

size and seriousness, and were, indeed, often ill-prepared to cope with their special demands even when they did make the attempt. Successes such as Harry Somers's *Louis Riel* (for the Canadian Opera Company) and R. Murray Schafer's *Son of Heldenleben* (for the Montreal Symphony Orchestra) were outstanding exceptions. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, new directions opened up with the formation of young Canadian ensembles that were generally receptive to new idioms (the Orford String Quartet, York Winds, Canadian Brass) and, even more notably, concert groups specializing in the most recent music (Société de Musique Contemporaine du Québec, New Music Concerts, Nova Music). This change helps determine not only how the newest Canadian works are presented but also what they sound like.

The other change has been gradual. Writing about music is not unknown in Canada. But, as with so many other processes, its development has been sporadic. A checklist of some 60 English-language journals on music produced in the country over the past century reveals some surprisingly sophisticated examples, with an average "life-span" of four or five years. Recent relatively stable and serious magazines are the *Canadian Music Journal*, its successor *Canada Music Book* and the *Journal of the Canadian Association*

*of University Schools of Music*, all of which have in the past 20 years devoted substantial critical articles to works by individual Canadian composers. Book-length studies have appeared on Lavallée and Somers. Histories such as Helmut Kallmann's *A History of Music in Canada 1534-1914* (1960) and surveys such as Arnold Walter's *Aspects of Music in Canada* (1969) have dealt in part with compositional backgrounds and trends. In 1975 the Canadian Music Centre prepared and published *Contemporary Canadian Composers*, a dictionary of the most prominent professional composers of Canada in this century. Finally, an ambitious work entitled *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada* is at an advanced stage of editing and is to appear in 1979 – a one-volume treatment (in both English and French) of all aspects of the subject, giving prominence to the music of Canada's own composers.

What is this music like? Keith MacMillan, until recently general manager of the Canadian Music Centre, has noted sound-images recurring in works by a number of prominent composers during the last 15 years or so, among them native bird-calls such as the song of the white-throated sparrow and the eldritch laugh of the loon – and, of course, the locomotive whistle.

Older composers imitated the dominant figures of their generations, striving to become Canadian