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Introduction: CEE 50

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In May 1972, the Canadian Electronic Ensemble (CEE) premiered under its new and official name. Over the subsequent decades, the CEE performed, toured, and recorded experimental electronic music. The CEE established a largely improvised, collaborative creative practice that has been maintained amid changing personnel, technological developments and new gear, and collaborators. As the 50th anniversary of the CEE's official launch approached, we were excited to celebrate the kind of huge achievement that every ensemble hopes—but likely dares not dream—to attain. In October 2022, Carnegie Mellon University's School of Music and the Frank-Ratchye STUDIO for Creative Inquiry hosted a hybrid symposium. The CEE had visited CMU previously in February 2020 for a week-long residency. Both CMU and the CEE were enthusiastic to revisit those relationships and continue the collaborations. The symposium reflected on the CEE's 50-year history, addressed unexplored histories, and related Pittsburgh's electronic music scene to the CEE's legacy. The CEE also performed a networked online concert with Exploded Ensemble, CMU's experimental music research ensemble.

We still have a long way to go before the scholarly record has adequately accounted for the contributions of the CEE and experimental and electronic music in Canada more broadly, but the symposium and these highlights from the day's activities make strides to address the gap. Included in the CEE 50 highlights are two transcribed panel discussions and two papers.

In the panel "The Canadian Electronic Ensemble: Past, Present, and Future," moderator Emily Gale guides current CEE members Paul Stillwell, Jim Montgomery, and David Jaeger through the CEE's 50-year history, Toronto's historical and contemporary experimental music scene, technological developments, and plans for forthcoming albums. In a second panel, "The Canadian Electronic Ensemble in the 1970s and 1980s," moderator Matthew Fava, founding CEE members David Jaeger and Jim Montgomery, and Alexa Woloshyn discuss the 1970s experimental music scene in Toronto and highlight Norma Beecroft's essential role as administrator, producer, and mentor. Jaeger and Montgomery go on to discuss the pragmatics of the CEE's 1985 Holland Tour as well as its broader significance for Canadian electronic music.

In "Grand Opera, Musical Brothel: COMUS's *Nightbloom*, the CEE, and the Innovation of Canadian Opera," Colleen Renihan addresses a gap in the

history of experimental music theatre of the 1970s and 80s, a gap that had minimized Canada's pioneering "genre-defying" work and eliminated the Canadian Electronic Ensemble completely from the narrative. Renihan contextualizes *Nightbloom* (1984) within a larger history of innovation with the Toronto-based COMUS Music Theatre (1975–87). Limited extant records, including inadequate sound recordings, have been supplemented with new interviews and private CEE archives. Renihan explores a number of sections in *Nightbloom,* highlighting the CEE's "collective composition" approach.

In "Avoiding 'Rona and Passing the Track: When 50 Years of the Canadian Electronic Ensemble Challenges the Limits of Pandemic-Era Live Improvisation," Alexa Woloshyn focuses on the CEE's most recent recording project entitled *Pass the Track* (*PtT*). Due to COVID-19 isolation requirements during 2020, the CEE could not collaborate together in a shared space. Instead, the group pivoted to an out-of-space, out-of-time strategy that resulted in multiple new pieces. Woloshyn argues that, despite the lack of spatial and temporal liveness, the *PtT* project is still an example of live electronic improvisation that aligns with the CEE's long-term improvisational creative practice. These two articles approach the CEE legacy from two very different times—the 1980s and 2020. Yet, they both emphasize the CEE's values of collaboration and pushing the boundaries of sound, genre, and even the limitations of a pandemic.