

Malcolm Forsyth's *A Ballad of Canada*: Premiere a triumph in the face of adversity



Photo Credit: Ron Checora

When Malcolm Forsyth was commissioned by the National Arts Centre Orchestra and the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra to write an "iconic Canadian work" he thought it odd that an immigrant should be asked to write such a work. However, being an immigrant Malcolm had the perspective of seeing Canada with "different eyes" and a broader perspective of appreciation than many who were born and lived all their lives here. The texts for *A Ballad of Canada* that he decided to set were four existing poems and one newly commissioned poem by his colleague and friend Carl Hare. The work is divided into 2 main sections, *The Land* and *Canada in Time of Trial*. The outer movements about the Yukon and Newfoundland make up *The Land*. The composer used Ralph Gustafson's poem on the Yukon with its images of the Northern Lights and salmon jumping, as well as excerpts of E. J. Pratt's poem on Newfoundland for the last movement. The inner section, *Canada in Time of Trial*, uses three poems, the famous John McCrae *In Flanders fields*, the new Carl Hare poem *On the Waverley Bridge* and *The Toll of the Bell* by E. J. Pratt, about a maritime disaster. Mr. Hare's poem examines an emotional meeting of the eyes of the mother a dead soldier as the procession carrying his body proceeds along the section of southern Ontario's Highway 401 known as the "Highway of Heros" and a mother holding her baby on a bridge under which the procession travels.

Although Dr. Forsyth was gravely ill with cancer and only weeks away from his death, this project gave him the drive to keep going and to come to the premiere, June 9, 2011. The work was very well received and the composer was given a long standing ovation after both of the initial performances. The piece was performed again November 11, on Remembrance Day, by the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra with a repeat the following day.

Malcolm Forsyth passed away on July 5, 2011. He would have been 75 on December 8
mixed chorus SSAATTBB +2(II=picc).2(II=ca).2(I=Bb & A; II=Bb & A & Eb).2./4.2.3.1./tp.3 perc (incl toy piano (opt)). hp./sts 25'

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2011 Pulitzer Prize for Music goes to Zhou Long



Oxford University Press composer **Zhou Long** (Zhou is his family name) has won the 2011 Pulitzer Prize for Music for his opera *Madame White Snake*. In this his first opera, he has drawn on an ancient Chinese myth of a white snake demon who surrenders her mortality in order to experience love.

It was commissioned by Opera Boston and was premiered in February, 2010, and later premiered with an expanded version in Beijing at the Beijing International Festival. The Pulitzer committee, in awarding the prize, said the work was a "deeply expressive opera that draws on a Chinese folk tale to blend the musical traditions of the East and the West".

Scored for full orchestra, it is a full-length 4-act opera of 100' using forces including soprano, mezzo-soprano or male-soprano, tenor, bass soloists, SATB chorus, children's chorus & orchestra with Chinese flute & erhu. English libretto by Cerise Lim Jacobs. Chinese fl+ 1(=picc).1.2(II=bcl).2(II=cbn)./2.2.tbmb.0/timp, 2 perc, hp, erhu./sts



Opera: *The Inventor* by Bramwell Tovey with libretto by John Murrell

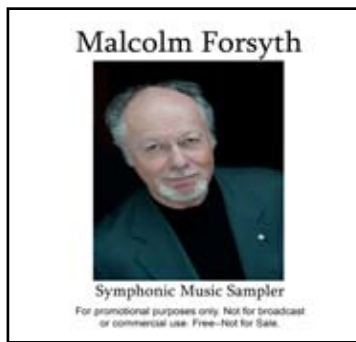
Bramwell Tovey and John Murrell have taken a part of Canadian history and brought it to life in their first collaboration. *The Inventor* is based on the true life story of Alexander (Sandy) Keith, Jr., nephew of the famous brewer, and black sheep of

the family. His story has the makings of any good opera--drama, intrigue, love and hate. It is set in Canada, U.S.A. and Germany. A devoted husband and father to his second wife and family, but also a swindler who stole a lot of money, he was a spy for the U.S. Confederacy. He ended up committing the first act of terrorism in the world, described at the time, December, 1875, as the "crime of the century". The two-act opera, commissioned by Calgary Opera and premiered January 29, 2011, was well received by the audience and critics. It featured a fine cast including Judith Forst, Erin Wall, Lauren Whalen, Roger Honeywell and James Westman (as Sandy Keith). The set was a multi-level very well-designed creation which included over one tonne of steel in the framework, standing 30 feet tall and 52 feet long. It had elevators to take the cast from one level to another and sliding doors to open the various rooms to show the next scene. It was too large to be put together in the shop and had to be put together for the first time on the stage which took 11 hours. The opera was broadcast on CBC's *Saturday Afternoon at the Opera*, in June, 2011. Listen to Bramwell Tovey talk about his opera in this Youtube clip: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Htqfbtd8M> and also an interview with James Westman, who plays the role of Sandy Keith, on *The Inventor* (the first of three parts--the other two links will be listed on Youtube). <http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=endscreen&NR=1&v=7WZ1sjueXQE>

Watch a sped-up version of the set being put together in this clip: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WLib6snf91E&feature=related>
Major roles: 2S.MS.T.Br.B Minor: 2S.2MS.2T.2Br. mixed chorus + 2(II=picc).2(II=ca).2.2./5.2.2.tbmb.1./tp.perc.hp./sts

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Newly Engraved editions of the ever popular *Bist du bei mir* by J.S. Bach, arranged by Stuart Calvert

We now have newly engraved performance material for the popular J.S. Bach work, *Bist du bei mir*, for soprano or tenor solo, unison choir and string orchestra. There are two versions, one for string quartet and one for string orchestra. Both versions have optional harpsichord and optional oboe accompaniment, as well as an optional third violin part which may be used to substitute for viola. This work is part of the Gordon V. Thompson catalogue division of Warner-Chappell Music Canada. The quartet version may be purchased, and the string orchestra version will be on rental.

New Critical Edition of Famous Saverio Mercadante's Flute Concerto by Mariateresa Dellaborra

The critical edition of Saverio Mercadante's Concerto in E minor for small orchestra is now finally available. The concerto is without doubt the composer's most famous work thanks to its third movement, the celebrated *Rondò russo*, and is still today the piece most frequently performed by flautists all over the world. The present version, unique among modern editions, represents a truly innovative publication in that it faithfully follows the prescriptions of the composer as regards both the melodic and harmonic invention and the make-up of the orchestra. It therefore differs from the version edited by Agostino Girard and issued by Suvini Zerboni in 1973. The flute soloist is accompanied by a string orchestra (two violins, cello, double bass, no violas) joined by two horns.

Compared to the version for large orchestra, op. 57 in Mercadante's catalogue, the score has fewer bars in the three movements that make up the work. Generally speaking it takes on a more agile performing guise, favouring a "cleaner" reading of the brisker passages, removing the redundancies or unnecessary repetitions and thus focusing on the essential elements that seem to lend further prominence to the felicitous creative elements. The draft was not written by Mercadante himself, but under the supervision of an entrusted copyist, who has left numerous traces of his activity in the archives of the library of the conservatory of San Pietro a Majella in Naples. The text thus came down to us in separate parts whose authenticity leaves no room for doubt.

Alessandro Savasta, Publishing Manager
Edizioni Suvini Zerboni

2.2.2.2./2.2.1.0./sts 23' material available on rental

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Why not consider a concert with highlights of the music from the *Royal Wedding of Prince William and Catherine?*

Our library is offering a rental package of highlights of the music performed at the Royal Wedding of Prince William and Catherine, which took place at Westminster Abbey on April 29, 2011. As with all royal occasions and especially at weddings, there was an abundance of glorious music performed to celebrate this happy occasion. Our package includes the following works, or choose some of them:

Serenade for Strings in E minor op. 20 by Edward Elgar (for the wedding the movements *Allegro piacevole*, *Larghetto* and *Allegretto* were used) for string orchestra - complete work 15'

Fantasia on Greensleeves by Ralph Vaughan Williams (arr. Greaves) for opt. 2 fl., opt hp and string orchestra 4'

On hearing the first cuckoo in spring (from *Two pieces for string orchestra*) by Frederick Delius for string orchestra 4'

Touch her soft lips and part (from *Henry V Suite*) by William Walton for string orchestra 2'

I was glad by C. Hubert H. Parry. **We have commissioned our own Canadian composer, Victor Davies (of *The Mennonite Piano Concerto* fame), to create a new orchestration because the original version is very large and not many orchestras have the forces to perform it. For the first group that presents this, they may request an orchestration that suits them and the arranger will try to accommodate. 4'

Jerusalem by C. Hubert H. Parry arranged for orchestra by Edward Elgar

2.picc.2.ca.2.bcl.2.cbn./4.4.3.1./tp.perc.2 hp.org./sts 4'

This is the day which the Lord has made by John Rutter, composed especially for this occasion.

SATB chorus + 2.1.2.1./2.0.0.0./perc, hp./sts 5'

Blest pair of sirens from *At a Solemn Musick* by C. Hubert H. Parry for chorus and orchestra

mixed chorus + 2.2.2.2(II=cbsn)/.4.3.3.1./timp.org./sts 12'

Crown Imperial by William Walton, arranged for this occasion by John Rutter for orchestra (or use the standard version)

1(=picc).2.2.1./0.3 orch tpt in C.4 fanfare tpt in B flat.2 fanfare tenor tpt.0.tbmb.0./fanfare snare drum, orch tp. perc (1 player).

hp. org./sts Percussion: SD.TD.sus cym.clash cym. 7'

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