

## TECHNOLOGY

Executives of the large record labels say that most of the recording equipment they use is manufactured in Mexico. On the other hand, *Televisa* said that it imports all of its technology from Japan, the US and Europe. An official of the *Orquesta Filarmónica de la Ciudad de México*, Mexico City Philharmonic said that the orchestra buys most of its instruments from the United States.

### PROMOTING CANADIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC COMPOSERS THE CANADIAN MUSIC CENTRE

The Canadian Music Centre (CMC) is a non-profit agency that promotes and distributes the work of Canadian classical composers. The Centre has regional offices in Sackville, Montreal, Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver. It receives funding from the Canada Council, provincial arts councils, municipalities and private foundations. It also receives membership fees from associated composers and earns revenue from the sale of scores, concert tickets and records that are published under its own label.

David Parsons is CMC's Ontario regional director. He feels that Mexico offers considerable potential for Canadian composers and has been active in promoting their work to potential Mexican buyers. But he is quick to add that the CMC's interest is in cultural exchange, not commercial trade. "Mexico is interesting because of the rich cultural and musical heritage that exists there," he says, "but so much of this activity is forced because of trade links." The CMC is very interested in a cultural exchange with Mexico. He adds, "I just hope that trade interests alone don't drive it."

In Mr. Parson's view, Canada and Mexico have much in common in their efforts to maintain a distinct national identity. "I think that artists in Mexico and Canada work in a similar way to define an identity that is in contrast to the United States," he says. "The advantage that the Mexicans have, that we don't, is that they have a more cohesive cultural root and a stylistic basis to develop, and that's very exciting to watch."

In the autumn of 1995, the *Quartetto Latin-Americano*, a contemporary classical music string quartet from Mexico City, came to Toronto on a tour organized by Ann Summers International. The performance included a piece written for this group by José Evangelista, a Canadian composer. Mr. Parsons saw this as an opportunity to promote other Canadian composers, and he quickly organized an impromptu reception for the *Quartetto*. Twelve local composers who write music appropriate for string quartets were invited to attend, and the CMC paid to have copies made of one of the scores of each composer's choice. "It wasn't anything specific about Mexico that prompted this event," Mr. Parsons noted, "It's just that this was an international group which performs 20th century work who would be potentially interested in the work of some of our members."

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## BREAKING INTO THE MEXICAN MUSIC INDUSTRY

The level of interest in Mexico within the Canadian music community far exceeds actual participation in Mexican projects. To assess the barriers that might be holding them back, an independent researcher circulated a questionnaire to more than 60 individuals and organizations across Canada. This informal survey, which was conducted in late 1996, covered independent record labels, distributors, agents, musicians, composers, music publications and many professional associations. The latter included local offices of the American Federation of Musicians, the Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers of Canada and the Canadian Music Centre.

In addition, many organizations agreed to make copies available to members on bulletin boards and at meetings. The questionnaire was also posted on music newsgroups on the Internet and several copies were distributed by hand at music venues.

Only 12 responses were received. But the consistency of the results suggests that the responses may be representative. Three respondents identified themselves as composers, authors or publishers; four as independent record labels or distributors; two as agents or managers; two as musicians; and one as a promotion and distribution agency. None of the respondents reported doing business in Mexico, but all of them expressed interest and said that there were opportunities in Mexico.

They identified several real or perceived obstacles:

- unfamiliarity with the Mexican music business (10);
- audio/video piracy (8);
- stability of Mexican currency (7);
- lack of assistance programs for market entry (6);