

tic music coincided with the disfigurement of the external soundscape by the Industrial Revolution. Romanticism was thus wishful thinking, an escape from uglification, a contempt for the external and a desire to transfigure it through fantasy. It was a new fact in Western history and it is this that makes it so difficult to combine effectively with music of other periods. This difficulty is what leads to the downfall of the traditional conservatory recital, which begins with Bach or the Elizabethans and then reels vertiginously into Schumann, Chopin and Brahms.

There certainly is music in the world that would sit well in apposition with that of the Romantics (certain forms of Middle Eastern or Indian music achieve a similar abandon) but the hope of bringing such a conjunction into existence in Toronto in 1962 was impracticable — and I suspect it may still be only remotely possible for cultural reasons. The fact remains that if and when music achieves true independence from nationalism (and we are by no means as free of it as we think) the chemistry of the types of music I am mentioning could work, and would work better than the chronological pileup of European material that characterizes almost any recital one cares to attend.

The first half of the concert was performed by candlelight. Interwoven with the movements of Schumann's *Kreisleriana* were readings from E.T.A. Hoffmann concerning the mad Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler, who had served as the inspiration for Schumann's music and who was an important prototype for the Romantic hero in general. The fact that after 150 years these vital writings had never been translated leaves further doubts about the efficiency of the British-American musicological trade union. Professor Beauty, of course, prefers Hoffmann in the *Urtext*.

In choosing the material for translation I tried to match and fold the music into the words and the words into the music to illustrate the synaesthesia that infuses both Schumann's and Hoffmann's work so strongly. Recitations with musical accompaniment were popular during this period but they are difficult to bring off today. The candlelight helped, as indeed it always helped romantic music. I've said it before, but it can be repeated: romanticism was electrocuted by the light bulb.

Program Five: February 3, 1963

JOSQUIN DES PRES — *The King's Fanfare*
JOHN BECKWITH — *Five Pieces for Brass Trio*
EDGAR VARESE — *Octandre*
JOHANNES BRAHMS — *Four Lieder* for women's chorus, two horns and harp
INTERMISSION
EDGAR VARESE — *Octandre* (repeated)
DON CARLO GESUALDO — *Four Madrigals*
IGOR STRAVINSKY — *Octet* for wind instruments

Program Five was a mixed bag. The main question to be asked here is whether the program would have been improved or dislocated had the pieces chosen been presented in any other order. Supposing Stravinsky had led off, or Gesualdo had been the centrepiece, or Beckwith had been repeated twice. Or suppose all the pieces had been performed twice, or none of them had. This is a question the program builder should ask himself constantly, repeatedly trying out different weightings and colorations until the best one is found. This is a question which the run-of-the-hall music director, or whatever mattooid it is that determines program arrangements, rarely or never asks. This is a question which CBC disc jockeys, prevented by whatever obstructions of intelligence that make one suitable for that profession, are never troubled with.

I suppose, speaking in broad terms, the climax of a concert ought to come after the intermission about five-eighths of the way through the show, confirming the Golden Section as sanctioned by Virgil and Leonardo da Vinci. But I have never understood how an audience, coming back from the trough of the intermission with booze and cigarette smoke still on its breath, should presume that the moment has arrived to be transported directly to the pinnacles of Parnassus.

It seems to me that the curve of arousal and boredom goes through something like two cycles in a good evening of music making, peaking somewhere before intermission but closer to it than to the beginning of the concert, and again after intermission, at something like the same distance from the first arousal to intermission. That is, it takes longer to arouse the audience to the first peak than to the second, the memory of the first half of the concert serving to pull the listener faster into the second trajectory of receptivity. So our pieces would fit under this graph more or less like this:

AROUSAL
↑
BOREDOM

Des Prés Beckwith Varèse Brahms Varèse Gesualdo Stravinsky

The little fillips I've added to the beginning and end of the graph result from the initial excitement, when the first sounds hit the clean ear out of silence (the same as onset transient excitement in any vibrating system); and again in the final recapitulation — perhaps bringing with it the prospect of seeing the young girl with the long legs in the lobby after the concert. Thus we peaked at the Varèse-Brahms juncture in the first half and at the Varèse-Gesualdo juncture in the second. In both cases, a romantic piece was juxtaposed to a harshly modern one in a deliberate attempt to activate the aural adrenalin. The Varèse was repeated because, as it was the most advanced piece on the program, we felt a second hearing would help its chances of winning reception. I will not say that listeners reacted this way. I will merely say that by adopting this program management we were attempting to eliminate the risks that they wouldn't.

Program Six: March 3, 1963

J.S. BACH — *The Musical Offering*
INTERMISSION

JAZZ — Compositions on the Frederick the Great theme by Gordon Delamont, Harry Freedman, Rob McConnell and Norm Symonds

This was the most flamboyant and at the same time thematically unified concert of our first year. As everyone knows, Bach's *Musical Offering* consists of a series of contrapuntal variations based entirely on a theme presented to him by Frederick the Great. Bach improvised on the theme in the presence of the king, then returned home to extend his thoughts in written form, sending his variations back to the court. We were operating perfectly within the original *cadre* in presenting "Freddie's tune" to Gordon Delamont's band to work over in jazz arrangements. All night long we heard the same chromatic descent of the famous theme, elaborated by the antique and modern imagination and in a way that definitely established the relationship of the Baroque to the swing era; for there can be no doubt that if one plays the Baroque masters in the manner that Couperin, C.P.E. Bach and Quantz recommend — that is by elongating the "cappial" notes and abbreviating the "passing" notes — something very close to jazz emerges. I would not insist that we were the first to put this argument to the test, though I know of no one who preceded us in the field and I do know of a good many who have achieved popularity out of coupling Baroque music and jazz in more recent years.

Program Seven: April 7, 1963

JACQUES IBERT — *Entr'acte*, for flute and guitar
UDO KASEMETS — *Conciones*, Op.42, for voice, flute and guitar
VILLA LOBOS — *Preludes* 1 and 2 for guitar
MORLEY, ROSSETER, DOWLAND — Elizabethan Songs for voice and harpsichord
PAUL HINDEMITH — *Kleine Kammermusik*, Op. 24, No. 2

INTERMISSION

PHILLIP FRIEDRICH BOEDDECKER — *Weinachts-Konzert* for voice and harpsichord
HENRY PURCELL — "Not All My Torments" and "If Music be the Food of Love" for voice and harpsichord
LEOS JANECEK — *Mladi* (Youth) for wind sextet

Spring usually strikes Toronto in April and we programmed accordingly. This was at once both the lightest and the most intimate of our concerts (*Entr'acte*, love songs, *Youth* suite). What else need be said; we were simply shaking off the icicles.

Ten Centuries Concerts continued for several years to critical and public acclamation. There would be no point in presenting all the programs; though a few highlights might be mentioned to drive home the argument that inventive programming can exist in competition with the more thoughtless variety and will be noticed and sufficiently appreciated.

My program file is incomplete, but here are a few items from what I have at hand. The 1963-4 season brought works as remote as those from the Chantilly Manuscript (1400) up to pieces by Webern and Hindemith. A special event was our own reconstruction from the surviving vocal parts and the second violin part of Joseph Quesnel's *Colas et Colinette*, probably the first Canadian opera to be written (1790). The work was later recorded by the CBC and successfully sold commercially (without acknowledging our work in initiating the whole undertaking). The 1964-5 season brought Adriano Banchieri's madrigal comedy *Il Festino* (1608), early American songs, electronic music and a specially-commissioned film by Michael Snow, *New York Eye and Ear Control*. 1965-6 brought rags by Jelly Roll Morton to the same pro-



gram as three canonic masses (Okeghem, Pierre de la Rue and Palestrina); a program of Indian and Chinese music in juxtaposition; and no doubt many other things my memory and incomplete filing system prevent from being recorded here.

But I do recall one concert vividly: this was in December 1965 when we were to present a piece specially written by Jack Behrens for flutes and three percussionists, whose job was to "play" an enormous metal sculpture by Gerald Gladstone. The percussionists were John Beckwith, Bruce Mather and myself. To us fell the responsibility of hitting, scratching, scrubbing and belting a huge celestial tub of metal while Bob Aitken stuck his head inside it and played the flute. The occasion was altogether too hilarious for the audience and soon the mirth spread to the stage. We simply broke up, or down, and lay rolling on the floor with our mallets bobbing in the air like flowers — all except for John Beckwith who went on fastidiously slugging Aitken's imprisoned head. Then I recall someone shouting from the back of the hall "Start again!" and we did, taking it from the top without this time even cracking a smile.

I have gone far enough in this survey. Some day some student can put the whole picture together and if such student is worthy of the task he or she will not stop at the doc. diss. department, but will gather up some of the originals written, revived or edited for Ten Centuries Concerts and give them to the public again.

There were, as I now realize, probably two precedents for what we did. One was the series of chamber concerts organized by Hans Keller for the BBC in the early sixties. I had heard some of these and liked the way he had gathered together singers and instrumentalists to produce music from a variety of periods. The other precedent should have been better known to me, but in fact wasn't until years later. This was Ezra Pound's series of Rapallo concerts, presented between 1933 and 1938. Pound has written of them in *Guide to Kulchur* and *ABC of Reading*. When I visited him in 1960 we also discussed these concerts, which featured music from the Middle Ages (much of it from mss.) to the twentieth century (much of it then the latest stuff), juxtaposed according to what Pound called the "ideogrammic method." The ideogrammic method was to consist of a "careful first-hand examination...and continued COMPARISON of one 'slide' or specimen with another." Thus music from widely divergent periods was presented together to show

similar structural or coloristic preoccupations. I sensed what E.P. was getting at from early on, but it was not until about 1970 after I had gathered up all the original reviews and programs for these concerts that I understood what a remarkably unique series Pound and his friends had produced in Rapallo.

After Rapallo 30 years passed before anyone dared to put on programs of original material from different periods designed to broaden tastes and break down the divisiveness of audiences. Two decades more have nearly gone by now without any Canadian city picking up the theme of Ten Centuries Concerts. It seems strange that during the most eclectic period of civilization on this planet, music has remained largely intransmissible across the social, ethnic and other dividers that keep audiences segregated and which successful managers and promoters know precisely how to exploit. Prejudice and laziness continue apparently to be the programmer's closest allies.

Ten Centuries Concerts was a defiant series. It cracked like a whip over the slovenly concert scene in Toronto. It reasserted prime musical values. It put music before musicians and musicians before the budget. It was probably not the only thing of value that happened at that time but I can't think of anything else to compare with it.

There will be no issues of Only Paper Today in July & August. The September issue will be almost entirely devoted to activities on the West Coast of North America. Interested contributors should contact Vic d'Or at La Mamelie Inc., PO Box 3123, San Francisco 94119 between August 4 and 31 or at the Western Front, 303 East 8th Street, Vancouver, until September 8.

