

Wild Bird

Inspired by the bird calls R. Murray Schafer heard on a daily basis at his rural home in Indian River, Ontario, Schafer recreates nature's sounds and atmosphere in *Wild Bird*. He uses dissonance (ie: the violin's opening which features a minor second double-stop) to represent bird squawks. Soaring melodies played in the violin's highest register continue to mimic birdsong before they swoop down in a flurry of activity. The ending features artificial harmonics which fade away just as a bird call becomes increasingly distant as it flies further into the sky.

Wild Bird was originally written for violin and harp in 1997. Schafer composed *Wild Bird* as a gift to violinist and former concertmaster of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Jacques Israelievitch, for his 50th birthday. In addition to the wildness of birds, Schafer was inspired by Israelievitch's bright orange hair which seemed "wild" in performance. Thanks to a recent collaboration with *Duo Concertante*'s Timothy Steeves and Nancy Dahn, Schafer now also offers the composition as a work for violin and piano.

— Amy Hillis

Coeur à Coeur

As the title describes, this piece is conceived as an imaginary conversation between two voices: exchanging inner thoughts, confessing their feelings to each other. There is an emotional aspect of the music that suggests deep affection and mutual understanding between two individuals, which is equivalent to the kind of support and receptiveness between players in a duet situation. The music travels from expressive lyricism to high animation, and concludes in transcending high notes uttered by both instruments signifying everlasting tenderness or consolation.

My work is created especially for *Duo Concertante*, violinist Nancy Dahn and pianist Timothy Steeves, two outstanding performers and supporters of Canadian music. Together they are an incredible couple who demonstrate remarkable strength and beauty in their lives and music making. This work has received a 2018 JUNO nomination for Classical Composition of the Year"

— Alice Ping Yee Ho

Bellatrix

I have been interested in astronomy for many years. As a child growing up in rural Ontario, Canada, I had many opportunities for star-gazing, and voraciously studied both the constellations and the mythologies behind them. I was always excited when Orion, the Hunter, would first appear in the evening sky, because it heralded the advent of winter, bringing with it the many bright stars and favourite constellations of those long clear nights.

Bellatrix is the Latin name given to the star that marks Orion's left shoulder. Traditionally, Orion is depicted as a man holding up a shield and brandishing a club. Bellatrix translates as "female warrior" and I find it cosmologically comforting that many years ago someone recognised the importance of acknowledging Orion's feminine side. The Arabic name for Bellatrix is *Al Najid* (The Conqueror) while scientists give it much less interesting designations like *Gamma Orionis*. Always more interested in the story than the science, I find these popular names much more potent than the technical ones, and so the Female Warrior has provided the inspiration for this extroverted and dramatic work.

Bellatrix (the music) is a virtuosic tour de force for the soloist. Within an overall tone of aggression and emphatic outward energy there are moments of reflection and lyricism, and the integration of vocalisations and breath sounds into the soundworld of the piece draws on the full resources of the player's performance skills, resulting in a work that demands a dramatic stage presence and a recognition of the concert experience as an act of theatre.

Bellatrix was commissioned in 2001 by CBC Radio Music in partnership with the Canada Council for the Arts as the imposed piece for the 31st CBC Radio National Competition for Young Performers.

— Jeffrey Ryan

Foxy Fox's Musical Games

Can contemporary music be fun? Yes it can! *Foxy Fox's Musical Games* has 8 sections, each with a different sense of play, in the engagement and excitement sense of the word. The players have to improvise, engage with the audience, incorporate new and old childhood songs, and play musical equivalents of the game of tag, chasing each other like a couple of young fox pups. Through these "games" I want to blur the line between composer and performer, and give each player moments to make musical choices. The interaction/relationship between the two players must be active and supportive, even if moments occur when there is musical teasing or friendly competition.

Foxy Fox's Musical Games was commissioned by the 2018 Eckhardt-Gramatté Competition and is dedicated to the Little One.

— Carmen Braden

Suite from The Criterion Collection

The Criterion Collection is a series of glitch-based pieces that delve into the worlds of iconic films and filmmakers that have made a marked impact on my aesthetic. Each work is constructed around damaged and deconstructed audio and video - chewed and warped videocassettes. The resulting errors and imperfections are woven together to create a sonic landscape over which accompanying instrumental material - itself emulating the traits of broken or malfunctioning media - is performed live.

The living performer interacts with the lost, forgotten or even dead icon, simultaneously breathing new life and emotion into the characters while bending, stretching, and hacking the original context, function and storyline. There is something sinister and terrifying when the performer infiltrates the scene and engages with the (often psychotic) character; at once becoming part of the *mise-en-scène*, while simultaneously guiding it into a new direction.

— Nicole Lizée