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Lucien Poirier, ed. *The Canadian Musical Heritage - Le Patrimoine musical canadien*. Vol. 7. Songs II to French Texts / Chansons II sur des textes français. Ottawa: Canadian Musical Heritage Society, 1987. xlvii, 222 pp. ISBN 0-919883-08-7

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One also wonders how representative these pieces are of music actually composed in Canada at the time, considering the large number of expatriates whose works are included in this collection: Branscombe, Tapley, Manning, Lucas, and McPhee.

Editorial interventions in the music are kept to a minimum and are generally restricted to correcting the obvious typographical errors in the original sources. It is surprising, in fact, to see how many errors these early prints contained. A few even eluded the editor of this edition (for example Lucas, p. 73, m. 36, right hand should have a B flat; Forsyth, p. 26, m. 34, beat 1, right hand should have a D natural). Further, in Forsyth's *A Song of Summer* (p.30, m. 8, beat 3, left hand), the nature of the editorial intervention makes it unclear whether the G flat should or should not be considered as a misprint in the original. Considering that a parallel situation in m. 56 in the left hand omits the flat against the G, the implication that the left-hand chord in m. 8 is a C minor rather than a C diminished chord should have been discussed in the critical notes.

On the whole, this second volume of piano music fulfils the valuable function of contributing to our knowledge of the Canadian musical heritage. It constitutes an important contribution to our overview of a part of our collective cultural experience.

Gordana Lazarevich

LUCIEN POIRIER, ed. *The Canadian Musical Heritage – Le Patrimoine musical canadien*. Vol. 7. Songs II to French Texts/Chansons II sur des textes français. Ottawa: Canadian Musical Heritage Society, 1987. xlvi, 222 pp. ISBN 0-919883-08-7

The historical and social development of a people is illustrated through its culture; in particular, a nation's song literature highly represents the philosophy and aspirations of that nation because music has the ability to heighten the significance of the meaning of the lyrics. Over the centuries, political movements, labour unrest, national feasts, heroic endeavours, the outcome of wars, the accomplishments of guilds – all such activities and many more have been celebrated, not just by the braying of trumpets and clashing of cymbals but also through the chanting of congratulatory odes of civic pride by one individual or by multitudes of joyous citizens. Such evidence of humanity's physical accomplishments could be given spiritual support in the public square with the raising of thousands of voices in song or in the private parlour with the quiet

intensity of a single vocal instrument. The medium of expression could be a popular folksong or a cultivated art song.

Volume 7 of *The Canadian Musical Heritage* attempts to give an insight into the national character of French Canada through a selection of 65 songs composed between the beginning of the 19th century and 1918 by 26 composers of whom 25 are native sons (Thomas Arne does not qualify!). These songs are divided into four groups: Sacred Songs; Patriotic Songs, national hymns, political and occasional songs; Guild and Association Songs; and Lyrical Songs. The editor is to be commended for his choice from the hundreds, if not thousands, of pieces at his disposal. Although some elimination was relatively simple because of the infantile quality of the work, much was not if only because Canadians, and, in this case, French Canadians have been a prolific nation in the medium of song literature. Pieces by composers such as Alexis Contant, Guillaume Couture, Antoine Dessane, Calixa Lavallée, Ernest Lavigne, Charles Wugk Sabatier, and Joseph Vézina should be of particular interest for artists desirous of compositions worthy of inclusion in any serious recital programme. It is encouraging to find again in print Contant's "Musique," Couture's "Le Souvenir," Lavallée's "Andalouse, Boléro, op. 38," and Sabatier's "Le Drapeau de Carillon," to mention a few highlights among many. Although it would be easy to lament the exclusion of a particular piece or to denigrate the inclusion of another, the volume has accomplished its purpose, which is the ongoing purpose of the anthology in general: to put at the disposal of contemporary artists and audiences examples of the past musical heritage of Canada. If a particular genre or composer creates further interest, then the individual can use the work cited in this anthology as a springboard to investigate additional output in a chosen research area.

This being said, there are a few problems facing the user of this volume. In the "Editorial Aims and Methods," the use of facsimiles versus the creation of new copy is defined:

It is the intention of the committee to reprint the music of Canada's past in a form as close to the original as possible. Facsimile reproductions of printed music are used whenever feasible. However, the inclusion of some manuscripts (or new handcopies of manuscripts) is deemed necessary because many worthy pieces have been published. The Committee's principal desire is to provide a clear and legible text for both the performer and the scholar. (p. vi)

Unfortunately, these criteria did not seem to be followed consistently in this volume. For instance, the additional lyrics on page 97 to Joseph Vézina's "En

avant!" are printed so small that it requires a magnifying glass to read them, not a practice recommended in encouraging performers to add this piece to their active repertoire! On page 173 Guillaume Couture's "Reverie," a sadly neglected work worthy of more attention, is reproduced from the original in such a fashion that the sixteenth-notes are rather blurred, making it difficult to look at the music for any length of time without seeing spots on the page. And these are only two such examples of several throughout the book which exhibit the same annoyances.

For the performer or researcher who wishes to investigate the existence of other repertoire of importance in this field, there is little indication of possible starting points for such an endeavour. Although under "Acknowledgements" there is a listing of all the institutions from which the compositions for this volume were procured, there is no indication of which ones contain the largest number of documents. For example, there is no mention of the fact that the Music Division of the National Library of Canada holds a preliminary union catalogue of sorts of sheet music (in which format the majority of works in this volume first appeared) published in Canada between the beginning of the 19th century and 1951. Equally, there is no mention of the fact that the largest collections of French Canadian songs can be found at: Bibliothèque, Faculté de musique, Université de Montréal; Bibliothèque, Université Laval; Bibliothèque de musique, Société Radio-Canada, Montréal; Bibliothèque nationale du Québec, Montréal; and, Music Division, National Library of Canada. Such information would make the intended purpose of this series more easily realizable by the average musician or musicologist.

The "Introduction" provides useful information for the performer, but more particularly for the music researcher, under the rubrics "Sources," "Favourite Poets," "Relationship between Text and Music," and "Types of Songs." This is followed by extensive, or perhaps more precisely, exhaustive "Critical Notes"; these give the sources of all variants of a work consulted, explain the editorial markings in the text as well as the music and relate data of historical significance for the understanding of the text and, to some extent, of the style of the music. A couple of comments in the "Introduction" could have been further clarified. On page viii, under the discussion of "Sources," the editor comments that "...such serious composers as Guillaume Couture and Alexis Contant seem to have been neglected by commercial publishers of their lifetime." As there was no publisher in Canada, and particularly in French Canada, during the period under consideration who specialized in music publishing, to what commercial publishers does this refer? We can infer from previous comments made in this section that any composer in 19th century Canada of a serious or even semi-

serious persuasion had to publish his own music at his own expense in the majority of cases. Unfortunately, this country has never been blessed with a C.F. Peters or Breitkopf and Härtel! Another point which should have been amplified for purposes of factual accuracy occurs on page x under "Types of Songs." The comment is made: "unlike their French counterparts, Canada's [read: French Canada's] composers never came under the spell of the Germans to whose influence may be attributed the replacement of the *romance* by the *mélodie*...." In the case of Alexis Contant this is not true. One has only to listen to his orchestral music and to examine the contents of what remains of his music library to realize that Contant was as much influenced by Wagner as by Gounod or Debussy. Certain chromatic passagework in his songs would also point to a familiarity with German music of the late 19th century.

Despite these few reservations, this volume can be highly recommended as a source of French Canadian Songs of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Its existence again justifies the expenditure of our tax dollars on a project such as the publication of The Canadian Musical Heritage. That said, I feel that I must mention a personal reservation which I have concerning the introductory notes to this volume.

As this review started out by saying, music in general and song literature in particular should given the historian or the sociologist an insight into the national psyche of a given people. Little mention of this is made in the copious notes with which this tome begins. So much literature of Quebec is steeped in the alienation which the French Canadian felt at the perceived desertion of French Canada by France during the 18th century. To this must be added the *angst* felt by the average Quebecois to this day caused by a seemingly continuous struggle to maintain a Gallic culture in a North America. These are the concerns which prompted the creation of the lyrics for the Patriotic Songs and some of the Guild and Association Songs as well as the Lyrical Songs which fill over half of this volume. To forego almost all mention of such matters, as well as of the isolation from France since the conquest (which ended with the arrival of the vessel *La Capricieuse* in July 1855) and of the ultramontanist movement which was strong in French Canada during most of the period covered by this volume, is to expect the reader to understand the significance of what is placed before him with only half the clues provided. The true worth of vocal music can be appreciated only if it is placed in its socio-historical context. It is to be hoped that future volumes of choral or vocal music in The Canadian Musical Heritage series will not be launched with the same lack of consideration for the importance of this context.

Stephen C. Willis