

Musical score composed by Jean Coulthard (Duo Sonata, for violin and piano, copyright 1963).

Jean Coulthard is part of a leading-edge Website: http://leccaine.music.mcgill.ca/MLF_Project_MLF_Composer_Database/Coulthard_Jean

In 1947 Coulthard began a 25-year teaching career at UBC by designing its first music theory courses. It was an exciting time at UBC, with Harry Adaskin as head of the new music department collecting together a young and enthusiastic faculty. At first, life at the new music school was primitive, but an adventure. "I used to teach some of the composition students the individual lessons in my car because there was no place for us to go. It was dreadful until we had the music building." Coulthard is still in touch with many of her students and is particularly pleased that many of them have become prominent Canadian composers Chan Ka Nin, David Duke, Sylvia Rickard and Michael Conway Baker).

She encouraged her students to be individuals and to make that part of their music. It also never occurred to her, until people began interviewing her, that being a woman composer was unusual. However, the domination of men in the academic world bothered her greatly when she was at UBC, and she worked hard to change attitudes.

In 1978 Coulthard was recognized for her contributions to Canadian music and was awarded the Order of Canada and made a Freeman of the City of Vancouver. She won Composer of the Year by PRO Canada in 1984, received an honorary doctorate degree from UBC in 1988 and was named the first recipient of the Woman of the Year for Women in Music this past September.

This February, Coulthard will celebrate her 89th birthday. She continues to compose each day and only in the last few years have the realities of ageing affected her in a major way. A failed operation in her right eye a couple of years ago has left it blind and forced her to quit driving. This has forced her to take great care not to tire her good eye while composing.

She has just mailed off a new manuscript for a solo bassoon work called "Legend from the West". "It is very haunting and very wistful as it starts, but of course it has very dramatic parts too." It is the second

VIOLIN



work written for local bassoonist George Zukerman. She wrote the "Lyric Sonatina" for bassoon and piano for Zukerman several years ago, and he has played it all over the world, including 16 times in New Zealand. He found it difficult to find pianists on tour who could play the challenging piano part and asked Coulthard for a new solo piece so that he would not have to worry about a pianist.

Coulthard describes her music as

having two distinct characteristics: lyrical and brooding. Perhaps her music is like the West Coast environment that she has lived in her whole life and watches from her West Vancouver balcony. Days of beautiful calm waters, blue skies and puffy white clouds against the majestic mountains are contrasted by the dark stormy days and the wet, grey winter skies reflected in the choppy waves outside her window. ☾

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