Italy, as he was in France at the time of Midem '78. Safari Records in England has just



Heather Haig

released his new single, "New York City", in England, France and Holland. The single comes from the album "Street Ballet", on Attic... "A dynamite duo," "the music guarantees that it will be well worth your effort" were quotes from Toronto papers following performances by the guitar/harmonica duo **MOSE SCARLETT** and Jim MacLean at The Riverboat. The two were off to Britain and Europe following their January engagement... Folk composer/performer **STAN ROGERS** plans a May release for his album "Turn Around", on his own Fogerty's Cove label, distributed by TCD. An album released a year ago has sold 5,000 copies, "without a bit of promotion", states Rogers. The new album extends from traditional folk to hard rock and 8 of the 10 tunes are original. The release will be in time for his appearances at folk festivals this summer, including Winnipeg, Vancouver (also organized by Mitch Podolak of the Winnipeg festival), Philadelphia, Owen Sound and Atlantic. Rogers will visit Britain for a two-week tour in August and will join Ryan's Fancy for appearances on *Canadian Express* and *Superspecial*, both for CBC-TV. Mary O'Hara's recording of his tune "Forty-

Five Years" was released earlier this year on Chrysalis in the U.S. and Capitol in Canada... Condor Records announced at press time the signing of affiliate **TOMMY HUNTER**. His first release is "The Great Mail Robbery" backed by "Gypsy Woman"... "All I Want To Do" by **BRENT SHINDEL** and Arlin Olson is included on Mushroom Records' latest Doucette Album, "Mama Let Him Play"... **RICHARD OUZOUNIAN** was named artistic director of Festival Lennoxville in January. Ouzounian has directed in Vancouver, Edmonton and Winnipeg... Eclipse, including affiliates **PIERRE GAUTHIER**, **MIKE DINARDO** and **JESSE OTTEN**, has had released the album "Night and Day" in 17 countries, according to Direction Records, distributed by Polydor... Two singles with tunes written by **CARMEN BERNARDO** have been made available in both Canada and Italy. Lynne Martin's recording of "I Should Really Leave You" and "Picture on the Wall" is on the EF label, distributed by London, and similar arrangements were made for Christopher Penn's recording of "To Make My Love" and "I Played for You" (for which Bernardo wrote the lyrics). As well, he has



Nelson Renaud

Sherisse Laurence

written or co-written three instrumentals for **ROB LIDDELL's** album "Swan Song", on Berandol Records. "To Make My Love" is included on the album . . . **DAN DONAHUE** hails from Winnipeg, where he's performed in the Winnipeg Folk Festival. Recently he has had released his first album, titled "Long Distance Runner". All but one of the tunes are original. Freckles Music is the label, available through World Records, 484 Waterloo Court, Oshawa, Ontario . . . Country writer/performer **BRENT WILLIAMS** has signed with Grand Slam Records, a division of Broadland. Brent's first single is "Looking Very Good", a **DALLAS HARMS'** tune . . . **SONNY GREENWICH, KATHRYN MOSES** and Nexus are three of the acts to be featured by Art's Alive Festival Series at Harbourfront in Toronto this spring. Dates are May 19, 20; June 8; May 31, June 1 respectively . . . Vancouver's **CHRIS NELSEN** has been studying toward his bachelor of music degree at Douglas College and the University of British Columbia and next fall plans to attend the University of Michigan. In the meantime he has been writing extensively in the area of musical theatre. A number of original songs were performed in February at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre in Vancouver, before an audience of nearly 3,000. The occasion was the Arthur Delamont Gala Anniversary Special. As well two pieces for band were included . . . **R. HARLAN SMITH** has returned to performing while **RUSS THORNBERRY** has taken over production duties at Royalty Records in Edmonton. The first recording under Thornberry is a **GLORY-ANNE CARRIERE** album. Her single, "Pretty Little Love Song," was written by Harlan. A recent release on Royalty by Harlan, himself, was "Daddy and a Man", an original tune. Other new Royalty releases include **DANNY HOOPER's** "Gone Are The Teardrops", written by Danny; **CHRIS NIELSEN's** recording of "Seems I Feel A Heartache", written by Harlan; and "High Steppin' Woman"

written by Wayne Sketchley and recorded by **LARRY GUSTAFSON** . . . **SHERRY KLUPT** of Toronto is to be congratulated for receiving an honourable mention in the Lyric Competition of the American Song Festival. Double congratulations, in fact, as Sherry's only 11 . . . RCA's new muscle-rock act, **THOR**, is one to watch in upcoming months. RCA is sparing no effort in promoting Thor across North America . . . Another major effort from a record company is the current campaign by Quality for Madcats across Canada. The group is scheduled to tour Ontario and Western Canada in May and June, following the success of an initial album. A single, "Too Late for Love", was released in April. The single was written by group member **GRANT FULLERTON**. **BRAD MACDONALD**, keyboards, is also a member.

NEXUS — *Continued from page 7*

to mention that much of what Nexus does is improvisational, and to give a couple of the musicians themselves a chance to say something! (661)

Wyre: "We improvise without a plan. Over the years, we've developed a kind of communication that doesn't require any talking, and the music just unfolds. Often, after our improvisations, people ask us the name of the piece. They find it hard to believe it was just spur-of-the-moment." (711)

Becker: "Our concerts have a very strong theatrical, visual impact. Everyone can identify with the basic instinct of hitting something, and we have an incredible variety of strange looking instruments to hit, and which make unusual sounds, too." (749)

Wyre: All of the instruments and musical materials we use are from so many different cultures, which all filter through our own experiences. Bringing all these things together makes us feel rather special — something like a United Nations of music!"

That's it, just about 800 words. ♣

CONCERT

A new work by **GILLES TREMBLAY**, "Vers le soleil", received its premiere March 11 in Paris as part of the Radio-France series *Musique au présent*. The composer attended.

One of the most historic events of the 1977-78 orchestra season was the February 1 premiere, by the National Arts Centre Orchestra under Mario Bernardi, of "Those Silent, Awe-Filled Spaces", **HARRY SOMERS'** first large orchestral work since "Stereophony" (1963) and one specially commissioned by the Ottawa orchestra. The composition's title is drawn from a description of the Rocky Mountains by the late artist Emily Carr.

DEREK HEALEY's three-act opera "Seabird Island", which was so successfully premiered at the 1977 Guelph Spring Festival, will become, in June of this year, the first Canadian opera to undertake a major tour. With the aid of the Touring Office of the Canada Council and the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation, Guelph artistic director Nicholas Goldschmidt will lead the Stratford Ensemble in performances of the opera in Toronto (June 16-17), Montreal (June 19) and Ottawa (June 21-22). Specially selected Vancouver musicians will form the orchestra for further performances in Banff (June 24) and during Vancouver's Heritage Festival (June 27-30). Based on a West-Coast Indian legend, "Seabird Island" will feature singers Roxolana Roslak, Garnet Brooks, Phyllis Mailing, Barbara Ianni and Inge-mar Korjus.

PEETER TAMMEARU's "Sonatina for Cello and Piano", Op. 3, was heard March 5 in the Town Hall of Toronto's St. Lawrence Centre in a performance by 'cellist Michael Jozefacki with the composer accompanying. The concert was sponsored by the Estonian Art Centre. The work had received its premiere in a February 2 recital at the Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto.

Highlights of the 1978-79 season of the Toronto Symphony will include world premieres of **RUDI VAN DIJK's** "The Shadowmaker", under the direction of Mario Bernardi and featuring baritone Victor Braun (October 24, 25 & 27) and **HARRY SOMERS'** recently "rediscovered" "Concerto for Piano and Orchestra" (December 5, 6), a work dating from 1956 which has not been heard since that time.

Other works by P.R.O. Canada affiliated composers to be heard include **JOHN BECKWITH's** "All the Bees and All the Keys" (1973) (February 17), **GEORGE FIALA's** "English Horn Concerto" (September 16, 17), **ROGER MATTON's** "Mouvement symphonique no. 2" (April 17, 18 & 20) and **PIERRE MERCURE's** "Kaleidoscope" (January 6 & 7).

On February 7, the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, under conductor **SERGE GARANT**, gave the Canadian premiere of **ANDRE PREVOST**'s "Choregraphie III", a work first heard in Paris in March, 1977, in a performance by le Nouvel orchestre philharmonique de Radio-France under the direction of Yves Prin.

"No one in Montreal is better qualified to decipher a new and unknown score than Serge Garant, who is the musical director of La Société de Musique Contemporaine du Québec", wrote Eric McLean of *The Montreal Star*. "Prevost's new work consists of a long series of linked episodes, beginning with mere drops of sound, swelling to a flood, and gradually subsiding to near silence again."

Vancouver composers **ROGER KNOX** and **FRANCIS CHAN** dropped into *The Music Scene*'s offices in March. The two returned to Canada briefly when the university they are attending, Indiana University, ran out of coal for electricity and heating and was forced to close temporarily.

Last September "Serenade for Flute, Oboe and Clarinet" by Knox received its first professional performance. Composed in 1973, the work was performed by Vancouver's Halcyon Quartet at the Vancouver Playhouse. The composer's "Trio for Flute, 'Cello and Piano" was scheduled to receive its first performance April 25 in Bloomington and will be performed during this year's Okanagan Music Festival as well. A work for trombone and tape by Francis Chan will be included in the April 25 programme.

Chan has completed "To God of All Nations", a CBC commission for the Vancouver Bach Choir. The composer's M.A. graduate recital, which was scheduled for April 13, included performances of the above-mentioned choral work; a piece for 30 wind instruments entitled "Foung" (Wind); his "String Quartet" and "Yeh-Pan Yueh" (Nocturne) for tenor voice and tape.

The Music Scene of January/February announced that additions to CBC's Canadian Collection are available through CBC Learning Systems/Publications in Toronto. The Canadian Music Centre in Montreal points out that RCI recordings are also available from the centre at the special price of \$3.90 each plus postage.

JOHN BECKWITH's "First String Quartet" received its world premiere February 10 during Radio-Canada's *Les Grands Concerts* series at the Salle Claude Champagne of the Vincent d'Indy School of Music in Montreal in a performance by the Orford Quartet. Commissioned by the Orford, through a grant from The Canada Council, the one-movement quartet was recorded by the CBC for later broadcast over the French and English radio networks.

Wrote Eric McLean in *The Montreal Star*: "... it is an important new work by a distinguished Canadian composer. I can say I was fascinated by the work and would welcome a chance to hear it again."

Since retiring in 1976 as Chief Supervisor and Co-ordinator of Music for the Scarborough Board of Education, **KEITH BISSELL** has become more prolific than ever in his compositional activities. For instance, a choral/orchestral work based on a text from Psalm 98 has been commissioned by Canadian Amateur Musicians/Musiciens amateurs du Canada (CAMAC) for performance this summer. Also to be heard this summer, during the August conference of the International Society for Music Education, are two songs set to poems by Thomas Hardy which have been commissioned by ISME. A second Bissell commission from ISME, "The Ballad of the Crossing of the Brook", based on a text by Sir Charles G. D. Roberts, will also receive its premiere this year.

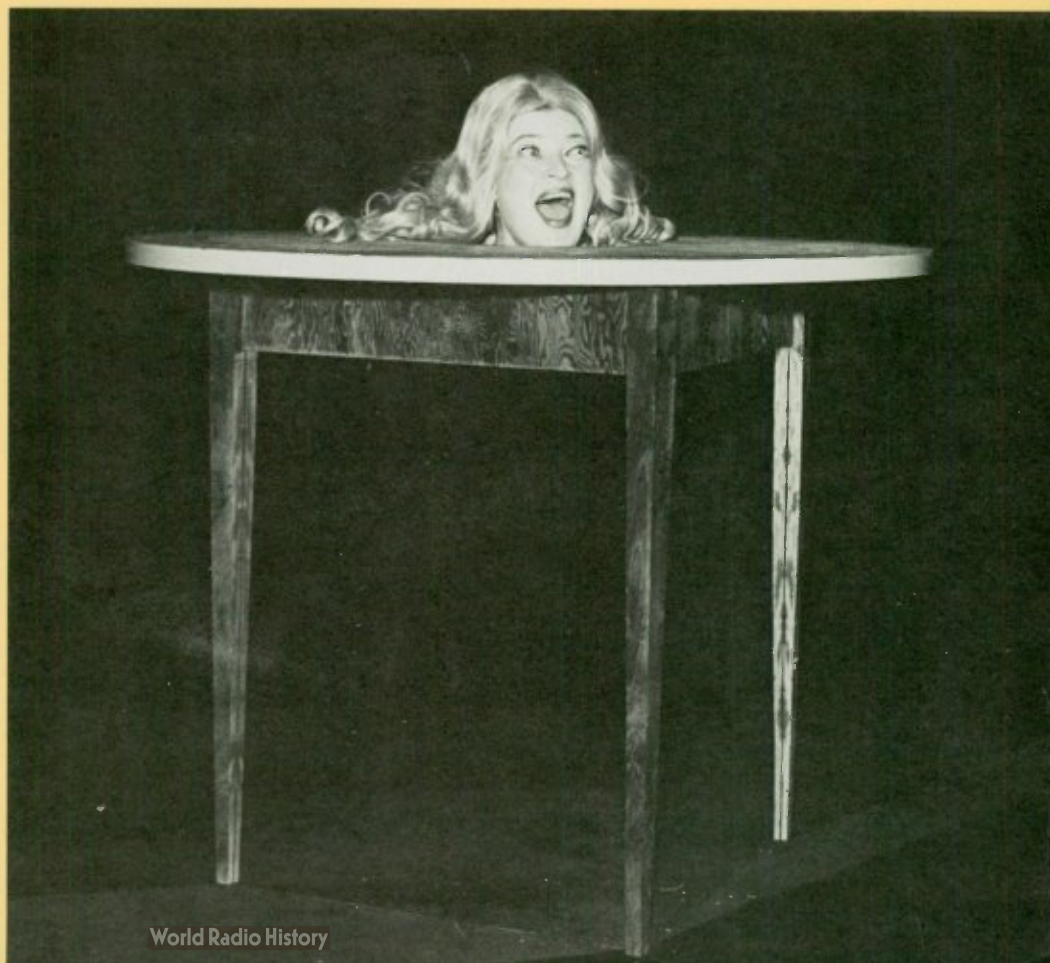
The Orpheus Choir of Toronto under conductor Lloyd Bradshaw presented on February 13 at Laidlaw Hall, Upper Canada College, in Toronto, the world premiere of "Chinese Food", a specially commissioned work by **SIDNEY ROBNOVITCH** set to a text by U.S. poet Erica Jong. The composer, who has studied music at the University of Indiana and composition with **SAMUEL DOLIN** at Toronto's Royal Conservatory of Music, recently gave up a post as lecturer in Social Sciences at York University in order to devote more time to composition. Also heard at the above-mentioned concert were works by **WALTER KEMP**, **KEITH BISSELL**, **HEALEY WILLAN**, **JOHN BECKWITH** and **HARRY SOMERS**.

A second concert, on February 24 at Temple Sinai, featured Toronto's Galiard Ensemble in the premiere of Robnovitch's "Sounds Ascending" for flute, viola, 'cello and harp (the last instrument replaced in this concert by a piano).

Continuing one of the most prolific seasons of his career, **R. MURRAY SCHAFER** attended on March 11 the world stage premiere of his 1965 opera "Loving/Toi" in a performance by members of Toronto's New Music Concerts. Schafer prefers to call the work an "audio-visual poem" rather than an opera, as it has no plot in the literary sense and the singers represent "attitudes" rather than fixed characters. Although "Loving" was commissioned by the CBC and subsequently prepared for presentation on the French television network by the late **PIERRE MERCURE**, the Montreal composer/producer's death resulted in an only partially completed production, which was aired in 1966.

The March 11 concert, which also included the first performance of the composer's "La Testa d'Adriane" for soprano and accordion as well as **BARBARA PENTLAND**'s "Interplay" (1972) for accordion and string quartet, was repeated in Ottawa (March 13), Montreal (March 16) and Halifax (March 19), in a tour sponsored by the Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council. Featured among the 23 "Loving" performers were singers Susan Gudgeon, Jean MacPhail, Kathy Terrel and Mary Lou Fallis, accordionist **JOSEPH MACEROLLO**, the Purcell String Quartet and members of the **NEXUS** percussion ensemble, all under the direction of **ROBERT AITKEN**. The Toronto performance of "Loving" was broadcast over the CBC FM network show *Two New Hours* on April 23.

Immediately following New Music Concerts' Ottawa performance, Schafer was able to attend the March 14 world premiere of "Adieu Robert Schumann", a work commissioned by the CBC for contralto Maureen Forrester and the National Arts Centre Orchestra based on selections from Clara Schumann's diaries.



Mary Morrison in "La Testa d'Adriana" by R. Murray Schafer.

Since taking over in September of 1977 as Professor and Chairman of the Music Department of Dalhousie University in Halifax, **DR. WALTER KEMP** has been active in his additional duties as conductor of the Dal Chorale and the Atlantic Choir. On December 4 Dr. Kemp attended the world premiere of "Crying my Little One?", a specially commissioned a cappella work performed by the Magdalen College Choir in Oxford, England.

"Networks", a newly commissioned work by **ANN SOUTHAM** for flute, viola, trombone, piano, 'cello and percussion, received its first performance during a January 28 Array concert at The Art Works in Toronto. "Like much of Southam's work", wrote Ronald Hambleton in *The Toronto Star*, "it is both ingenious and beguiling . . . the aleatory music that emerges from the bleak motifs achieves a surprisingly dance-like quality as the texture thickens."

"Also surprising", he continues, "was **CLAUDE VIVIER's** "Pulau Dewata" (1977), for keyboard, viola and xylophone. Based on Balinese idioms, it was both simple and subtle, and of all the works that night, was most warmly received by the audience." Vivier's work was subsequently heard in a February 17 performance at Montreal's Salle Claude Champagne by members of the McGill Percussion Ensemble. Also featured were works for percussion by **SERGE GARANT** and **FRANCOIS MOREL**.

Another new Vivier work, "Les Communiantes", for organ, was first heard March 5 at Montreal's l'Eglise Immaculée Conception in a performance by Christopher Jackson. The Montreal composer has just completed introductory theme music for the CBC-AM French Network programme *Entretiens*.

Canada's National Youth Orchestra will present a special contemporary programme on August 11 at Grant Hall, Kingston, Ontario, August 12 at the University of Western Ontario's Alumni Hall in London and August 14 at Vancouver's Orpheum Theatre. It will consist of **JOHN WYRE's** "Bells", **ROBERT AITKEN's** "Neukuia", **R. MURRAY SCHAFFER's** "North/White" and Bela Bartok's "Concerto for Orchestra". Both the Aitken and Schaffer works were originally commissioned by the NYO. All three concerts will be conducted by Kazuyoshi Akiyama.

The Contemporary Music Showcase Association, a non-profit organization which promotes the teaching and performance of new music, held a special concert February 25 at Toronto's Haliconian Hall presenting two specially commissioned works, "The Mexican Suite" for saxophone quartet, by **GLENN MORLEY**, and "Phases for Solo Clarinet" by **BARBARA PENTLAND**. The programme also featured first performances of **ROBERT BAUER's** "Episode I and II" for solo horn and **TIMOTHY SULLIVAN's** "Twelve Touches" for piano. All works were performed by scholarship winners of Showcase '76.

VIOLET ARCHER's one-act opera "Sganarelle" (1973), which was first staged in 1974 by members of the University of Alberta Music Department, will be revived this year for the 1978 Banff Festival of the Arts between August 1 and 19.

Miss Archer's "Three Improvisations" for piano were given their premiere January 15 at Alberta College in Edmonton in a performance by Robert Pounder. On January 29 Norma Cutrer gave the U.S. premiere of the composer's "Sonata" for piano in a recital sponsored by the School of Music of Louisiana University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Ann Price of Baton Rouge's *Morning Advocate* wrote, ". . . it is an exciting piece of music, opening with a pounding, relentless rhythm which recurs during the development of the sonata."

Professor Archer recently became the recipient of a Queen's Jubilee Silver Medal. At the end of the current academic year she will retire as Chairman of the Department of Theory and Composition in the Music Department, University of Alberta.

The University of Toronto and the Royal Conservatory of Music have collaborated with coordinator Blago Simeonov on their fourth annual Canadian Concerts series consisting this year of concerts on May 3 and May 28. The first of these includes new chamber works by **THOMAS SCHUDEL** and **GARY KULESHA** as well as works by **RICHARD JOHNSTON**, Robert Fleming, and **ROBERT BAUER**. The May 28 concert will feature a new set of arrangements of folksongs from Quebec for clarinet, bassoon and piano by **CHRISTOPHER WEAIT**, in addition to compositions by Blago Simeonov, Morris Surdin and **JOHN REA**. Performing at both concerts will be Christopher Weait, bassoon, Nancy Antonachi, piano, and several student musicians. Concerts take place at the Royal Conservatory of Music.

TIMOTHY WATTERS' "Sinfonia" for six voices, first performed on December 7, 1977, in a concert by Dalhousie University's resident new music ensemble Murphy's Law (which also included a new work by Dalhousie professor **STEVEN TITTLE** called "Find Your Own Way Out") was featured on the Nova Music programme of February 5, along with the four-channel tape version of Stockhausen's "Kontakte" and **JACQUES HETU's** "Variations pour piano". Watters, a former student of **R. MURRAY SCHAFFER**, was born in Kingston, Ontario, and now resides in Halifax.

Dr. Elaine Keiller, of the music department of Ottawa's Carleton University, was responsible for the organization of a mini-festival of Canadian music which took place March 14-16 at that university. A March 14 recital by bass/baritone Donald Bell included works by **HARRY SOMERS** and **JEAN COULTHARD** while, on the 15th, a variety of works by **JACQUES HETU**, **R. MURRAY SCHAFFER** and **GILLES TREMBLAY** were heard.

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Music Concerts has long forced its co-founder (with Norma Beecroft) and Artistic Director to devote much less time to his important composing activities than he would like. Nevertheless, he has found time to amass a sizable body of compositions, the most ambitious of recent years being the large orchestral work "Spiral". Commissioned by the CBC for the National Arts Centre Orchestra's 1975 performance at *World Music Week* and since performed several times — including last Autumn's presentation by the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Mario Bernardi during the *Musicanada* series in London — this work has presented both composer and performers with certain problems. "Writing 'Spiral' exhausted me", the composer recalls. "I still haven't heard it played very close to what I had intended. Although I was away and didn't hear it, I understand the Toronto performance was quite good. But it's a very difficult piece, very uncompromising. I put so much into it that I didn't have the courage to write another piece after that until last year when I wrote two flute pieces: 'Icicle' and 'Plainsong'."

The first of these will be published by Editions Transatlantique in Paris in a booklet introducing young flute students to new techniques in contemporary music. Aitken first performed "Plainsong" in March, 1977, as part of Boulez's newly formed Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique (IRCAM) at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, sharing a week of solo recitals with such world-renowned figures as Heinz Holliger, Vinko Globokar and Siegfried Palm.

Referring to "Spiral", the composer reminisces on the work's brief but troubled performance history, regretting in particular John Kraglund's report (*Globe and Mail*, September 24, 1977) that Aitken claimed Mario Bernardi did not understand the work. Being naturally rather distressed with this mis-quote, the composer submitted a letter to the editor claiming that Bernardi had been "the single most important person in the history of 'Spiral', and as such, has understood it better than anyone else . . . it is an immensely difficult score and rather than criticize, I would like to commend anyone who attempts it."

"I used to think, because of all the years I had in the orchestra, that at least I was moderately practical", the composer muses. "When I write things that are difficult it's because I want them to sound difficult. The NACO is a terrific orchestra. Mario said: 'Write anything, they can play it.' And I know they can too, so I wrote anything. I'm not blaming the orchestras; it really is a hard piece. Very hard."

Although Aitken's crammed schedule forces him to turn down two or three commissions each year, he has been particularly attracted to the idea of composing an opera on an offer from Toronto's Co-Opera Theatre. Having previously composed only incidental music for the theatre, such an undertaking would constitute the composer's first venture into the realm of vocal music, a venture which we anticipate with great interest. ♦

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