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BY ARNAUD G. VEYDARIER ON 4 OCTOBER 2018

CANADIAN MUSIC, CLASSICAL MUSIC, CONTEMPORARY



October 2018

A leader among the Canadian contemporary music ensembles, ECM+ has acquired over three decades a consistently reaffirmed reputation for the daring of its creations and the calibre of its performers. Since 1987, under the artistic direction of its founding conductor Véronique Lacroix, the ensemble has presented more than 260 premieres and issued 10 recordings that portray a sparkling and constantly evolving musical landscape.

If the organization is primarily collective, this search for new worlds of sound cannot succeed without a competition for the next generation of composers. Born of the desire to provide composers with a stimulating creative environment and the means to disseminate their works across the country, the biennial and multifaceted Génération project is a unique opportunity to promote emerging individual voices, sheltered from the dogmas inherent in academic circles. This year again, ECM+ is joining forces with four emerging composers to present the Canada-wide Generation2018 Tour.

Genesis and creation of workshops and Concert

The first incarnation of the project known today as Génération was born when Lacroix, inspired by her colleague Tim Brady suggestion, laid the groundwork for a musical creation workshop that welcomed select composers of the next generation, after a competition, to join the ensemble to undertake collective musical explorations.

Fascinated for a long time by the ins and outs of the creative process in music, Lacroix sees in this project an opportunity to establish a one-of-a-kind research and creation laboratory. Through these numerous meetings (or workshops) composers enjoy a great deal of latitude allowing them to experiment more extensively and directly with the ensemble. After the workshops, the adventure ends with a major concert in which the works are presented in their final version. It was in this form that the first edition of Ateliers et Concert was held in 1994. Building on this success, the project was repeated three times before finally taking shape in 2000 with the first edition of Génération, entitled Génération2000.

Génération

While retaining the basis of the original project, many new components significantly enrich the experience and expand its reach into a national event. Now spread over two consecutive years, the Génération project is both a creative laboratory and a broadcasting platform that reaches audiences from coast to coast to coast.

The arrival of this new "revised and expanded" version allows Génération to take over from the late CBC National Radio Competition for Young Composers, which disappeared a few years later. Although the eligibility criteria

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remain almost unchanged, the competition has been opened to candidates from outside Quebec. The first year, devoted essentially to the composition process, includes four creative workshops in the company of ECM+ as well as a series of mini-concerts open to the public, during which sketches with commentary are presented, thus allowing composers to experiment in concert settings while forging links with the public.

The following year begins with a five-day stay at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. In the heart of the majestic scenery of the Rocky Mountains, this short retreat aims to prepare composers and the ensemble for a major cross-Canada tour that will take them to several major cultural centres, including Vancouver, Victoria, Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa.

While musical performance is at the heart of the event, the evenings also include an introductory interview where composers unveil the basics of their artistic approach to the public. This general presentation offers the public a privileged perspective on the work of the artist through the analysis of two or three key passages that facilitate the understanding of the musical subject. In addition to the many educational activities that punctuate the Génération tours, two composers receive special awards: for the 2018 edition, the National Public Prize (with a \$2,000 scholarship) and the National Jury Prize, awarded by a jury made up of 40 specialists from the cities visited during the tour (with a \$6,500 scholarship for an original commission).

The 2018 vintage

This year again, ECM+ brings together four of the most promising composers of their generation. With participants from across Canada, the 2018 cohort is highly diverse: Sophie Dupuis, a New Brunswick native and winner of the 2016 Karen Kieser Award (The Painted Twilight of Black and White); Patrick Giguère, a Quebecer currently pursuing a doctorate in Birmingham (The inevitable idealism); James O'Callaghan, a Vancouver native and 2015 winner of the Canada Council's Robert Fleming Award (Close/Colse); Thierry Tidrow, an Ontario native who won the Jules Léger Award in 2014 (Sweeten the Beak).

ECM+ and its director will kick off the tour at the Banff Center on Oct. 25 and then head to Calgary (Oct. 26), Vancouver (Oct. 28), Montreal (Nov. 1), Quebec City (Nov. 3), Ottawa (Nov. 6), Winnipeg (Nov. 8) and finally Toronto (Nov. 11). www.ecm.qc.ca.

ECM | Véronique Lacroix

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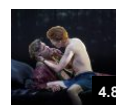
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