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| Tremblay, Gilles (1932--) |
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| Composer and musical pedagogue Gilles Tremblay made significant contributions to the development of musical composition in Quebec in the second half of the 20th century. After studying at the Montreal Conservatory (Conservatoire de Musique du Québec à Montréal), he attended workshops at the Marlboro School of Music (Vermont) in the summers of 1950, 1951, and 1953. He lived in Paris from 1954 to 1961, where he enrolled in the piano studio of Yvonne Loriod, took analysis courses with Olivier Messiaen, attended workshops on Ondes Martenot, and took counterpoint lessons with Andrée Vaurabourg-Honegger. He attended the Darmstadt International Summer Courses in 1957 and 1960, and worked at the GRM (Groupe de Recherches Musicales) led by Pierre Schaeffer. Involved at this time with the networks of French new music, he frequently met with Pierre Boulez, Karlheinz Stockhausen, and Iannis Xénakis.  In 1961 Tremblay returned to Quebec and was appointed professor of analysis and composition at the Montreal Conservatory, a position he occupied until his retirement in 1997. His courses at the Conservatory were inspired by Messiaen’s famous analysis class in Paris. Tremblay found connections between master works of western music that linked the past to the present, from Gregorian chants to the polyphony of Guillaume de Machaut, Monteverdi, and Mozart, through to the 20th century. His courses were extremely influential to two or three generations of composers in Quebec. |
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In 1961 Tremblay returned to Quebec and was appointed professor of analysis and composition at the Montreal Conservatory, a position he occupied until his retirement in 1997. His courses at the Conservatory were inspired by Messiaen’s famous analysis class in Paris. Tremblay found connections between master works of western music that linked the past to the present, from Gregorian chants to the polyphony of Guillaume de Machaut, Monteverdi, and Mozart, through to the 20th century. His courses were extremely influential to two or three generations of composers in Quebec.  In his works composed from around 1965, at the rate of approximately one work per year, he also established links with traditions of the past and the present. Works from this period include *Cantique de Durées*, presented at the Domaine Musical in Paris on 24 March 1963; *Souffles (Champs II)*, premiered by the Société de Musique Contemporaine du Québec (SMCQ) 21 March 1967; and *Centre-Élan*, electronic tape music composed for the Quebec Pavillon of Montreal’s Expo ‘67. Traces of his travels in the summer of 1972 to the Far East (Japan, Korea, Philippines, China, Java, Bali, and India) can be heard in *Oralleluiants*, which premiered in Toronto 8 February 1975; and in *Traçantes, auprès, au loin…* and in *Fleuves*, which was premiered by the Montreal Symphony Orchestra on 3 May 1977. He was named Composer of the Year in 1978, and a series of LPs devoted to his music – *Anthology of Canadian Music –* was released in 1983. After the premiere on 12 October 1992 of *AVEC, Wampum Symphonique*, Tremblay was named a member of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French minister of culture Jack Lang.  In 1994 he composed *L’arbre de Borobudur*, a work that incorporates a Javanese gamelan and Western instruments. In 1998, he composed *Les Pierres Crieront* for cello and orchestra, and in 1999 *À Quelle Heure Commence le Temps*, which wasbased on a text by Bernard Lévy. His opera, *L’eau qui danse, la pomme qui chante et l’oiseau qui dit la vérité*, with a libretto by Pierre Morency (based on stories by Madame d’Aulnoy), premiered in November 2009. His last work, *L’origine,* based on a text by Fernand Ouellette, was commissioned by Radio-France, and premiered by the Montreal Symphony Orchestra on 15 February 2010.  Tremblay’s works often contain Christian religious references, particularly to biblical texts. It is impossible to separate the spiritual strivings of the man from the activities of the composer, whose works reflects a quest for meaning and an understanding of the sacred dimension of the work of art. Nature is understood in his works less as an ecological entity than as a way to access the divine. In this way, Tremblay’s process could be compared to that of Jacques Maritain or perhaps even more closely to Teilhard de Chardin, whose cosmic vision of the world appears as a slow progression towards the spiritualisation of matter. From a purely musical point of view, Tremblay’s production, and coeval with structuralism, while always extremely personal and of its time, nevertheless refuses to break with the history of musical language and tradition. Works 1994. *Envol*, Centredisques CMCCD 5094. *Aubes* (1990), *Envol* (1986), *…le sifflement des vents porteurs de l'amour* (1971).  1998. *Les Vêpres de la Vierge* (1986), Analekta FL 2 3102. Société de musique contemporaine du Québec.  2003. *Ovation, Volume 3*, CBC Records PSCD 2028-5. *Fleuves* (1976)*, L'arbre de borobudur* (1994)*, Les pierres crieront* (1998).  2003. *Canadian composers portraits: Gilles Tremblay*, Centredisques CMCCD 9003 *Phases* (1956)*, Réseaux* (1958)*, Jeux de solstices* (1971)*, Oralléluiants* (1975)*, L'espace du cœur* (1997)*, Croissant* (2001).  2006. *À quelle heure commence le temps?* (1999), Atma ACD 22376.  2006. *Composer ?!. 12 portraits*. DVD réalisé par Irène Messier et Anne-Marie Messier. SMQC en coproduction avec ÈS ARTS et Productions ÉNÉRI. [www.smcq.qc.ca](http://www.smcq.qc.ca)  2007. *Le signe du lion*, Centredisques CMCCD 12507. *Le signe du lion* (1981), *Solstices* (1971), *Envoi* (1982). | | Further reading:  (Lefebvre , Tremblay, Varèse, Messiaen: Gilles Tremblay Analyste)  (Lefebvre, Compléments biographiques : Pour la suite des recherches autour de l’oeuvre de Gilles Tremblay)  (Lefebvre, Gilles Tremblay: Réflexions)  (Lefebvre, Introduction à la pensée esthétique de Gilles Tremblay à travers ses écrits)  (Lefebvre, Le compositeur Gilles Tremblay: un artiste croyant et engagé) | |