

JOHN BECKWITH -- composer, writer, teacher, and pianist -- was born in Victoria, B. C., in 1927. He holds Mus.B. and Mus.M. degrees from the University of Toronto, and doctorates *honoris causa* from five Canadian universities (Mount Allison, McGill, Guelph, Queen's, Victoria). A member of the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto, starting in 1952, he served as its Dean from 1970 to 1977. From 1984 to his retirement in 1990 he was Jean A. Chalmers professor of Canadian Music and founding director of the Faculty's Institute for Canadian Music.

His more than 160 compositions include four operas, orchestral pieces, songs, chamber music, compositions for chorus, music for children, and a series of "collages" in collaboration with the poet and playwright James Reaney. The following are his main works:

- 1958: *Night Blooming Cereus*, opera
- 1959: *Concerto Fantasy*, piano and orchestra
- 1962: *Flower Variations and Wheels*, orchestra
- 1963: *Concertino*, horn and orchestra; *Jonah*, chamber cantata
- 1964: *The Trumpets of Summer*, choral suite
- 1965-7: *Canada Dash, Canada Dot*, collage-trilogy
- 1967: *Circle, with Tangents*, harpsichord and strings
- 1968: *The Sun Dance*, chorus, soloists, organ
- 1972: *Taking a Stand*, brass quintet
- 1973: *All the Bees and All the Keys*, narrator and orchestra [chamber version, 1987]
- 1977: *Quartet*, strings
- 1978: *The Shivaree*, opera
- 1979: *Keyboard Practice*, 10 keyboards, 4 players
- 1981: *Three Motets on Swan's "China,"* a-cappella chorus
- 1982: *Mating Time*, chorus; *A Little Organ Concert*, chorus, organ, brass quintet
- 1982-3: *A Concert of Myths*, flute and orchestra
- 1983: *Études*, piano
- 1984-5: *Harp of David*, chorus
- 1988: *Crazy to Kill*, opera
- 1989: *Peregrine*, viola, percussion, chamber orchestra
- 1990: *beep*, chorus, soloists, percussion; *The Hector*, soprano-narrator, early instruments
- 1992: *Round and Round*, orchestra
- 1993-4: *Taptoo!*, opera
- 1995: *Echoes of Thiele*, chamber ensemble

1996: *Eureka*, nine winds
1997: *On the other hand...*, four quarter-tone studies for solo harpsichord;
Stacey, soprano and piano
1998: *Basic Music*, children's choir, youth choir, and orchestra
2002: *A New Pibroch*, Highland pipes, percussion, strings
2006: *Fractions*, microtonal piano and string quartet
2007: *Derailed*, double chorus and percussion
2011: *Variations*, string orchestra
2013: *Follow Me*, clarinet and piano; *Ut re mi fa sol la*, solo guitar
2015: *Wendake/Huron*, narrator, alto, choir, early-music ensemble; Quintet
2016: *Calling*, chamber ensemble

Various of his pieces have been recorded on CBC, Radio Canada International, Centrediscs, and other labels, and published by Berandol, Novello, Frederick Harris, Warner-Chappell, Jaymar, Waterloo, and Avondale. He has filled commissions from the CBC, Toronto Symphony, Esprit Orchestra, Canadian Chamber Ensemble, Vancouver International Festival, Guelph Spring Festival, Elora Festival, Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, Elmer Iseler Singers, Mississauga Choral Society, Canadian Brass, Orford String Quartet, Toronto Consort, Musick Fyne, Royal Canadian College of Organists, Vancouver New Music Society, New Music Concerts, Arraymusic, the Aldeburgh Connection, and others, and his music has received performances by orchestras, choirs, chamber groups, and soloists both in Canada and abroad.

His main teachers were, for piano, Alberto Guerrero, Toronto 1945-50, and, for composition, Nadia Boulanger, Paris 1950-51. As a pianist, he gave numerous recital and broadcast performances between 1947 and 1953, including a lecture-recital on Bach's *Goldberg Variations*. He was active 1981-91 in program planning and performances at the summer festival "Music at Sharon." Between 1991 and 1997 he made orchestral transcriptions of all forty-five movements in Bach's *Orgelbüchlein*, in three "sets," and these were premiered by Symphony Nova Scotia under Georg Tintner. He presented lectures, workshops, and performances of Canadian music, past and present, and of his own works, at six Australian universities, 1992, and in Hong Kong, 1996, both trips sponsored by the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs.

In 1972 he was awarded the annual Canadian Music Council Medal for services on behalf of music in Canada, in 1977 a Sesquicentennial long-service award by the University of Toronto, in 1983 a P. R. O. Canada Award, and in 1996 the Diplôme

d'honneur of the Canadian Conference of the Arts. He was named "Composer of the Year" for 1984 by the Canadian Music Council. He was appointed a member of the Order of Canada in December 1987, and was one of the 1994 recipients of the Toronto Arts Award. In 2010 the Canadian League of Composers and Canadian Music Centre chose him for their annual "Friends of Canadian Music" award. He was the 2014 recipient of the SOCAN/CUMS Award for Excellence in the Advancement of Research in Canadian Music.

For five years (1959-62 and 1963-5), Beckwith wrote reviews and a weekly music column for the *Toronto Star*. He was an associate editor of the now-defunct *Canadian Music Journal*. He was active 1953-70 as a script writer, critic, and programmer for CBC Radio. From 1966 to 1970 he was program annotator for the Toronto Symphony. His articles and reviews have appeared in the *Canadian Music Journal*, *University of Toronto Quarterly*, *Canadian Forum*, *Musical Times*, *Les Cahiers de la SQRM*, *CAML Review*, *Canadian University Music Review*, *American Music*, *Notes*, *Musicworks*, *WholeNote*, and other periodicals, and he has contributed to several books and reference volumes, including *Dictionary of Contemporary Music* (ed. Vinton, 1974), *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada* (ed. Kallmann et al., 1981; 2nd edn., 1992), *An Ives Celebration* (ed. Hitchcock and Perlis, 1977), *Glenn Gould* (ed. McGreevy, 1983), and *Istvan Anhalt: Pathways and Memory* (eds. Elliott & Smith, 2001). He edited James Reaney's *Scripts: librettos for operas and other musical works* (Toronto, 2004). He served as Canadian consultant for *The New Grove* (London, 1980) and was co-editor with Keith MacMillan of *Contemporary Canadian Composers* (Toronto, 1975), with Frederick A. Hall of *Musical Canada* (Toronto, 1987), with Brian Cherney of *Weinzweig: Essays on his Life and Music* (Waterloo, 2010), and with Robin Elliott of *Mapping Canada's Music: Selected Writings of Helmut Kallmann* (Waterloo, 2013). He is the author of a brief history of the Faculty of Music, *Music at Toronto: a personal account* (Toronto, 1995), *Music Papers: articles and talks by a Canadian composer, 1961-1994* (Ottawa, 1997), *Psalmody in British North America: Humbert, Daulé, Jenkins, Burnham* (Toronto, 2002), *In Search of Alberto Guerrero* (Waterloo, 2006), and *Unheard Of: Memoirs of a Canadian Composer* (Waterloo, 2012).

Beckwith's interest in Canadian musical history led to his editorship of Volumes 5 and 18 of *The Canadian Musical Heritage* anthology series (Ottawa, 1986, 1995), and of *Sing Out the Glad News* (Toronto, 1987), as well as his 1989-90 reconstruction of Joseph Quesnel's early-19th-century comic opera *Lucas et Cécile*. Research papers on aspects of Canadian music, including two on

Beckwith's own music, appeared in *Taking a Stand: essays in honour of John Beckwith* (ed. Timothy J. McGee, Toronto, 1995). Papers about Beckwith's career, presented at a symposium in 2007 marking his 80th birthday, are reproduced in the *ICM Newsletter*, 5/3, September 2007.

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