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Canadian Music in Education, Patricia Shand

CMEA Composition Competition for Student Composers Writing for Student Performers

CMEA is pleased to announce the winners of its 1999-2000 Student Composition Competition. CMEA organized this competition in order to encourage student composers to write for student performers, and to expand the repertoire of Canadian music suitable for student ensembles. The composition competition was administered by the John Adaskin Project on Canadian music for student performers. Entries were received from secondary school and university student composers from across Canada.

Kimberly Francis was awarded $500 for her Welelara for concert band. She is a student at the University of Western Ontario in the Honours Bachelor of Music program where her major is Theory and Composition. Her major instrument is oboe. She enjoys writing for large ensembles and has done so since she was sixteen. She has studied with Susan Mander-Powell and Peter Clements and is currently studying with Kim Lundberg. This is her first award for composition.

Following graduation from the University of Western Ontario, she plans to continue to compose and perhaps teach at the university level. She is enthusiastic about composing. "For me, composition is an outlet for my creative energy, a mental challenge and a chance to grow as a musician. Every time I write something, I walk away from it knowing more about music and what music means to me as well as others." She reports that she particularly enjoys writing for concert band and for symphony orchestra. "The many different colour, timbral, dynamic, textural and expressive possibilities of these ensembles has always attracted me." She began composing as a student at Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School in Burlington, Ontario. "When I was in high school I arranged a large amount of works for concert and stage band, which was where I learned about the different instruments and how they all worked together."

When asked about influences on her work as a composer, she responded: "The composers that have influenced me the most have been the ones that I have performed, listened to and studied. I wish that I knew more Canadian music and composers. A lot of the Canadian influence I have experienced comes from choral composers, for example Nancy Telfer and from my teachers, Peter Clements and Kim Lundberg. I am also very interested in the folk music and indigenous melodies of our country."

In writing Welelara, Kimberly Francis set herself an ambitious task. Her aim was to incorporate "music from all over the world into a single piece played on Western instruments." In the Foreword to the score, she wrote: "As boundaries shrink and the world becomes smaller, humans are becoming increasingly aware of the incredible diversity which exists today. Canada as a country is a wonderful example of this multiculturalism. It is this very characteristic which helps define us as a nation ... Our music therefore should embrace this quality." As one of the competition judges noted, the composition "clearly has educational value especially in building students' awareness of different cultures and the inherent sonic diversity."

Matthew Grant Asplin was awarded Honourable Mention for his Revelation for concert band. He is a native of Port Moody, B.C. and graduated in 1999 from Port Moody Secondary School where he was awarded the school's 1998-9 Outstanding Composer Award. He began to play in a concert band in grade 8, and to perform in a jazz band in grade 10, when he also began taking composition classes. He wrote his first piece for concert band for his grade 10 band. During the 1999-2000 academic year, he is studying geography in the B.A. program at Simon Fraser University, but is still continuing his musical involvement as a member of the Port Moody Community Concert Band for which he is composing music. He plans to work in the fields of highway engineering or urban planning, but to continue his musical involvement as well. "I do plan to keep writing music, playing in a concert band and playing piano for the rest of my life."

The generous contributions to the CMEA Composition Competition provided by the McLean Foundation and by individual music educators are gratefully acknowledged.