

he must have thought that his life was almost over. Although he did not know it, a new and far more fruitful life was about to begin.

Gaynor G. Jones

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GORDANA LAZAREVICH. *The Musical World of Frances James and Murray Adaskin*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988. x. 331 pp.

As suggested by her title, Gordana Lazarevich recounts the careers of Frances James and Murray Adaskin “with reference to the social, political, and cultural circumstances that affected them.” And indeed, the somewhat self-contained chapters 3 and 4 (*The Canadian performer in the 1940s; A Canadian composer in the 1940s*) might be sobering reading for today’s aspiring performers and composers who on one hand will gain an appreciation of the challenges faced four decades ago, but on the other may lament what appear to be lesser opportunities now, particularly for cross-country touring (no matter if poorly paid) and CBC employment and exposure. Perhaps it remains for a sociologist to determine whether the situation in the late 1980s is demonstrably superior to “perhaps the most difficult time in Canadian cultural history.”

In Dr. Lazarevich’s estimation, the correspondence in 1948 between Frances James and Ward French, President of the Community Concert Series, “documents an incident of considerable importance in Canadian cultural history.” The plight of the performer in the United States was not entirely dissimilar, however, for as Abram Chasins observed in *Leopold Stokowski — A Profile*, “around 1930 (Arthur) Judson acquired a subtle stranglehold on the concert business through Columbia Artists Management” and had “firm control over the musical activities and destinies of many famous orchestras, conductors, and soloists . . . this meant not only where they played but also what.”

That artists elsewhere may have languished under monopolistic practises in no way detracts from the achievements of Frances or Murray Adaskin; indeed their integrity, perseverance and artistry resulted in an enduring contribution to Canadian cultural life both directly and through countless others whose talents they nurtured.

Murray too could rise to a challenge, for in 1952 he almost singlehandedly raised funds for a Toronto Symphony concert of music by the newly formed Canadian League of Composers of which he was one of eight founding members.

Although it was not Dr. Lazarevich’s intent to provide a detailed technical analysis of Murray Adaskin’s music, Chapter 6 is an overview of “The Compositions of the Saskatoon period”, 35 musical examples of which appear in an appendix. Other appendices offer a catalogue of Adaskin’s compositions, “First or early performances