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CANADIAN MUSIC COLUMN
By Patricia Shand
This column describes another exciting new resource for teachers who are developing Canadian music listening programs of study. The ComPoster Project materials are highly recommended.

On May 19, 1992 in Toronto, the Ontario regional Office of the Canadian Music Centre launched the ComPoster music education project, designed to help teachers familiarize students with the range and history of music written by Canadian composers.

Educator and composer Ted Dawson developed the project while working with Grade 11 students and music teachers at Earl Haig Secondary School in North York, Ontario. "Composed to other art forms, like painting and writing, students have little awareness of Canadian composers and their music. This doesn't have to be the case," said Dawson.

The education package includes a booklet entitled "A Teacher's Guide to Canadian Music," two complimentary audiocassettes of Canadian musical examples used in the text, a directory of Canadian composers, including biographical and recording information on over 300 Canadian composers, and a large four-colour ComPoster project poster.

The students at Earl Haig S.S. completed research assignments on Canadian composers, and with graphic artist Bob Yoshioka, designed the accompanying poster. The students chose the project's name -- ComPoster, by combining the words "composer" and "poster." "I hope that this guide will help make students and teachers more aware of Canadian music," said Philip McConnell, one of the music teachers at Earl Haig S.S. who helped with the ComPoster's development. "Canadian composers are still basically ignored -- this project could make their music more accepted and understood," McConnell added.

Some of the composers featured in the text and on audiocassette include such Canadian music pioneers as Harry Somers, John Weinzwieg and R. Murray Schafer, younger composers such as Alexina Louie and Claude Vivier, as well as electronic composers Ann Southam and David Keane.

"It makes me very happy to learn that an extract from my song cycle, Northern Landscape, has been selected for inclusion in this audio resource," said composer Violet Archer of Edmonton. "I think it is a wonderful idea to make Canadian music as widely known as possible."

As well as providing an historical overview, the Teacher's Guide includes sections on a wide variety of cultural influences on Canadian music, and suggests ways to introduce Canadian music into other course-work in an interdisciplinary way. "I believe it is essential to bring young people to Canadian music through exposure in the school system, and the CMC's Ontario Region has been very active in this regard," said David Parsons, Ontario Regional Director for the CMC.

Funding for the ComPoster education kit came from the Ontario Arts Council, the North York Board of Education, the Ontario Ministry of Education, and the Canadian Studies Directorate of the Federal Secretary of State.

"The ComPoster is a useful resource for anyone designing Canadian studies courses, or trying to use more Canadian content in their class. We hope that its interdisciplinary format will mean more students get to know Canadian music. And its fun, too," added Parsons.

ComPoster packages are now available for $30 (plus applicable provincial and federal taxes, and postage and handling charges) from the Distribution Service department of the Canadian Music Centre, 20 St. Joseph St., Toronto, Ontario M4V 1J9. Or they can be ordered by phone at (416) 961-4057, or fax (416) 961-7198.

The Canadian Music Centre is a non-profit non-government agency that exists to stimulate the awareness, appreciation and performance of Canadian music by making the music of its Associate Composers publicly available.