

Summer/Fall, 2018

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The Summer/Fall Newsletter focuses on Newly Issued works

We are pleased to attend the Ontario Registered Music Teachers' Convention in Ottawa, July 28-29

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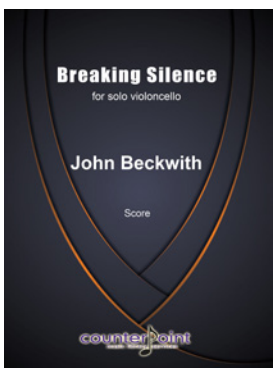
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John Beckwith

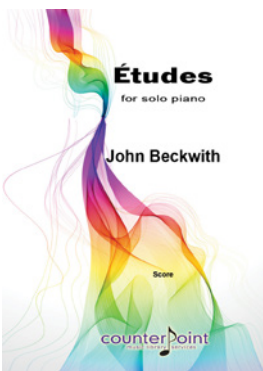


We are very pleased to announce that the very respected and renowned Canadian composer John Beckwith has agreed to allow us to publish some of his works.

Mr. Beckwith, a composer, music educator, and writer has more than 160 compositions in his catalogue including four operas, a dozen works for orchestra, chamber and solo instruments, songs, and works for chorus. His music has had commissions and performances by leading ensembles and solo artists around the world.



Breaking Silence is a short work for solo cello which was commissioned by the school of music of Memorial University in St John's. "Instrumentalists of the school were preparing a late-evening concert and decided to ask the composers represented to each write a brief solo encore piece. I was assigned the cello. My work was premiered at the concert (2 February 2013) by Vernon Regehr."



Commissioned by the Vancouver New Music Society, the *Études*, which are challenging to perform, were premiered in Vancouver in April 1984 by Jane Coop, who also recorded them (Centrediscs CMCCD 5897).

"What had always fascinated me about the étude genre was the concept of deriving musical expression from the physical actions involved in playing." (the composer). Listen on YouTube.

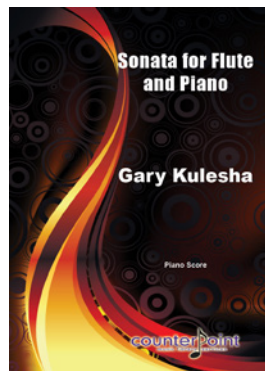
Perceptive listeners will be intuitively aware of both great complexity and an underlying powerful sense of coherence in Beckwith's Études...it is one of the twentieth-century masterpieces of the genre. (Gail Dixon from her analytical article *Taking a Stand: Essays in Honour of John Beckwith*.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MegQ1Y2dkhY&index=3&list=PLYVCpbOihkNX5xOn073toqY3rEFwVJC_p



The Cheese Stands Still, is a fun collection of five short piano pieces for beginners. It was written for the composer's granddaughter when she was learning to play. The title comes from the last line of the well-known nursery rhyme, *The Farmer in the Dell*. Each of the movements is titled with a different type of cheese: Brie, Cream, Goat, Cheddar and Blue.

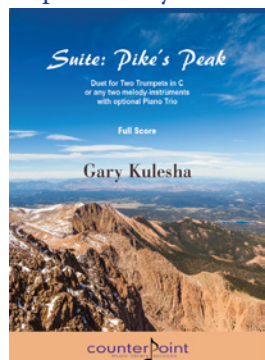
The composer has included his letter from 2002 to his granddaughter, which explains it all.

Gary Kulesha

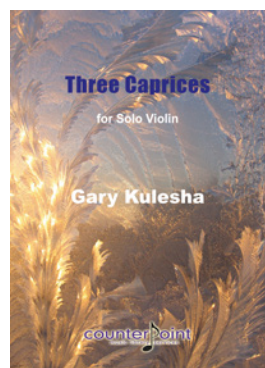


Sonata for Flute and Piano - "The flute lends itself so naturally to lyrical and florid writing that it seemed almost impossible to create something else. I set out to compose music which explores other qualities. In this work, I have tried to substitute "athletic" for "florid" and "passionate" for "lyrical". There are still very lyrical passages in the work, but I wanted above all else to demonstrate that the flute is capable of not only bright and brilliant colours, but also of very dark and tempestuous ones. The music is florid at times, but it is also very sharply rhythmic and, at times, even brutal."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GY4AlpJtbo8>



Suite: Pike's Peak was originally written as a duet for two trumpets, commissioned by Stephen Chenette, who premiered it on a climb of Pike's Peak in 1981. "In 2004, I added an optional accompaniment for violin, cello, and piano. At the same time, I added the option of substituting any instrument with the correct range for the trumpets parts. It is still possible to play the work as a duet, in which case the performing instruments could be in any key."



Three Caprices for solo violin is one of the composer's most performed works. Each are quite different, although they are all quite assertive and headstrong. The first begins with a rather ceremonial Maestoso, and develops into a freely flowing Allegro. The second is jagged and very angular. The third is a combination of these qualities, with a dramatic opening idea followed by an agitato middle section, closing with a climactic return to the opening.



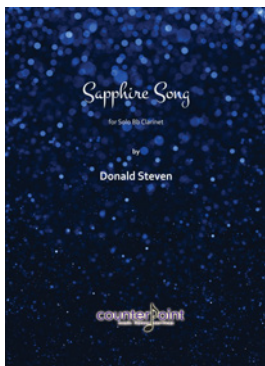
The Greatness of the New-Found Night was commissioned and premiered by the Toronto Wind Symphony. The title is taken from a poem by Wallace Stevens but there is no actual relationship between the music and the poem. The title was chosen because of the beauty of the language, as it seemed to suggest the atmosphere of this work. Cast in three movements, the outer movements are fast, with a slow middle movement. The fast music of the first movement is actually rather dark in nature. The second by contrast, is far more stark, beginning with rather brutal brass writing. The third embraces the sonorities of the opening in a triumphal way, celebrating not the victory of light, but the greatness of darkness, the new-found truth of the night. (the composer)



Donald Steven



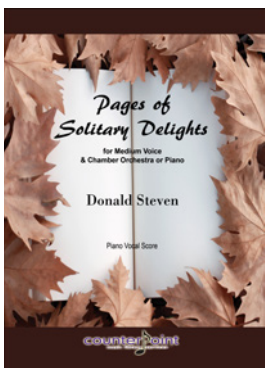
Donald Steven is an award-winning composer whose works have been performed on four continents. Born in Montréal, Mr. Steven has won a number of important awards including the Jules-Léger Prize for Chamber Music and the JUNO Award for "Best Classical Composition" from the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, deemed by many to be the highest honors for composers in Canada. Mr. Steven has also been nominated for the "Composer of the Year" Award from the Canadian Music Council and has won the Golden Jubilee Creative Arts Award from the Canadian Federation of University Women.



Sapphire Song is a solo clarinet work which was commissioned and premiered by clarinetist Robert Riseling. The work is contemplative, somewhat in the character of the traditional shakuhachi (bamboo flute) folk-art music of Japan. It is, for the most part, completely written out, but it contains several passages of varying lengths in which the performer improvises on previous material, within certain restrictions. This piece

has become one of his best selling works.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CEEhfqxrTXw>



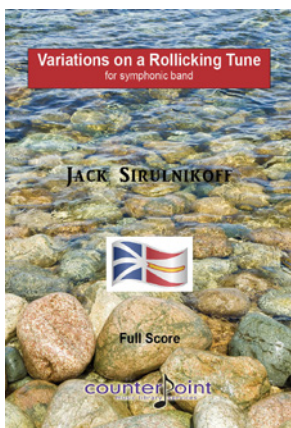
Pages of Solitary Delights is a work for medium voice and orchestra. It was commissioned by the McGill (University) Symphony Orchestra for contralto Maureen Forrester to perform and record. It tied for the first place JUNO award (with Malcolm Forsyth's *Atayoskewin*, which we also have published) the first time the category for *Best Classical Composition* was awarded. This is a delightful piece and you can hear Ms. Forrester

perform it with the McGill Symphony Orchestra on YouTube. Unfortunately, this work has been forgotten and unjustly ignored. Counterpoint has just released a newly-created piano reduction of the work which previously only existed with chamber orchestra accompaniment.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v0v9brWASfE>

Jack Sirulnikoff

Jack Sirulnikoff's (1931-2017) arrangement of the traditional Newfoundland tune, *I se the b'y that builds the boat*, in his *Variations on a Rollicking Tune* is suited to school bands, fun to play and enjoyable to listen to.



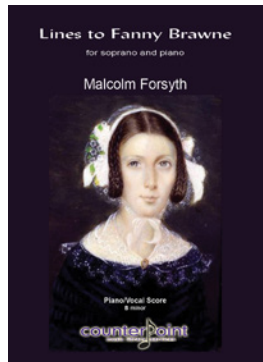
It is an easy piece for concert band composed around 1975. It was first performed at the Mid-West Band Clinic in Chicago in 1977. The tune is stated at the beginning and end of the work with interesting variations on the tune in the middle. It is suitable for Junior or Senior high

school, university or amateur bands.

Winnipeg born composer Jack Sirulnikoff was also a performer and teacher whose compositions included works for theatre as well as works for film and TV. He worked in Massachusetts as a composer and accompanist, before moving to Ontario where he taught music and English. He also taught in Truro Nova Scotia for 8 years, all before 1975. At that time he switched careers to become a computer programmer which continued to his retirement.

Malcolm Forsyth

Canadian composer Malcolm Forsyth (1936-2011) enjoyed a distinguished international career as one of Canada's major composers, having written a wide variety of works including orchestral, chamber (especially for brass and strings), vocal, instrumental and choral music. He was named "Canadian Composer of the Year" by the Canadian Music Council in 1989, and received many other awards, including three JUNOs for "Best Classical Composition" -- 1987, 1994 and 1998, and several JUNO nominations. A native of South Africa who emigrated to Canada in the late 1960s, his music combined



Lines to Fanny Brawne, for soprano and piano."The composer's fascination with the poetry of John Keats began while he was still in high school, when he was required to recite passages from the *Ode to a Nightingale*. In the collected edition of Keats' poems there appears a short, untitled piece under the name, "Lines" supposed to have been written to Fanny Brawne. Miss Brawne was the object of Keats'

devotion for several of the last years of his tragically short life, and this poem is a passionate plea for her understanding of this devotion." (the composer). Available in B minor and G# minor. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JF086IDFaNI>

Kelly-Marie Murphy



Ottawa composer Kelly-Marie Murphy's voice is well known on the Canadian music scene. She has created a number of memorable works for some of Canada's leading performers and ensembles. Her music has been performed around the world by outstanding soloists and ensembles, and has had radio broadcasts in over 22 countries.

Sur les pas de la lune (In the steps of the moon) for mezzo-soprano and ensemble "sets the text of postwar French poet, Philippe Jaccottet. The poem contains wonderfully rich symbolism that is very elemental – moon, water, earth, grass – and a timeless message of overcoming the obstacles in one's life.

The voice is used in a vocalise style. When the voice enters with text, she is completely alone. The voice weaves in and out as an equal instrument." (the

composer) Listen on Sound Cloud:

<https://soundcloud.com/k-mmurphy/01-sur-les-pas-de-la-lune-full>



Victor Davies



In other notable news, the in-concert performance of Victor Davies' new opera based on the George Ryga play, *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*, was premiered by the group Voice Box, in Toronto March 23, 2018, with Marion Newman in the title role of Rita Joe. This play has continued to move audiences with its powerful message, and this opera was well-

done and well-received by the audience.

It is being performed at the Ryga Arts Festival in Summerland B.C., where George Ryga lived for many years. This stark and wrenching look at the Indigenous experience still resonates today, more than 50 years after the play's premiere in 1967. The upcoming performance of this new opera will feature rising stars and a local choir in its August 31, 2018 presentation.

Counterpoint Highlights available in PDF

Download the PDF version of this newsletter from our website, as well as the link to sound clips, on this page:

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