
As for opera directors, Hermann Geiger-Torel (1907-76) gave up his academic studies for a career in the theatre, moving from Germany to Uruguay in 1943 to become chief staff director at the national opera. In 1948 he came to Canada where his combined theatre and music background made him a dominant force with the Canadian Opera Company and the Opera School at the University of Toronto. Another director, Irving Guttman (1928), a regular guest conductor throughout Canada and the United States, has been artistic director of the Edmonton, Winnipeg and Vancouver companies.

Choral music

Choral music flourishes in Canada. Most small communities claim at least one choral group, excluding church and school choirs. In larger centres it is difficult to keep track of all the groups devoted to the practice of choral singing. Ethnic choirs, ensembles concentrating on folkloric music and others more oriented towards classical repertoire are just a sampling of the variety of musical styles. In major cities, large choirs specialize in presenting oratorios, masses and cantatas. Many collaborate with a local orchestra such as the Hamilton Bach Elgar Choir, the Ottawa Choral Society, the Vancouver Bach Choir, the Winnipeg Philharmonic Choir and, the most venerable, the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir. Canada's oldest-surviving mixed-voice choir, it began in 1894 and, under conductors Sir Ernest MacMillan and Elmer Iseler, has established a solid reputation both in Canada and elsewhere.

Augmenting these usually choral forces are full-time chamber groups comprising professional singers. The Tudor Singers (Montreal), the Elmer Iseler Singers (Toronto) and the Vancouver Chamber Choir routinely schedule concerts in their home cities, tour and broadcast on radio.

Chamber music

In the past few years chamber music has blossomed everywhere in Canada, thanks to professional ensembles of superior quality. The Orford String Quartet, founded in 1965, draws praise from critics throughout the world for its repertoire of classical and commissioned new works. The quartet, which is associated with the University of Toronto, plays regularly with guest ensembles and soloists. Other professional groups are the Brunswick, the Vaghy and Purcell quartets.