

Canadian Music: A Personal Perspective

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Article abstract

In this article the author reflects on musical life in Canada, drawing on experiential perspectives while growing up in Toronto and his career for three decades as a faculty member in musicology at the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto. References to pivotal musical institutions (Canadian League of Composers, CBC, Canadian Music Centre, among others) and historical documents such as Ernest MacMillan's *Music in Canada*, Marshall McLuhan's *Gutenberg Galaxy*, and George Grant's *Lament for a Nation* provide contextual frameworks for these perspectives.

CANADIAN MUSIC: A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

Carl Morey

One definition of *perspective* in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (ninth edition) is “a mental view of the relative importance of things,” and another is “the art of drawing solid objects on a two-dimensional surface so as to give the right impression of relative position, size, etc.” If I offer my own perspective of the relative importance of some things, I disclaim an ability to give the *right* or the *only* impression of the relative positions and importance of those things. It depends where you stand. My perspective is from Toronto, not because I think it is the centre of Canadian experience, but simply because that is where I have lived, studied, and worked for almost all of my eighty years. The lens through which my view is refracted is music history, and not just Canadian music history. Musicology was what I was trained in primarily and at which I have earned my living.

The word *Canada* has a degree of uncertainty about it. Some would exclude Quebec from Canada politically, and in many ways already do psychologically and socially. And some have expressed a similar position about Alberta. If one takes the historical view, then *Canada* has to mean everything that the national boundaries presently enclose, a region that has changed much and often since Champlain set about settling New France. Just as geographical boundaries have changed throughout the history of Canada, so have culture and attitudes to culture, and I want to visit some of the points that mark changes in our attitudes and to offer a few recollections and observations about them.

Seniors like me often posit our memories with immodest certainty, a certainty that is not always confirmed when the facts are examined. My memories of impressions, if not always the details, are lively and often vivid for me, and whatever they may lack in verifiable veracity, they provide me with at least a frame of reference. In the sixty-five years of my recollection, much has happened. In 1950 the Second World War was recently over—I remember the principal of my school coming into the classroom one spring day in 1945 to tell us the war was over and we could all go home—and I recall the rush of prosperity that suddenly appeared in buildings, jobs, motor cars, and new appliances that seemed to be our comic books come true. Somewhere in those early years an uncle acquired a large and cumbersome tape recorder that was as wondrous as the first radios must have been and with consequences that could not have been guessed at.

I was an undergraduate at the University of Toronto in 1955 when a book appeared, edited by Sir Ernest MacMillan, with essays by a number of contributors, called *Music in Canada*. The articles were positive in evaluations of

the past and optimistic for the future. The Introduction to the book was by Vincent Massey, who was in many respects a kind of colonial and anglophile aristocrat, but he was also a Canadian patriot; he had used his personal fortune to support painting and music in Canada, and in 1952 he became the first Canadian-born governor-general. In 1951 he chaired the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences. In his 1955 introduction to MacMillan's book, Massey stated concisely the prevailing attitude in Canada in the 1950s towards both the particular case of music and the general idea of culture: "In this story of music in Canada, we can find a vivid reflection of a broader theme—the growth of Canadian nationality. At first came the varied threads of musical tradition from other countries; then were these strands slowly woven into a fabric which could be looked on as Canadian" (MacMillan 1955, v). Perhaps Massey was just being rhetorical, but he did seem to conceive of a pan-Canadian identity, and one that was already manifest in music. Certainly his notion of national identity had much force at the time, even in the 1950s when Canada would add four million people to its population, in large measure because of unprecedented immigration by people who, naturally, would have no cultural identification with their new home.

I was lucky to live in Toronto in the early and mid-1950s; most of the great performers came to town, as indeed they had been doing since at least the middle of the nineteenth century; we had a good orchestra, although not much opera to speak of, a surprising amount of chamber music, and the CBC. As a boy I got the idea from weekly radio broadcasts that Canada had two orchestras, one in Toronto and one in Montreal, that had important guest soloists and conductors and played the kind of repertoire that I could also hear on the Sunday afternoon broadcasts of the New York Philharmonic. There were also two other orchestras that seemed to have secondary status in Winnipeg and Vancouver and that had regular broadcasts on Sunday evenings, but other than those four orchestras there was very little heard from other cities, and when the CBC generously gave some air time to an orchestra from one of those other places it was obvious from their quality why there were not regular broadcasts. Nevertheless, such broadcasts were positive indications that something musical was going on in Canada outside the four cities that I have mentioned.

In my youth there was something else about the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and perhaps about musical life in the city generally that started to become less the case, even by about 1960. The conductor of the orchestra was a Canadian, Sir Ernest MacMillan (he was born in Mimico, near Toronto), and soloists with the orchestra and certainly in concerts around town were often also Canadian, even Torontonians. The CBC presented many live studio radio broadcasts of recitals, and sometimes of studio orchestras, for which the performers were always Canadians. In her later life when she was reminiscing about her early career, the great soprano Lois Marshall once told me that as a very young singer on her first tour of western Canada she was astonished at how people seemed to know her because of her CBC broadcasts. We may forget

today how powerful an agent radio broadcasting was before television, and even for some years after its arrival.

What I did not hear much of was music composed by Canadians. Suddenly that changed, modestly but no less dramatically, with the establishment of the Canadian League of Composers in 1951. Not that composers were altogether new to the scene. In 1947 the CBC published a *Catalogue of Canadian Composers* (Kallmann 1952) that contained the names and short lists of works of 238 living composers, but almost none of those names would have been much known outside their communities, and certainly today most would be looked on with curiosity. Nevertheless, it is salutary to recall that at the end of the Second World War there were so many people in Canada who had set pen to paper to write out an original piece of music, however modest. Virtually without exception, these were musicians who doubtless understood themselves to be teachers or performers first, and only secondarily as composers. In 1951 there were only two prominent names in composition in Canada: Claude Champagne in Montreal and Healey Willan in Toronto, but even they were thought of as a teacher in the case of Champagne and as organist and choir master in the case of Willan. The league changed that—the members might have had other jobs, but they were composers first, and moreover, modern composers who avowed the international modernisms of mid-century. Neither Champagne nor Willan was a member of the league, except by honorary appointment.

In modernist Toronto it has always been common, even popular, to disparage Willan as being old-fashioned, an English choirmaster who arrived in his maturity in Canada and who never left behind the fustian trappings of English conservatism. Whatever one might think of his music, he was a composer by profession. By mid-century his choral and organ music was much published and performed worldwide, certainly wherever the Anglican service was observed. He had written two symphonies, a piano concerto, two operas, and incidental music for at least fifteen plays produced in Toronto. Old-fashioned or not, Willan was living proof that you could live in Toronto and in Canada and be a professional composer.

It was also true that the league did not introduce modernity in music, at least in Toronto, and I'm sure also in Montreal. I don't actually remember this, of course—this is the musicologist speaking—but a Toronto quartet played Schoenberg's string quartet opus 7 in 1915. In 1928 Ravel visited and performed his music in Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal. From 1925 to 1935 the Hart House Quartet played quartets by Schoenberg, Bartok, Hindemith, Prokofiev, Honneger, and Malipiero, among others. Stravinsky conducted the Toronto Symphony Orchestra in 1937 to rapturous acclaim. These and other events slowly established a frame of reference for modern music, but such performances were admittedly sporadic and inevitably of music by foreign composers. The disconnectedness of events arguably prevented the development of a sympathetic and knowledgeable audience for new music, and especially for new music composed by composers working in Canada. In 1951 the league proposed to change this.

When it was formally chartered in 1952 the league had about two dozen members. In that same year the CBC published a revision of its earlier *Catalogue of Canadian Composers*, this time with the names of 356 composers living and dead, of whom 290 were alive and well at the time of publication. Obviously membership in the new League of Composers was highly self-selective. What's more, with the exception of Barbara Pentland, who had recently moved from Toronto to Vancouver, Jean Coulthard, who was also in Vancouver, and Walter Kaufmann in Winnipeg, the members were all living in Ontario and Quebec, mostly, in fact, in Montreal and Toronto. This might sound too local to be very Canadian by present-day standards, but in 1951 the population of the country was only fourteen million people, and outside the two largest cities the population was very sparse indeed. This, however, did not lessen the intention to shape a Canadian musical consciousness, for if the defining spirit of the league was internationalism and modernism, there was something else afoot that the league represented by implication—nationalism.

The founding members of the league were not conspicuously nationalistic, and nothing indicated that they wanted to establish anything like a Canadian music—indeed, their interests and individual styles were far too disparate even to consider such a thing—but they could not have been immune to the atmosphere in which they lived and worked.

When the Canadian Music Centre was established in 1959, its mandate, still reported on the CMC website, was “to stimulate the awareness, appreciation and performance of Canadian music.” There is nothing specifically nationalistic in those intentions, any more than in the league's, but clearly there was some sense in which music could be Canadian, if only by its position within the cultural life of the country defined as Canada.

Something that the league did do was validate in Canada serious musical composition in contemporary styles, styles that would be recognized anywhere in the Western world. As important as modernism itself was the fact that the composers were living and working in Canada and that they expected their works to be heard here. It also established important figures who would influence a succession of younger like-minded composers. I think particularly of John Weinzwieg and Jean Papineau-Couture and their students: Somers, Freedman, Adaskin, Mather, Cherney, Rea, Hétu, Morel, and Tremblay, to mention only a few, most of whom in turn have taught younger composers.

When Massey wrote his *Report* in 1951 for the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences, the connection between culture and national identity was a given. The terms of reference given by the government under which the commission worked included the phrase “that it is in the national interest to give encouragement to institutions which express national feeling, promote common understanding and add to the variety and richness of Canadian life, rural as well as urban” (Canada 1951, x).

Canadian nationalism surged into politics with the election to power in 1957 of John Diefenbaker, and I cannot emphasize strongly enough how much we young Canadians were swept up by Diefenbaker's nationalist enthusiasm. It

was his defeat at the polls in 1963 that led George Grant to write his now classic *Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism*.

In 1962 Marshall McLuhan described the global village that was being created by the new electronic technologies. Nevertheless, in our own neighbourhood in that village, and at the same time that the relationship of culture and national identity was assumed to be evident, there was a burgeoning sense of Canadian identity that would reach a climax in the centennial year of 1967 and the World's Fair, Expo 67 at Montreal. Who can forget, among those of us who remember it at all, the beguiling popularity of Bobby Gimby's song "CA-NA-DA" with its refrain "Merrily we roll along / Together all the way."

Such was the temperament of the land when the great literary critic Northrop Frye, in 1967, the year of the Canadian centennial and the apex of Canadian nationalism, delivered the Whidden Lectures at McMaster University in Hamilton, with the title "The Modern Century." He said, "It is widely believed, or assumed, that Canada's destiny, culturally and historically, finds its fulfillment in being a nation, and that nationality is essential to identity. It seems to me, on the other hand, quite clear that we are moving towards a post-national world, and that Canada has moved further in that direction than most of the smaller nations. What is important about the last century, in this country, is not that we have been a nation for a hundred years, but that we have had a hundred years in which to make the transition from a pre-national to a post-national consciousness" (Frye 1967, 17).

Canada's evolution to post-nationalism marks a turning point in imagining both nation and culture in this country. On either side of Frye there were two federal government cultural reviews that reported in 1951 and in 1982, which represent opposing positions that Frye mediates with his concept of post-nationalism. The changes that have taken place since the first of those reports in 1951 are within my lifetime and within my active memory.

If in *Lament for a Nation* Grant saw us as having moved from colony to nation to colony, Frye's view was less despairing but nonetheless jarring. His assertion that we are a post-national country was radical at the time of his lecture in 1967. The word *globalization* was just beginning to appear as a familiar term, but when Frye spoke of a post-national world he was not talking about the political and economic implications of globalization but about the increasingly common disjunction between identity and nationality. Clearly, something had happened since 1955, when Massey could write so confidently about music and Canadian nationality.

In 1969, two years after Frye's post-national lecture, Arnold Walter edited a kind of sequel to MacMillan's 1955 book, called *Aspects of Music in Canada*, with a foreword by another governor-general, this time Roland Michener. Michener wrote not about music and national identity but about music in the more up-to-date context of a multicultural society. He wrote, "Music appears as a language which can be understood equally by all Canadians, whatever tongue was spoken by their forbears, or how proficient they are themselves in our two official languages. In so far as music becomes distinguishably Canadian it will be a common possession in the realm of intellect and emotion. It

is, therefore, another brotherly bond to enhance our community of purpose as well as being a fine art to enrich our individual lives” (Canada 1982, 3).

Thirty years after Massey there was another cultural review co-chaired by Louis Applebaum and Jacques Hébert. Their 1982 *Report of the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee* reveals little of the national identity bias of the Massey Report. Moreover, on the first page the authors write, “The reader will discover, first of all, that we have placed great emphasis on artistic creativity, over and above any of the other facets of our cultural life” (Canada 1982, 3). But in the same paragraph they refer to “the cultural industries of broadcasting, publishing, film and sound recording.” And while the 1982 report continued to support government funding of the arts, it saw culture as an end in itself and not as an instrument in building and directing a sense of national identity, and specifically rejected what it referred to as the “muddling of cultural goals with national goals.” The report worried that “when some new cultural policy is justified on the grounds that it promotes national unity, for example, it raises the suspicion that its purpose is to homogenize the different cultural traditions that Canadians so cherish” (Canada 1982, 8).

If the reports of 1951 and 1982 now seem to have something of bureaucratic remoteness about them, the changes in attitudes that they exemplify were evident in the daily coverage of musical events in the Toronto *Globe and Mail*. In the *Canadian University Music Review* Colin Eatock surveyed music criticism in the newspaper between 1936 and 2000: “Before 1952, the virtue, value and cultural ‘importance’ of classical music was taken for granted, and its practitioners—especially Toronto’s own musicians and musical institutions—were well supported by the *Globe and Mail* critics” (Eatock 2004, 26). In 1952 the newspaper appointed John Kraglund as its chief music critic and Kraglund took the view as Eatock describes it that “classical music in Toronto was a strong and abundant cultural force—so abundant that keen critical vigilance was needed to separate the wheat from the chaff” (ibid.). For Kraglund and for his readers, as for the Massey Commission, the assumption was that classical music was the music to be considered, and the role of the critic was primarily to distinguish between good and bad performances of a well-defined repertory.

The change in attitude that characterizes the Applebaum-Hébert Report was also exemplified in the pages of the *Globe and Mail*. In 1987 John Kraglund retired, and the new music journalist, Robert Everett-Green, had a different approach. Again as Eatock describes the situation, “Classical music itself was subjected to criticism: its entrenched traditions, lack of modernity, aging White audience, financial precariousness, waning popularity, and its claims of ‘universality’ and superiority to all other musics were all—explicitly or implicitly—addressed” (Eatock 2004, 26).

The word *music* would once have had a fairly clear and generally accepted meaning, but it is evident that it came to encompass a meaning far larger than it would have sixty years ago. *Music*, in either popular or scholarly parlance, no longer is confined comfortably to serious music in the European tradition, and the instability of the meaning of that word is something that must be dealt with in the twenty-first century.

The most concrete result of the Massey Report was the creation by the federal government of the Canada Council in 1957. This was followed over the years by the creation of provincial arts councils as well as municipal councils, and in 1977 by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, which has been the chief support of musical research and scholarship. I only remind us of these sources of financial support and I won't get into the argument about amounts of money available or whether more is available in other places. The fact remains that in Canada there is now immensely more money available than there was fifty years ago for the support of the performing arts, publishing, even musical composition, and this support is in greater measure than results merely from a doubling of population. The question is, are we better off for it?

In some ways the answer is a clear yes. We have a number of first-rate orchestras, we have many advanced music schools, there are many specialized orchestras, chamber ensembles, and what I might call special-interest groups, even a good deal of opera, which is easily the most expensive musical endeavour. These are all the kinds of ensembles that the Massey-Lévesque Commission would have recognized and endorsed, even if the ensembles are not concerned primarily with establishing and defining Canadian identity. Yet in some way we are concerned about Canadianism, if not as an aspect of national character at the very least in providing opportunities for Canadian artists. Here the answer to whether or not we are better off is not so clear.

For some years, especially during the 1950s and 1960s, music schools were the harbours for modern composers in Canada, but I can't see that that fact has done much for new music, even among young musicians. When I was an undergraduate at the University of Toronto, composers were everywhere. I studied orchestration with John Weinzweig, counterpoint with Talivaldis Kenins, harmony with Oskar Morawetz, history with Godfrey Ridout, but of the music of these composers we heard not a note within the limits of our studies. It is not easy to assess the Canadian content of present music schools, because materials of Canadian relevance might be out of sight in various courses in theory and history, but my attempt to discover a Canadian interest of any substantial kind in our largest music schools was no more successful than my attempts to find Canadian works on the programs of our major orchestras. If as George Grant said almost fifty years ago, Canadian nationalism has been defeated, it would seem that equally dead is national self-interest.

If nationalism is a weakened force on the cultural front, the whole cosmography of music has been shaken by electronic development, with results that move us well into Frye's post-national world. When Massey reported in 1951, the committee was interested chiefly, electronically speaking, in radio broadcasting. The establishment of the CBC was likened to the building of the transcontinental railway in the nineteenth century and was seen as a bulwark against absorption into the network of American broadcast culture. Television was discussed, in five pages, in terms of its development in other countries and what might happen if introduced into Canada, while recording was not even a topic. In 1951 the long-playing record was still new, audiotape had no

commercial existence, and television signals were just beginning to creep over the border from the United States before CBC television was instituted in 1952. By the time of Applebaum-Hébert in 1982, audiotapes had become a boon to music recording but also a problem for copyright of those copied materials. If the 1951 report failed to foretell the future, so too in the 1982 report there is no hint of what lay just ahead. The compact disc was about to appear on the market and displace the long-playing record, digital tape was about a decade away, and computers would quickly move from the novel to the commonplace. Undreamed of were present-day hand-held devices and downloads of music.

Mass media are a mixture of arts and techniques. Creative arts had a non-artistic component until relatively recently—the recording of events, the glorification of a monarch, the conveyance of religious symbolism—but generally speaking they have become largely disinterested, unlike applied arts, which have become closely allied with advertising and propaganda. Is there an applied music that is distinct from creative music? Not, I think in quite the same way as there is in visual art, but the expansion of electronic capabilities for marketing and distribution has created demands for an ever-changing product that has persuaded millions of the need to keep abreast constantly of something that is created in order to keep people locked into a cycle of musical consumerism.

Advertising and propaganda are an imposed interpretation that is passively accepted by the receiver. Conjoined as “public relations,” they have become as important to the Toronto Symphony Orchestra as to the Toronto Maple Leafs, the chief difference among them being the amount of money each organization has available to direct to this feature of their operation. In the field of popular music, the public relations activities are unceasing, directly in radio broadcasting and tabloid publications and magazines, indirectly in the promotion of devices for the downloading of and listening to music. The earphone brings music literally into the physical body, and when a medium overwhelms the internal privacy of an individual, then the message is that media have become cultural prostheses, artificial replacements for the active individual engagement of music and art.

There is, however, an illusion in this electronic world. For one thing, the music sites are basically trading exchanges where the music that you choose is the music that has been made available by someone else and who might withdraw that track from the market. Moreover, while the choice of popular music is certainly enormous, the sheer amount tends to result in an ever-increasing selectivity. The sites offer categories such as electronic dance, rock ‘n’ roll, Latin, and so on, and once listeners have decided what category is “their” music, the chance of their stumbling against something unexpected becomes less and less. As the choice widens, the selection narrows.

We live in an age of great speed in cultural movement. As soon as something is identified as a style, a technique, or a device, it is likely already receding into the past. The onus is on the artist to create “newness” to satisfy the shifting expectations of the audience. The problem for the composer is obvious, but it extends as well to performing organizations or individuals whose repertoire,

by convention and habit, is old and uniform. The performer, as much as the composer, must find new variants of the old style or new ways to present it. Scholarship is no less immune to the exigencies of “newness.” Taking science as the model, musicology has been required to engage in what is called “the expansion of knowledge” but more and more, it seems to me, has been the search for novelty where the more *outré* the subject the better.

Perhaps the paucity of study of Canadian subjects in serious music is explicable by the largely underground nature of its existence, but when I looked quickly at music school curricula I came across several courses in pop music. Without exception they listed among the materials to be studied the expected names of British and American groups and individuals, but I looked in vain for such names as Lighthouse, the Guess Who, Rush, the Tragically Hip, Blue Rodeo, Bryan Adams, Gordon Lightfoot, Ian and Sylvia Tyson, Buffy Sainte-Marie, the Rankin Family, Ronnie Hawkins, La Bolduc, Robert Charlebois, Félix Leclerc, or the phenomenon of the Chansonniers, to mention only a handful of a huge number of names who have enjoyed and still do enjoy enormous popularity in this country. We live a bifurcated musical existence. At one side are the music and musicians deemed worthy of attention; at the other are the music and musicians listened to by Canadians. Whatever kind of music we talk about, whether our world is described by Massey, Frye, Grant, Applebaum-Hébert, or McLuhan, there is a purely practical consideration in making Canada aware of and receptive to musicians of any kind who want to make a living here.

In the post-national world of economic globalization and electronic reductionism, culture returns to being regional. An indigenous culture requires boundaries, but those boundaries can just as well be psychic as political, and in Canada different boundaries can simultaneously define shared physical space. Culture has been aligned customarily with ethnic identity, and that in turn has been equated with national boundaries—the Irish live in Ireland, the Poles in Poland, the Italians in Italy. Canada has never been very good at homogenizing our citizens to produce a recognizable ethnic identity, and in recent years diversity has been raised to the political status of multiculturalism. Perhaps in this we can see a possible pattern for the future, one in which we shall turn out to be more practical than we sometimes think we are. If we sustain a uniformity of ambition and a diversity of ideas, we might well provide a template for the future.

In 1955 MacMillan wrote in his *Music in Canada* that it was “desirable that we develop more institutions of nation-wide influence, if only to give strong leadership and assistance to worthy local effort” (MacMillan 1955, 4). Fifty years later, we can be sure that the worthy local efforts would find that patronizing and there would be fierce argument about where the institutions of nationwide influence would be located. But earlier in the same paragraph MacMillan wrote of the plethora of musical activities in Canada: “Practically all of them were originally, and most of them still are, purely local or at most provincial in scope. It is desirable that many remain so, for nothing could be duller than a uniform pattern” (ibid.). At the same time that culture was still seen to

be uniform and both a result of and an agent of nationalism, there existed a sense of the individuality of locales.

As a post-national multicultural country, should Canada have a national cultural policy? In an election campaign one is unlikely to hear the words *culture* or *the arts*. We live in a period when everywhere an increasingly conservative view asserts its agenda: public interest must cede to private profit, communal experience must cede to individual stratagems, the state itself must cede to the marketplace. In my view, a policy that addresses our situation in the modern world is necessary, without question. The terms of reference might be quite different now from what they were for Massey in 1950 or for Applebaum and Hébert in 1982, but a policy that addresses contemporary Canada, in all its richness and confusing variety, is at least as imperative as it was sixty years ago.

The subway train and bus are full of people with plugs in their ears, each one listening to different music in the same way that others are, still, reading different books. But when I pick up one of the free tabloids of popular culture that are now available in most large cities on this continent, I find pages of advertisements for bands and entertainers, real live people, at bars and clubs throughout the city. When I go to concerts, whether in the large concert halls or small and sometime irregular recital auditoriums, I find people in them, often filling the spaces to capacity. In my own city there is a society devoted to Indian classical music and a huge Chinese cultural centre with a theatre, and a society for the performance of Chinese classical opera. As a graduate student I was set a bibliographic exercise that had the unexpected but collateral effect of demonstrating to me that, following the end of the First World War, there were predictions that culture as it had existed before the war would disappear, that opera and symphony concerts would vanish, that large concert halls would be empty. After almost a century those predictions have proven to be untrue. Jet aircraft and electronic connections have made McLuhan's global village smaller than even he imagined, but the villagers seem to have changed less than we sometimes think.

A static culture is a museum culture and we must always have a place for creators as well as curators. Music of all kinds in Canada is a fifth column that works actively, even if sometimes little noticed, to undermine the passivity of most listeners. In this it shares a character with much music of the twentieth century, from Schoenberg to Boulez, and including Arnold Dolmetsch, Lighthouse, and Glenn Gould as iconoclastic performers. Perhaps not so much has changed, despite royal commissions, reassessments of the modern world, and the deluge of electronic devices. What changes is the perspective.

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ABSTRACT

In this article the author reflects on musical life in Canada, drawing on experiential perspectives while growing up in Toronto and his career for three decades as a faculty member in musicology at the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto. References to pivotal musical institutions (Canadian League of Composers, CBC, Canadian Music Centre, among others) and historical documents such as Ernest MacMillan's *Music in Canada*, Marshall McLuhan's *Gutenberg Galaxy*, and George Grant's *Lament for a Nation* provide contextual frameworks for these perspectives.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article présente une réflexion sur la vie musicale canadienne, basée sur l'expérience de l'auteur en tant que torontois et musicologue membre de la Faculté de musique de l'Université de Toronto depuis trois décennies. Cette réflexion fait référence aux principales institutions musicales canadiennes (Ligue canadienne des compositeurs, Société Radio-Canada, Centre de musique canadienne, etc.) et s'appuie sur les études historiques d'Ernest MacMillan (*Music in Canada*), de Marshall McLuhan (*Gutenberg Galaxy*) et de George Grant (*Lament for a Nation*).