

## PREFACE

At a time when national unity and cultural identity are matters of serious concern to Canadians, many voices are raised in a call for greater emphasis on Canadian Studies. Many Canadian music teachers believe that their students should be made aware of their national cultural heritage, but it is often difficult to locate Canadian compositions suitable for student performers. Although there has been a remarkable increase in the number of Canadian composers in the past thirty years, there is by no means an unlimited supply of Canadian music, and most compositions are for professional rather than student performers. The teacher's search for suitable material is made more difficult by the fact that many Canadian compositions are not available in published form. Published music represents a relatively small proportion of the total creative output of Canadian composers. It has been difficult to obtain information on unpublished compositions, and therefore unpublished compositions have been a largely untapped source of possibly useful pedagogical material.

To help meet the need for more Canadian content in music education, the Ontario Ministry of Education funded a 1983-4 research study which identified unpublished Canadian compositions suitable for performance by elementary or secondary school students. This Guidelist of Unpublished String Orchestra Music is an outgrowth of that research study in which detailed guidelines, developed in consultation with a panel of string specialists, were used in appraising the level of difficulty of 156 unpublished Canadian string orchestra compositions. 84 pieces were judged to be too demanding for the average high school performer. 72 pieces were assessed as being of a suitable level of difficulty for elementary or secondary school players, and these pieces were analysed using standardized frameworks for appraising technical challenges, musical characteristics, and pedagogical value. A program of classroom-trial of these pieces by teachers across Canada was also undertaken. A report on the research study was presented to the Ontario Ministry of Education, outlining in detail the research procedures, including the guidelines developed for assessing level of difficulty. The research report listed all the compositions which were assessed, with an indication of those compositions which were recommended for student performers. This Guidelist provides teachers with detailed information on the recommended compositions for which scores and parts are available.

Although the analysis of compositions has been as objective as possible, based on carefully devised guidelines and standardized frameworks, the importance of subjective response to music and the uniqueness of each teaching situation must be acknowledged. No piece, whether Canadian or not, is suited to all teaching situations. Since musical tastes and technical abilities differ, it is important that there be a variety of Canadian music, in different styles and at varying levels of technical difficulty, from which teachers can choose.

The selection of repertoire for teaching purposes is one of the educator's most important responsibilities, for music must be at the centre of music education. Teachers owe it to their students to choose the best possible repertoire, weighing all the various factors related to their specific situation, using their musical and educational judgment. They should use whatever information is available to help them make repertoire choices, including the information provided in this Guidelist. When teachers are aware of the variety of Canadian music which is available and suitable for student performers, and which they have access to support materials to guide them in their choice and teaching of this repertoire, they can include Canadian music as an integral part of a well-balanced music program, thus fostering students' awareness of their national cultural heritage.

1. Patricia Martin Shand, *Selection and Evaluation of Unpublished Canadian Music for Band and String Orchestra for Use in Schools* (Toronto: Ontario Ministry of Education, 1985).

## **EXPLANATORY NOTES**

This Guidelist is limited to original unpublished compositions for string orchestra written by Canadian composers before July 1983.

The adjectives Easy, Medium, and Difficult are used to describe level of difficulty.

Easy compositions are suitable for beginning string orchestras whose players have had less than two years of string instruction.

Medium compositions are suitable for intermediate string orchestras whose players have had two to three years of string instruction.

Difficult compositions are demanding for an average high school string orchestra in which most players have had three or more years of string instruction.

Compositions are arranged alphabetically by composer according to level of difficulty. Easy compositions are described on pp. 3-40, Medium compositions on pp. 43-102, and Difficult compositions on pp. 105-132. Information for each composition includes instrumentation, duration, and availability. Where a composition is available only through the composer, interested persons should contact the John Adaskin Project, 20 St. Joseph Street, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 1J9.

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Director, John Adaskin Project