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The Mount Royal Brass Quintet. The Mount Royal Brass Quintet. McGill University Records 77004, produced by Donald Steven. Scheidt: *Canzon "Bergamasca."* Bach: *The Art of Fugue: Contrapunctus I.* Ewald: *Quintet for Brass, Op. 5.* Arnold: *Quintet for Brass.* Jones: *Passacaglia and Fugue for Brass Quintet*

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may be the only person in the world (hopefully not) who regards Rolf Liebermann's *Concerto for Jazz Band and Symphony Orchestra* (recently reissued on RCA) a minor masterpiece of the genre in its skillful and exciting balancing and accommodating of the symphonic and jazz idioms (as are Norm Symond's *Concerto for Jazz Quintet and Symphony Orchestra*—once available on a CBC transcription—and a 1980 Columbia release, NJC 36318, which dropped soundlessly into our culture's bottomless musical oblivion without a ripple—Patrick J. Williams's *American Concerto*).

Anyhow, Bencriscutto isn't operating in this league because all he really does is provide a sufficiently dense, cushiony, and flexible framework for a quintet of soloists to do their thing (though I suspect only the first movement contains any real, un-notated improvisation). The composer makes a half-hearted attempt to dignify and unify the first and third movements by the stanzaic repetition of a fanfare-like sequence of chords, but basically what we get in Blues/Ballad-Rock/Progressive Jazz is a driving, catchy, quasi-commercialized cross-pollination of Stan Kenton, Michel Legrand, and Burt Bacharach—which in our book is pretty high-quality stuff of its kind. But, of course, there are those who will reasonably question the wisdom and necessity for tying up a whole side—and such a talented ensemble—with what is essentially third-rank—though not third-rate—repertoire.

There is a fourth work on this disc—*Eidesis IV* for winds and electronic sounds by the Argentine-born Alcides Lanza, who spent some years in New York but is now attached to the McGill faculty. This reviewer must candidly disqualify himself from the task of evaluating this type of music—which, for all he knows, may be very successful on its own terms, because he finds its combination of mercilessly loud and static sound waves and philosophical program notes too unnerving and masochistic an exercise in upsetting the delicate equilibrium of his aesthetic sensibilities. Let others who are braver and better-equipped rush in where this sonic and critical coward fears to tread.

Paul Snook
(FANFARE, V/5 (1982), 289-90)

THE MOUNT ROYAL BRASS QUINTET. The Mount Royal Brass Quintet. MCGILL UNIVERSITY RECORDS 77004, produced by Donald Steven.

SCHEIDT: *Canzon "Bergamasca."* BACH: *The Art of Fugue: Contrapunctus I.* EWALD: *Quintet for Brass, Op. 5.* ARNOLD: *Quintet for Brass.* JONES: *Passacaglia and Fugue for Brass Quintet.*

Whether or not this is a debut disc, the Mount Royal Brass Quintet surely bids fair to compete for best-quintet honors with the Canadian

Brass, on the basis of this recording. Its contents remind me rather of those of a comparable Eastern Brass Quintet disc on Klavier, but that is just a reminder to readers anxious to avoid duplications of certain “standards” which frequently reappear on brass-quintet recordings. Witness the presence of the brilliant Arnold work here. As for the Ewald, though it is *not* the same Ewald quintet featured on one Philip Jones Argo disc, it is the same as the *Symphony for Brass* presented by the Jones boys on another Argo disc. Those matters aside, it remains to note that considerable horn virtuosity is evident here, and that the sole rare and Canadian piece included, the Kelsey Jones *Passacaglia and Fugue*, is fairly interesting. Again, I am impressed with the ability displayed by these Montreal Symphony and McGill University musicians, and recommend this disc to those lacking many of these pieces—if any there be. The recording is fairly lively, and the pressing all right—but simian packing procedures, including the use of trashy inner sleeves more appropriate to the packaging of submarining (hero, hoogie, what you will) sandwiches have taken their toll.

John Ditsky
[FANFARE, V/5 (1982), 292]

PERCUSSION. The McGill Percussion Ensemble. MCGILL UNIVERSITY RECORDS 77003, produced by Donald Steven.

François MOREL: *Rhythmologue*. Alcides LANZA: *Sensors I*. Serge GARANT: *Circuit I*. Andrew CULVER: *Signature*.

This disc, out for some three years now, has already won a Canadian *Grand prix du disque* award, which in terms of the shabby packing and warped surfaces evident here is no great shakes of an event. Luckily, the music itself is something more eventful, as evidenced by the pieces by Quebec’s leading composers, François Morel and Serge Garant, particularly the exciting rhythms of the former’s *Rhythmologue*. I am less happy with the short Culver work, but the Lanza *Sensors I*—Lanza is an Argentinian now resident in Canada—is striking in its use of various percussive colorations, including those of the human voice. The annotation is tricked out with references to prime numbers, Fibonacci series, and the like, but the music is interesting in addition to—in spite of?—all this theory. Performances are excellent throughout, and of themselves should have won some prize or other. The miking has been intelligently carried out. All things considered, this is a disc worth owning, in spite of all my caveats to the contrary.

John Ditsky
[FANFARE, V/5 (1982), 292]