

MARNIE GIESBRECHT
Organ

*Recital of
Canadian Organ Music*

Friday, November 23, 1990
8 pm

Convocation Hall
Arts Building
University of Alberta

Program



PROGRAM

Toccata on "O Filii et Filiae" (1932) Lynnwood Farnam
(1885-1930)

Livre d'Orgue de Montréal
Magnificat en C Sol ut Anonymous
Prelude
[Basse]
[Récit]
[Tierce en taille]
[Dialogue]

Prière (1954) François Morel
(b. 1926)

Livre d'Orgue (1981) Bengt Hambræus
Récit de Tierce en taille (II) (b. 1928)
Répercussions

Variations on "Aberystwyth" (1984) Violet Archer
(b. 1913)

INTERMISSION

Cabena's Homage (1967) Barrie Cabena
Macmillan's Majesty (for Sir Ernest Macmillan) (b. 1933)
Victor's Variations (In memory of Victor Togni)
Hugh's Hornpipe (for Hugh McLean)

Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue (1913) Healy Willan
(1880-1968)

PROGRAM NOTES

The virtuoso, **Lynnwood Farnam**, was an internationally renowned concert pianist. Born in Montreal, he studied in London, England, served Montreal churches as organist from 1904-1913, and taught at McGill University 1912-1913. From 1913-1919 he was organist at Emmanuel Church in Boston and spent his last years at New York's Fifth Avenue Presbyterian church. A legendary artist, he is remembered for the Bach series of recitals he gave in 1928-1929 and his performances of contemporary music. From 1927-1930 he was head of the music department at the Curtis Institute, Philadelphia. The Toccata on "O filie et filiae" is his only composition and was published posthumously.

The *Livre d'Orgue de Montréal* is a recently discovered manuscript containing 398 pieces, mostly anonymous, of French classical organ music (sixteen of the pieces have been identified as works by Nicolas Lebègue, 1630-1702). The organ book was brought to Montreal in 1724 by a cleric from Bourges, Jean Girard (1696-1765). A facsimile of the manuscript was published in 1981 by the Foundation Lionel-Groulx. The manuscript was revealed by Elisabeth Gallat-Morin whose PhD thesis at the University of Montreal is devoted to a study of the manuscript.

French organ music of the end of the 17th Century and of the 18th Century had a liturgical function. Verses played on the organ alternated with those sung by the cantor.

François Morel was born in Montreal and received all of his training in Quebec. He has worked for CBC radio as composer and researcher; he has taught orchestration and composition at the University of Montreal and Laval University since 1979. His compositions include major works for orchestra and chamber music; his colorful and dazzling *Deux Études de sonorité* for piano are well-known to keyboard players.

The *Livre d'Orgue* by **Bengt Hambraeus** was inspired by French organ music of the 17th and 18th Centuries and by the French classical organ in Redpath Hall, McGill University, Montreal. Hambraeus' intent was to revive the French classical tradition in a contemporary idiom. The *Récit de tierce en taille* utilizes a classical registration while the *Répercussions* is a study in vertical changes between three keyboards.

Violet Archer was born in Montreal where she was active as a composer, teacher, pianist, organist and percussion. Her composition teachers include Bartók (New York) and Hindemith (Yale). Internationally acclaimed as a composer and well-known to Edmontonians,

PROGRAM NOTES (continued)

Dr Archer joined the faculty at the University of Alberta in 1962, becoming chairman of the theory and composition department. The list of her compositions is long and varied, including orchestral, chamber, choral, vocal and keyboard works, a piano concerto and an opera.

Organist and composer **Barrie Cabena** was born in Melbourne, Australia. He joined the faculty at the Department of Music at Wilfrid Laurier University in 1970. His compositions include a long list of choral and organ works, as well as a children's opera, *The Selfish Giant*. Cabena's Homage is subtitled *Ten Portraits for Organ* and "pays tribute" through dedications and musical nuances to ten Canadian organists.

An imminent Canadian church musician, composer and teacher, **Healey Willan** was born in Balham near London, England. He came to Canada in 1913 to head the Theory Department of the Toronto Conservatory of Music. He was associated with the University of Toronto, from 1921 until his death in 1968. Willan's musical thought was rooted in plainchant, Tudor choral music and in the music of Wagner.

The *Passacaglia* combines an innate English style influenced by Parry and Stanford with European chromaticism inspired by Reger and Karg-Elert. The *Introduction* is both mysterious and dramatic. Willan indicated a registration of tubas at the sudden and triumphant plunge into B major. The musical colours in *Introduction, Passacaglia & Fugue* were inspired by those of the imposing organ in St. Paul's Cathedral, Toronto (whose very operation causes the lights in a nearby restaurant to dim). The eighteen variations in the passacaglia progress inexorably from the gentle canon-at-the-sixth of variation I to the climactic *quasi marcia funebre* of variation XVII. The final variation is treated as a quiet interlude between the passacaglia and fugue. The fugue subject is derived from the first half of the passacaglia ground bass. Following a four-voice exposition, a series of stretti begins. A close stretto over a dominant pedal precedes the climax, indicated by the composer's notation *nobilmente*. A massive harmonized version of the canon from variation I of the passacaglia brings to a momentous close this internationally known work which has been heralded as representing one of Healey Willan's "finest hours."

(Marnie Giesbrecht)

Acknowledgement

I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the Canadian Music Centre for granting me permission to use scores in preparation for this program.