

Composer Beecroft adds new tricks

BY WILLIAM LITTLER
MUSIC CRITIC

When Norma Beecroft went for her first lessons with John Weinzweig, the dean of English Canadian composition teachers, she remembers the crusty notesmith telling her, "What do you want to do this for? There is no future in it."

That was back in the 1950s, a less than hospitable time for composers in this country, especially those, like Weinzweig himself, who had adopted Arnold Schoenberg's 12-tone technique.

Beecroft came to include the technique in her own bag of compositional tricks, but as those listeners must have recognized, who braved the icy winds Sunday night to attend the latest New Music Concert at the Premiere Dance Theatre, she added other tricks as well.

The concert took the form of a portrait of Beecroft, one of an ongoing series in which the music of senior Canadian compos-

ers (the lady reached a youthful 60 in April) is examined along with the music of those who influenced them and those they admire in a younger generation.

Not surprisingly, Weinzweig represented the former category and Calgary's Hope Lee the latter. Beecroft herself was represented by three pieces, all of them (like the Weinzweig and Lee scores) being given their premieres.

A veteran broadcaster with a consequent taste for things electronic, the Oshawa native has never been easy to pigeonhole stylistically and in these three works she remains very much a pragmatist, responding to specific circumstances.

In the case of *Images* (1986), a commission from the York Winds (who disbanded before they could play it) produced a wind quintet in which steady drones give way repeatedly to playfully decorative arabesques.

In the case of the more sub-

stantial *String Quartet* (1991-92), a surprisingly lyrical pre-recorded tape is employed canonically in relationship with live instrumental sounds using melodic ideas from a previous piece.

And in the case of *Face à Face* (1994), the opportunity to write for the virtuosic Robert Aitken and his daughter, Diane, what may be the first work for two bass flutes has produced a score primarily interesting for its coloristic effects (some of them generated on this occasion by percussionist Trevor Tureski).

Hope Lee's *Voices In Time* also incorporated a pre-recorded tape, using transformed water sounds from Kananaskis, representing the flow of time, but despite adding to it the coloristic resources of an ensemble of 14 players, the Hong Kong native made time pass quite uneventfully.

There was much more life compressed into the staves of the octogenarian Weinzweig's *Journey Out Of Night*, a collection of 14 terse songs aspiring to the over-all shape of a monodrama.

Although the moods are several, most of the songs are nocturnal and serious in tone, building, as the composer says, "to a prophecy of a world doomed to vanish into darkness and stillness."

Words and music generally alternate, fostering remarkable textual clarity, and if the physical gestures applied by mezzo-soprano Marianne Bindig in dramatizing them looked underdeveloped, the dialogue between singer and pianist (the dependable John Hess) was convincingly realized.

The concert is scheduled to be broadcast on CBC-FM Radio's *Two New Hours*, Dec. 11 at 10:05 p.m.

Le Compositeur Canadien

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En tête NORMA BEECROFT, compositrice bien connue, parle de sa musique digne et sensuelle pendant un entretien avec Kenneth Winters 5

ANDRÉ GAGNON, compositeur, arrangeur et pianiste de Montréal, se dit romantique mais compose souvent dans le style baroque de Bach. Reportage de Jane Champagne 11

Point de départ . . .

Les téléspectateurs invétérés, qui ont capté l'émission récente Telescope de la télévision de R.-C. mettant en vedette BORIS BROTT, ont été témoins de l'écroulement continu de la tour de suffisance qui a abrité pendant si longtemps le monde de la musique sérieuse.

On y a vu le jeune M. BROTT pilotant son avion privé, s'occupant à la direction de trois orchestres (pas en même temps, cela va sans dire), parlant au téléphone dans sa voiture décapotable, enregistrant son spectacle radiophonique pour R.-C. et se comportant dans ses autres moments à la manière réservée jusqu'à maintenant aux administrateurs sans cérémonies du commerce de la musique pop.

Il y en a qui croient que ce genre de comportement ne fait rien de bon pour la musique "sérieuse". Il y a ceux qui sont disposés à pardonner au jeune M. BROTT de jouer à l'occasion des disques des Beatles à son émission de radio (qu'on a intitulée bêtement Brott to You) comme s'il s'agissait d'une aberration inoffensive. Ceux-là seront probablement estomaqués si jamais ils voient le placard de BORIS BROTT, dans lequel le chef d'orchestre est entouré de quelques-unes des plus belles jeunes femmes qu'on puisse trouver dans

toute la ville d'Hamilton.

Par-dessus cela, le voir à la télévision conduisant sa décapotable à toute vitesse comme s'il était un nouveau membre de l'équipe Mod Squad, c'était aller vraiment trop loin.

Est-ce que ce l'était vraiment? Les jeunes en particulier ont des goûts musicaux plus catholiques que jamais auparavant. Peut-être recourent-ils encore à des clichés ("sérieux", "pop", "rock", etc.), mais, de plus en plus, musiciens et compositeurs à la formation classique explorent les modes d'expression pop, et les jeunes, de plus en plus nombreux, élevés au régime du rock and roll de la radio, découvrent de la valeur dans la musique "sérieuse". Alors, si M. BROTT, avec sa décapotable et tout le reste, concourt à favoriser ce genre de pénétration des goûts musicaux, il mérite qu'on l'encourage.

Tout ce qu'il nous faut maintenant, c'est de trouver quelqu'un qui possède l'habileté, l'enthousiasme et la pure audace qu'il faut pour faire connaître la belle musique du Québec au reste du Canada, qui reste lamentablement dans l'ignorance des talents de quelques-uns des meilleurs compositeurs au monde. □

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Photos de NORMA BEECROFT par John Reeves; Alec Bruyns et Columbia Records ont pris celles d'ANDRÉ GAGNON, et Dennis Robinson, du concert de Crowbar.

NOMS des membres de la CAPAC en grandes et petites MAJUSCULES.

A profile of Norma Beecroft, written by Kenneth Winters

A composer who doesn't wear music like a straightjacket

The image of the woman composer as a kind of awkwardly noble, dauntingly heroic battle station in skirts in the Dame Ethel Smythe tradition, has about run its course, certainly in Canada.

The zestful and dynamic S. C. ECKHARDT-GRAMATTÉ, the swift and elegant Barbara Pentland, the modest and capable Violet Archer — to name only three well-established figures — have enlivened our musical picture in fresh, subtle, interesting and not-easily-calculable ways.

As women, they represent a world of the imagination in some essence quite different from any man's world, but no whit less resourceful, and certainly no less well run.

So when we come to consider a young-woman composer like Toronto's NORMA BEECROFT we do not, at all, find ourselves shooting the wildly boiling rapids of Women's Lib. Sexual equality has already been achieved and enjoyed in Canadian music — music being, as usual, well ahead of the pedestrian trend — and a woman composer of BEECROFT's generation is thus free to relax about the implications of her gender and get down to the business — and the pleasure — of her art. The BEECROFT shoulder is a handsome one, and all the handsomer for the absence of a chip on it. Her output is small but rich, personal and blessedly un-hag-ridden:

"What is a feminine composition? I have no idea. Perhaps it has something to do with not making a religion of discipline. As a woman I've been fortunate to have some good, well-placed friends in the composition field, but even they sometimes tell me I should write more, work harder. However, I decided quite early not to let work take absolute priority. I'm too interested in other things to wear music like a straitjacket.

"I'm caught up with sound; I admit it. But I can't deal with sound in an abstract way. I'm not interested in making a perfect piece of craft. You *need* craft, of course, but once the craft is operative, you choose; and you choose personally, you choose sounds and sound-implications that mean something to *you*.

"I believe in this kind of 'meaningful choice' because I believe in communication. And what is meaningful to me has a reasonable chance of setting up that communication by being similarly meaningful to other people who hear it."

So said NORMA BEECROFT as she sat at ease one afternoon a few weeks ago in the quiet living room of the central-Toronto house she inhabits with her husband, corporation lawyer John Wright.

"When we were children just going into our teens, my sister Jane and I used to lie on the balcony listening to that marvellous radio program, *Escape With Me* — do you remember it? It was a bit sticky, I guess, by our severe modern standards, but it had the root of the romantic matter in it and was full of the music of Debussy and Ravel. Great stuff for releasing imagination from conventional bonds, and through that program I gained a respect and an affection for Debussy that have never left me and that have been probably basic to my personal musical aesthetic."

The mention of JANE BEECROFT — poet and painter — and the image of the sisters sharing in a close way their imaginative experience, inevitably recalled those famous sisters of fiction, D. H. Lawrence's Brangwyn sisters, Ursula and Gudrun, who enliven so memorably Lawrence's maddening and fascinating masterpiece, *Women in Love*.

Like the Brangwyn sisters, the BEECROFTS are beauties, are artists, are luminous exceptions, living outside the types and categories

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Une production musicale limitée mais riche, digne et personnelle

L'image qui présentait la femme compositrice comme une espèce de poste de combat en jupons, genre Dame Ethel Smythe, à la noblesse gauche et à l'héroïsme indomptable, a à peu près fait son temps, à tout le moins, assurément, au Canada.

La piquante et dynamique S. C. ECKHARDT-GRAMATTÉ, la vive et élégante Barbara Pentland, la compétente et humble Violet Archer, pour ne nommer que trois figures bien connues, ont insufflé de la vie sur la scène de la musique, de façon fraîche, subtile, intéressante et difficilement mesurable.

En qualité de femmes, elles représentent un monde de l'imagination à certains égards essentiels bien différent de n'importe quel monde réservé à l'homme, mais non moins rempli de ressources et assurément non moins bien dirigé; de fait, pour ce qui est d'exercer proprement le métier, toutes ces femmes pourraient apprendre une chose ou deux à quelques-uns de nos compositeurs de sexe masculin.

Par conséquent, lorsqu'il s'agit de considérer une jeune femme compositrice comme NORMA BEECROFT de Toronto, nous ne nous trouvons pas du tout au milieu des rapides tumultueux de la Libération des femmes. L'égalité des sexes existe et se pratique déjà dans les milieux de la musique au Canada, la musique devançant de beaucoup, comme d'habitude, les tendances du commun des mortels. Par conséquent, une femme compositrice de la génération de BEECROFT peut en toute liberté se sentir à l'aise quant aux répercussions de son sexe et s'occuper au travail et au plaisir de son art. La ligne BEECROFT est élégante, d'autant plus élégante que celle qui la présente ne se prend pas pour une autre. Sa production n'est pas considérable, mais elle est riche, personnelle et heureusement dépourvue de cauchemars.

"Ce qu'est une composition féminine? Je

n'en ai pas la moindre idée. Cela tient peut-être à ce que je ne me fais pas une religion de la discipline. En tant que femme, j'ai eu la chance de compter de bons amis bien placés dans le domaine de la composition mais, même eux, parfois, me disent que je devrais composer davantage, travailler plus dur. Toutefois, j'ai décidé, il y a déjà assez longtemps, que je ne laisserais pas le travail assumer la priorité absolue. Je m'intéresse à trop d'autres choses pour porter la musique comme une camisole de force. J'avoue que je suis prise par le son. Cependant, je ne peux pas traiter le son comme une abstraction. Faire une oeuvre d'artisan parfaite ne m'intéresse pas. Bien entendu, il faut du métier mais, du moment qu'on sait exercer le métier, il faut choisir et l'on choisit personnellement, on choisit les sons et les implications sonores qui signifient quelque chose pour soi.

"Je crois à ce genre de 'choix qui signifie quelque chose' parce que je crois à la communication. Et ce qui signifie quelque chose pour moi a raisonnablement des chances d'établir cette communication en signifiant quelque chose de semblable pour les autres qui l'entendent. Je suis effrayée par l'attitude d'un compositeur comme Milton Babbitt qui a déclaré se ficher de ce que les gens comprennent ou pas sa musique. Pour ma part, je tiens certainement à ce que ma musique soit accessible. Les plaisirs raréfiés et masochistes de l'aliénation humaine, ce n'est pas pour moi."

C'est ainsi que parlait NORMA BEECROFT, il y a quelques semaines, un après-midi, dans le tranquille salon de la maison du centre de Toronto qu'elle habite avec son mari, John Wright, avocat de société commerciale.

"Lorsque nous étions enfants au tout début de notre adolescence, ma soeur Jane et moi

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Norma Beecroft/from page 4

into which most people fall, yet not so far out that they lose touch with the intensities of human experience. The emotional and imaginative reach that makes them outstanding also keeps them human. Also as with the Brangwyns, the differences between the BEECROFT sisters at once nourish and offset each other. The natural and passionate aestheticism of Jane at once affects and complements the equally natural and singularly dignified sensuality of Norma.

This interaction can be demonstrated by a handsome small painting on the wall of the room in which we talked. "I'm not particularly aware of any visual implications in my music", said Norma (paradoxically, for her work is full of them!) "but Jane did that painting after hearing a work of mine. And while the music wouldn't have struck me that way, I love the painting."

Another analogy with Lawrence's Brangwyns would be the BEECROFT sisters' resistance to classification. Both would be ashamed to work as mere amateurs. Yet both would resist the routines, the strictures, the hardness, of the avowed or resigned professional. As Norma indicated above: "Craft, yes. But not craft as a straitjacket."

Predictably, the Brangwyn analogy breaks down when we consider the sisters' antecedents. Unlike Ursula and Gudrun, whose father was irascibly but irretrievably conventional and whose mother was a soft and shadowy figure, Norma and Jane came from imaginative and spirited stock.

"Mother was an actress and a glamorous woman. Father was brilliant and extraordinary. And though we five children had a rough time when they decided to part, we all nevertheless turned out pretty well and pretty strong. We had certain things from our parents which we never lost or forgot — and they were the same things for my sister, my brothers and me. These kept us very close and, I think, accounted for our survival both as individuals and as a family.

"Father was always interested in music and in mechanisms. He was going to be a concert pianist but he lost three fingers in a machine, so *that* career stopped, and there was a residue of bitterness. He turned to building boats and cars of his own design, and gradually carved himself out a career as a consulting engineer. He was actually an inventor of magnetic tape, though — as with a lot of these discoveries — other men came up with the same inventions at the same time and Father was not the one who patented this one.

"My interest in electronic music comes from

my many hours in his shop — from what I learned there and from the natural familiarity I gained with electronic machinery. I also inherit some of his scientific-artistic duality, and some of his independence and cussedness." She paused for a moment.

"I was making my own decisions very early. I didn't want to study the piano until I was working, so that I could pay for my own lessons.

"And much later, when I had just returned from Europe and Walter Susskind — then conductor of the Toronto Symphony — asked me to write a piece for orchestra and electronic tape, I made conditions. I wanted to do it right, and I didn't want to use poor equipment, so I wrote the Toronto Symphony about it. My letter was never answered. By then, however, I'd done a lot of thinking about the piece, so I wrote it anyway, incorporating a text by Jane written while I was ill in Italy. *From Dreams of Brass* was the result — a 20-minute work for narrator, chorus and orchestra, quite different from what it would have been if I had gone through with the Toronto Symphony request."

Another reactive work was the *Tre Pezzi Brevi*, written "in a great splurge one day, in temperamental rejection of my training. I just thought 'Enough of this nonsense!' and whacked 'em down on paper."

More often, however, the Beecroft *oeuvre* emerge in response, not in reaction.

Her very early (1955-56) *The Hollow Men* was an intense young woman's response to a serious involvement with the utterance of that giant among the poets of that day, Thomas Stearns Eliot.

The *Improvvisazioni Concertanti* (1961) were written as an assignment by her Italian teacher Petrassi. ("He sprung it on us in April to be completed as an integral part of our

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Compositrice/suite de la page 5

avons l'habitude d'écouter, étendues sur le plancher du balcon, la merveilleuse émission radiophonique *Escape With Me*. Vous vous rappelez? Elle était un peu chargée, je suppose, par rapport à nos sévères normes modernes, mais elle possédait la racine de la matière romantique et était remplie de la musique de Debussy et de Ravel. C'était ce qu'il y avait de mieux pour libérer l'imagination des liens conventionnels et, grâce à cette émission, j'ai acquis pour Debussy un respect et une affection qui ne m'ont jamais quittée et qui ont probablement été le fondement de mon esthétique personnelle en musique."

La mention de Jane, poétesse et peintre, et l'image des deux soeurs partageant étroitement leur expérience d'imagination rappelle inévitablement les deux célèbres soeurs Brangwyn, Ursula et Gundrun, qui animent de façon si mémorable le chef-d'oeuvre exaspérant et fascinant du roman *Women in Love* de D. H. Lawrence.

A l'instar des soeurs Brangwyn, les soeurs BEECROFT sont des beautés, des artistes, des exceptions lumineuses, échappant aux types et catégories dans lesquels se classent la plupart des gens, sans pour autant s'en écarter au point de perdre le contact avec l'intensité de l'expérience humaine. L'étendue d'émotion et d'imagination qui en fait des exceptions leur conserve aussi leur dimension humaine. A l'instar des soeurs Brangwyn également, les différences que présentent les soeurs BEECROFT à la fois nourrissent et contrebalancent l'une et l'autre. L'esthétisme naturel et passionné de Jane influence et complète à la fois la sensualité également naturelle et singulièrement digne de Norma.

On peut voir la démonstration de cette influence mutuelle dans une jolie petite peinture suspendue au mur de la pièce où nous nous entretenions. "Je ne suis pas particulièrement consciente de quelque répercussion visuelle dans ma musique, dit Norma (c'est paradoxal, parce que son oeuvre en est remplie!), mais Jane a fait cette peinture après avoir entendu une de mes oeuvres. Quoique la musique ne m'ait pas frappée de cette façon-là, j'aime bien cette peinture."

Une autre analogie avec les soeurs Brangwyn de Lawrence se verrait aussi dans la résistance des soeurs BEECROFT à toute classification. Les deux seraient honteuses de travailler en simples amateurs. Malgré cela, les deux résisteraient aux routines, aux critiques, à la dureté du professionnel avoué ou résigné. Ainsi que le disait Norma ci-dessus: "Du métier je veux bien, mais pas comme d'une camisole de force."

Il était à prévoir que l'analogie avec les

soeurs Brangwyn cesserait avec l'examen des antécédents des soeurs. Au contraire d'Ursula et de Gundrun, dont le père était d'un conservatisme irascible mais irrécupérable et dont la mère était un être sans fermeté et effacé, Norma et Jane ont eu des parents débordants d'imagination et d'ardeur.

"Maman était une actrice et une femme ensorcelante. Mon père était brillant et extraordinaire. Encore que les cinq enfants que nous étions aient souffert lorsque mes parents décidèrent de se séparer, nous n'avons pas moins tous réussi assez bien et sommes devenus assez forts. Nous avons hérité de nos parents certaines choses que nous n'avons jamais perdues ou oubliées et c'étaient les mêmes choses pour ma soeur, mes frères et moi. Elles nous ont conservés très étroitement liés les uns les autres et, je crois, sont la raison de notre survie comme individus et comme famille.

"Mon père s'intéressait toujours à la musique et à la mécanique. Il devait devenir pianiste de concert mais il perdit trois doigts dans une machine, ce qui mit fin à *cette* carrière et le laissa un peu amer. Il se lança dans la construction de bateaux et de voitures de sa propre conception et, graduellement, se tailla une carrière d'ingénieur-conseil. Il a réellement inventé la bande magnétique mais, comme il arrive souvent dans le cas de ces découvertes, d'autres ont eu la même idée en même temps et mon père n'a pas été celui qui a breveté cette idée-là.

"L'intérêt que je porte à la musique électronique vient des nombreuses heures que j'ai passées dans son atelier, de ce que j'ai appris là et de la familiarité naturelle que j'y ai acquise dans les appareils électroniques. J'ai aussi hérité un peu de sa dualité scientifique et artistique et aussi un peu de son indépendance d'esprit et de son entêtement.

"Très tôt, j'ai appris à prendre mes propres décisions. Je n'ai pas voulu apprendre le piano avant d'avoir travaillé pour pouvoir faire les frais des leçons.

"Longtemps après, peu après mon retour d'Europe, Walter Susskind, alors chef de l'Orchestre symphonique de Toronto, me demanda de composer une oeuvre pour orchestre et bande électronique. Je posai mes conditions. Je voulais que ce fût bien fait et je ne voulais pas utiliser un matériel médiocre, de sorte que je fis part de mes idées là-dessus à l'Orchestre symphonique de Toronto. On ne répondit jamais à ma lettre. Toutefois, j'avais eu le temps de réfléchir beaucoup à cette oeuvre, de sorte que je l'ai composée quand même, en y incorporant un texte que Jane avait composé pendant ma maladie en Italie. Il en est résulté *From Dreams of Brass*, oeuvre

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Norma Beecroft/from page 6

graduation – or not – in May.”)

The *Improvvisazioni Concertanti No. 2* (1970) was written for the National Arts Centre Orchestra, with actual players and their instruments in mind.

Contrasts for Six Performers (1962) “followed hard on the heels of *Tre Pezzi Brevi* and was written especially for the fantastic oboist Lothar Faber, who performed it at Darmstadt.”

Rasas, for flute, violin, viola, cello, harp, percussion and piano “was done as a commission for the Société Contemporaine de Musique de Montréal, who have performed it several times.”

Twelve O’Clock Chant (“Where did you dig up that one!?”) is a 2-minute pop song, written on the spur of the moment “one drunken evening at a party. Harold Town seemed to think he could sing to Leonard Cohen’s lyrics, and I seemed to think I could respond with some music. But a pop composer I fear I am not. I understand, though, that it has actually been performed.”

Two Went to Sleep was written in 1967 as the Canadian Centennial commission. BEECROFT has, of course, worked on a basis of close friendship and great professional respect with the trio (flutist Robert Aitken, soprano Mary Morrison, pianist Marion Ross) and this work has become a staple of its repertory. The work is scored for flute, soprano and electronic sound, and the flute role – as in other Beecroft works – is of particularly personal connotation since the composer is herself something of a flutist (“rusty but sincere”) having studied the instrument with great pleasure with Keith Girard and Severino Gazzelloni.

“Important days in my life as a composer? Oh yes. For instance, the day back in 1954 when I was modelling for a living down in the wholesale houses on Spadina and confessed my ambitions to be a composer to one of the buyers. He sent me to JOHN WEINZWEIG, and that was the big beginning. I’ll never forget the excitement I felt when WEINZWEIG introduced me to the lineal concepts of counterpoint.”

“Then there was the scholarship to Tanglewood where I worked with Copland and Foss – particularly Foss. Conductors Zubin Mehta and Claudio Abbado were studying there that year and the atmosphere was pretty lively.

“Then Europe in the fall of ’59, on their advice. I’d applied for a Canada Council grant, and of course didn’t get it. But fate stepped in, in the form of the death of an uncle who left money to the family, so I didn’t need the grant at the time. I got into the Master Class of



Goffredo Petrassi at the Academy of Saint Cecilia in Rome, where I spent three years.

“1969 was the next major time. I was 35 that year, and I had always planned that as a crucial age. I gave up my job with CBC and all other commitments and settled in to compose. I decided the time had come to be selfish without feeling guilty.

“From that point, I have aimed at greater calmness and perspective. Now I’m even feeling a bit different about deadlines. I used to thrive on them. I needed them. Now I’m changing a bit. I’m rebelling against them, not just for the temperamental hell of it, but because I’m trying to put together all I’ve learned, into a particular kind of music – music with a feeling of suspended sound – and this is just something I can’t parcel out precisely and can’t rush.”

And, it may be added, at age 37, NORMA BEECROFT has become a composer sufficiently interesting to get away with taking her time. Besides, what woman composer worth her salt has not mastered the art of keeping us waiting in a state of more-or-less pleasurable suspense? □

ORCHESTRAL

TWO MOVEMENTS FOR ORCHESTRA (18') MS

Moderato, Meno Mosso, Moderato — Adagio

3 (Picc), 3 (Eng.HN), 3 (B Clts, Bass Clt), 3 (Contra Bsn.)/4331/
Timp, Perc (2)/Stgs. Comp. 1957-58

1st. Perf. 1971, Toronto Youth Symphony, Jacob Groob, Conductor.

FANTASY FOR STRINGS (8') MS

(For String Orchestra)

One Movement — Adagio. Comp. 1958.

1st. Perf. 1958, Central Circulating Library, Toronto.
Milton Barnes, Conductor.

IMPROVVISAZIONI CONCERTANTI NO. 1 (8') MS

(For Flute and Orchestra)

One Movement of varying tempi.
Solo flt/0000/3230/Timp, Harp, Perc (Vibra)/ Stgs. Comp. 1961.
Dedicated to Goffredo Petrassi.1st. Perf. 1961, Rome, Italy. Santa Cecilia Orchestra.
Karl Kraber, Flute; Daniele Paris, Conductor.

Recording: 1971, World/Audat 4774001

Project of Composers, Authors and Publishers
Association of Canada; and the Canadian Assoc-
iation of Broadcasters; Toronto Symphony;
Nicholas Fiore, Flute; Victor Feldbrill, Conductor

PIÈCE CONCERTANTE NO. 2 (4') MS

(For Orchestra)

One Movement
2222/2210/Timp, Perc (2), Piano, Harp, Organ/Stgs. Comp. 1966.1st. Perf. 1966, Charlottetown Summer Festival, Atlantic Symphony
Orchestra, John Fenwick, Conductor.

Commissioned by Atlantic Symphony Orchestra, Charlottetown, P.E.I.

IMPROVVISAZIONI CONCERTANTI NO. 2 (10')

(For Medium Orchestra)

One Movement of varying tempi.
2222/2200/Timp, Perc/Stgs. Comp. 19711st. Perf. 1971, National Arts Centre Orchestra, Ottawa.
Mario Bernardi, Conductor.

Commissioned by National Arts Centre Orchestra.

Recording: 1972, RCA Victor (To be Released)

CHORAL

THE HOLLOW MEN (15') MS

(For Mixed Choir a Cappella)

Text by T.S. Eliot

Five Movements: Lento-Moderato — Lentissimo — Adagio —
Allegro con brio. Comp. 1956.

THE LIVING FLAME OF LOVE (10) Waterloo Music Co.,

(For Mixed Choir a Cappella) 3 Regina Street, N.,

Waterloo, Ontario.

Text by St. John of the Cross;

Translated by Composer.

Four Poems: Very slow — moderato — Allegro Moderato — Very slow

1st. Perf. 1968, Waterloo Lutheran University Choir,
Walter Kemp, Conductor.

Commissioned by Waterloo Lutheran University Choir.

Recording: 1972, Capac-Cab Project (To be released)

ELECTRONIC

UNDERSEA FANTASY (20') Composer

Two-channel tape for Puppet Show. Comp. 1967.

1st. Perf. 1967, Presented in repertoire during Expo '67, Montreal
by Dora and Leo Velleman, Puppeteers.

Commissioned by Dora and Leo Velleman.

ELECTRONIC, CHORUS, ORCHESTRA

FROM DREAMS OF BRASS (16') MS

(For Narrator, Mixed Chorus, Orchestra and Tape)

Text by Jane Beecroft. Three Parts of varying tempi. Comp. 1963-64

0000/4231/Harp, Timp, Perc (5), Vibra, Xylorimba, Stgs
(12, 12, 10, 8, 7) Tape — 2 or 3 Channel.1st. Perf. 1965, Toronto Symphony, Festival Singers,
Barry Morse, Narrator, Mary Morrison, Soprano,
John Avison, Conductor.Recording: RCA Victor CC-1008, CCS-1008
Music and Musicians of Canada, Vol. 2Scores and parts of unpublished works by Miss Beecroft may be obtained
from:THE CANADIAN MUSIC CENTRE,
33 EDWARD STREET,
TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA.
(416) 364-8436

Norma Beecroft

Norma Beecroft

Composer

Born in Oshawa, Canada in 1934, Norma Beecroft has had a wide and varied musical career as a composer, broadcaster and producer. She is currently a director of the Composers Authors and Publishers Association of Canada (CAPAC), president of New Music Concerts, a series focusing on contemporary works and a member of the Association of Canadian and Television Artists (ACTRA). Primarily interested in contemporary music, Miss Beecroft has helped to pioneer outlets for composers and artists of today both in her own country and abroad.



BIOGRAPHY

- 1950 – 1958: Studied piano privately and at the Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto, with teachers Aladar Ecsedy, Gordon Hallett and Weldon Kilburn.
- 1952 – 1958: Studied composition with Prof. John Weinzweig at Royal Conservatory of Music, and Faculty of Music, University of Toronto.
- 1954 – 1957: Joined Canadian Broadcasting Corporation as Script Assistant TV.
- 1956 – 1957: President of Canadian Music Associates (Toronto Concert Committee of Canadian League of Composers.)
- 1957 – 1958: Scholarship in Composition from Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto. Studies in flute with Keith Girard, Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto. Freelance Music Consultant, CBC.
- Summer 1958: Scholarship from Berkshire Music Centre (Tanglewood), U.S.A. Studies in composition with Aaron Copland and Lukas Foss.

- 1958 – 1959: Freelance Music Research, CBC-TV Special Programs. Continuation of flute and piano studies at Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto.
- 1959 – 1961: Beginning of 3-year period of studies in Europe. Graduated from Academy of Saint Cecilia, Corso di Perfezionamento, in 1961, Rome, classes under Goffredo Petrassi. Studies in flute with Severino Gazzelloni (1959–1961), Rome, Italy. Scholarship from the Canada Council (1961).
- Summer 1960: Studies in composition with Bruno Maderna at Summer Courses for New Music (Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik), Darmstadt, Germany, and at the Dartington School of Music, Devon, England.
- 1961 – 1962: Scholarship in composition from Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Summer 1961: Continuation of studies with Bruno Maderna, Darmstadt, Germany.
- 1962 – 1963: Returned to Canada and CBC, as Script Assistant, TV. Attended Seminar in Electronic Music, University of Toronto, under Dr. Myron Schaeffer.
- 1963 – 1964: Talent Relations Officer (Casting), for CBC.
- Summer 1964: Attended Electronic Music Studio of Columbia-Princeton University, New York, working with Mario Davidovsky.
- 1964 – 1966: Program Organizer, National Music Department, CBC, Toronto.
- 1965 – 1972: President Ten Centuries Concerts
- 1966 – 1969: Producer, National Music Department, CBC, Toronto
- 1968: Short Term Grant from Canada Council.
- 1969 – 1970: Senior Arts Fellowship, Canada Council.
- 1969 – 197—: Freelance Broadcaster and Producer: Host and Commentator on weekly CBC-FM series "Music of Today".
- 1971 – 197—: Director, Composers, Authors and Publishers Association of Canada. President of concert series "New Music Concerts".

NORMA BEECROFT, 21 POPLAR PLAINS CRESCENT
TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA. (416) 924-3694.



COMPOSITIONS

CHAMBER

TRE PEZZI BREVI (4') *Universal Edition, (London) Ltd.,
2/3 Fareham Street, Dean Street,
London W1*
(For Flute and Harp, or
Guitar or Piano)

Three short movements of varying tempi. Dedicated to Severino Gazzelloni. Comp. 1960–61.

1st. Perf. 1960, 2nd Settimana Internazionale Nuova Musica, Palermo, Sicily. Severino Gazzelloni, Flute; Alvaro Company, Guitar.
Recording: Dominion S-69006, Robert Aitken, Flute;
Marion Ross, Piano.

CONTRASTS FOR SIX PERFORMERS (5') *MS*
(For Oboe, Viola, Xylorimba,
Vibraphone, Perc., Harp)

Three short movements of varying tempi. Comp. 1962.

1st. Perf. 1962, 4th Settimana Internazionale Nuova Musica, Palermo, Sicily. Ensemble Directed by Daniele Paris.

ELEGY AND TWO WENT TO SLEEP (8') *MS*
(For Soprano, Flute and
Percussion, and Tape)

Two poems by Leonard Cohen. (Elegy, for Soprano and Flute;
Two Went to Sleep, for entire ensemble and tape). Comp. 1967.

1st. Perf. 1967, Ten Centuries Concerts, Toronto.
Mary Morrison, Soprano, Robert Aitken, Flute,
Hugh Barclay, Percussion.
Commissioned by Ten Centuries Concerts, under grant from the
Canada Council.

RASAS (10') *MS*
(For Flute, Harp, Vln, Viola,
Cello, Perc, Piano)

One Movement of varying tempi. Comp. 1968

1st. Perf. 1969, Société de Musique Contemporaine du Québec,
Serge Garant, Conductor. (Montreal)

Recording: CBC International Service, transcription
(Performers as above)

Commissioned by the Société de Musique Contemporaine du Québec.

Norma Beecroft

Composer and producer Norma Beecroft has been active for most of her life as a proponent of Canadian music and musicians while simultaneously pursuing her creative life. She worked for many years for CBC television and then CBC radio, where she produced numerous series for the Music Department and documentaries on Canadian composers. In the mid 70s, she became a free lance commentator on contemporary music, and for seven years hosted the weekly series Music of Today on CBC Radio.

Miss Beecroft began her compositional studies in Toronto with John Weinzwieg, then continued with Aaron Copland and Lukas Foss in Tanglewood, and in 1959 began a three year study period in Europe with Goffredo Petrassi and Bruno Maderna. There her interest in electronic music was stimulated, and since her return from Europe she has composed many works combining instrumental music with electronic sound. Her most ambitious work using the combination of tape and orchestra was the ballet score Hedda (1981-82), commissioned and performed by the National Ballet of Canada.

Although Norma Beecroft has written many works for orchestra and chamber ensembles as well as pieces for Canada's leading soloists, such as Robert Aitken and Rivka Golani, her fascination with electronic sound has led her into the world of digital ~~xxxxxx~~ technology, such as computer generated sound and digital sound processing equipment. In recent years, she produced electronic scores in collaboration with Harry Somers and Ron Lynch for two Stratford productions, Macbeth and Midsummer Night's Dream. Norma Beecroft is currently Course Director of the Electronic Media Workshop at York University, and in collaboration with Ron Lynch and guitarist Rob Pilch, is producing incidental music for a series Fish On! for TV Ontario.

JEU II (1985) for electronically processed solo flute, solo viola and digital tape

Jeu II is a sequel to Jeu de Bach, a work for orchestra and tape in which I used material exclusively from the Goldberg Variations. Jeu de Bach was commissioned by the Bach 300 Festival for its opening concert on March 8, 1985. In Jeu II, I intended to explore further the music of J.S. Bach as well as the music of Alban Berg, and create a tribute to two great masters of the past on the occasion of their 300th and 100th birthdays respectively. Added to this was an interest in taking digital technology into the concert hall, spurred on by my friend and recording engineer, Ron Lynch.

The solo flute and solo viola in Jeu II are transformed live through the use of a digital delay and pitch changer, and a digital reverberation unit, both the inventions of Automated Music Systems (AMS) in England. The 6 channel tape forming the continuum uses the latest digital and video hi fi sound technology, and is created from the harmonies found in the opening strains of the solo violin in Berg's Violin Concerto, prerecorded by Robert Aitken and Rivka Golani.

Fragments selected for incorporation into the work are taken from: the Allemande from the A Minor Flute Sonata of J.S. Bach, and his Prelude from Suite I for solo cello (viola); and excerpts from the Violin Concerto of Berg.

Jeu II was created in consultation with and with the assistance of Ron Lynch, and the patience of Robert Aitken and Rivka Golani. It was commissioned by New Music Concerts with the assistance of the Canada Council.

NORMA BEECROFT..... .Rasas II

Born in Oshawa, Ontario in 1934, Norma Beecroft has had a wide and varied musical career as a composer, broadcaster and producer. She first studied composition in Toronto with John Weinzwieg, then worked with Aaron Copland and Lukas Foss in Tanglewood. 1959 marked the beginning of a three-year period of studies in Europe, with Goffredo Petrassi in Rome, and Bruno Maderna in Germany and England. Miss Beecroft has been host and commentator for many years on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's weekly series "Music of Today", and is co-founder (with Robert Aitken) and President of New Music Concerts. Acknowledged in her country as a pioneer in the use of electronic music in her compositions, many of her works include magnetic tape. With the assistance of a Canada Council Senior Arts Award, she is currently working with computer music programs at the University of Toronto Computer Centre.

Miss Beecroft writes: " Commissioned by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the work - for voice, chamber ensemble and tape - was completed at the beginning of 1973. It can be described as a type of time cycle, which deals with four life experiences: time, youth, maturity, old age and life's inevitable conclusion, death.

In Part I, the singer joins the instrumental ensemble and together they imply the passage of time. Part II is mainly a narration with tape accompaniment, the original material recorded by the Moe Koffman Quartet in Toronto. In this section the words were selected from: Ecclesiastes the Prophet, Japanese Haiku (translated by Peter Bielensohn and Harry Behn), poetry by public school children from the North York Board of Education in Toronto, and lines from a collection of poems by Jagdip Maraj, titled "The Flaming Circle".

The text for Part III, 'Maturity', was written by my sister, Jane Beecroft, especially for this project. It contains symbolism and paradox, using the four elements of earth, air, fire and water as inspiration, and key words 'in' and 'out', representing internal and external forces. This section resolves in a positive, if not questioning serenity. Part IV uses a Haiku Death Song by Sokan, translated by Mr. Bielensohn.

"Rasa" is a Sanskrit word meaning mood, a theory which was originally applied to the theatre and divided into nine different categories or emotions. These range from anger to fear to peace, but it is the essence of each which the audience is intended to receive." The first "Rasas" was composed in 1968, and "Rasas III" was premiered by New Music Concerts in 1974. ~~New Music Concerts in 1974, and "Rasas III" was premiered by New Music Concerts in 1974.~~

ROGER MARTINSON
P.O. BOX 4181
SYLMAR, CALIFORNIA 91342

Nov. 24, 82

Dear Norma Beecroft,

It has been almost 3 years since I last wrote to you, and since I have never heard from you, I am sure you must have forgotten me.

I am a lover of classical music, and am especially interested in contemporary works. I like your music very much, and enjoy the recordings I have. I hope that more of your music will be recorded as I am indeed looking forward to hearing more of your work.

If I may, I would like to have an autographed picture of you. It would mean a great deal to me as I admire your work very much.

Please let me hear from you,
with my sincere appreciation and good wishes
I am yours truly,
Roger Martinson