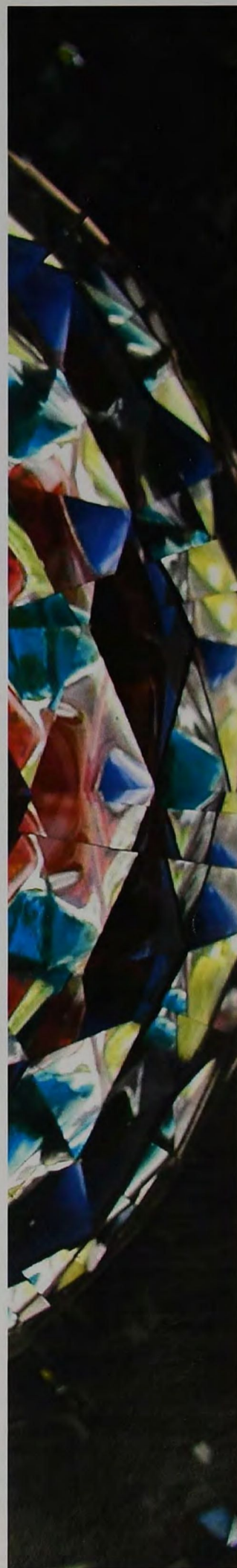


ANN SOUTHAM TRIBUTE

**CELEBRATING
A LIFETIME OF MUSIC**

April 21, 2011
7:30 pm

MacMillan Theatre
Faculty of Music
University of Toronto





Welcome

We extend a very warm welcome to all here tonight to remember, honour, celebrate and mourn the loss of a dear person - an extraordinary being - who graced this planet and this country she loved with her sensitivity, wit, intelligence, enthusiasm, and her generous, joyful, enquiring spirit. We hope you will find your own personal connections to Ann in this evening's music, dance, words and images and will be inspired to share your thoughts and memories of Ann later this evening.

Special Thanks

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the following individuals and organizations who contributed to tonight's event.

Kip Southam
Canadian Women's Foundation
Patricia Beatty
Rachel Browne
Eve Egoyan
Robin Elliott
Shirley Grierson
Gregory Harrison
David Jaeger

Beverley Johnston
Norma Lachance
Terrill Maguire
Sahara Morimoto
David Olds
Penny Olorenshaw
Christina Petrowska-Quilico
Johanna Riley
J. Kenneth Scott

Jonathan Smith
Tim Southam
Nancy Thoman
Ron Snippe

Avril Jacobson *editor*
Iris Ng *interview cinematographer*
Mary Wong *interview sound*
Tamara Bernstein *interviewer*

Portions of tonight's Ann Southam Tribute are being recorded for broadcast on May 14th by The Signal, with host Laurie Brown. The Signal is Canada's national new music show, heard Monday through Saturday evenings, 10 pm to midnight on CBC Radio 2.



radio 2

Program

Glass Houses No.1 and No.5 (1981)

Arranged for two marimbas by Gregory Harrison

Gregory Harrison

Jonathan Smith

Prelude *Seastill (1979)*

Welcome

Christine Forsyth

Kip Southam

Molly Weaver

Simple Lines of Enquiry excerpts (2007)

Pianist **Eve Egoyan**

Thoughts from choreographers and collaborators

Patricia Beatty

Rachel Browne

Pond Life excerpt (2011)

Music ***Pond Life excerpt (2008)***

Choreographer/Dancer **Terrill Maguire**

Pianist **Christina Petrowska-Quilico**

Costume **Terrill Maguire**

Appreciation from organizations

Elisabeth Bihl Canadian Music Centre

Gilles Comeau University of Ottawa

Monte Hummel World Wildlife Fund

Beverley Wybrow Canadian Women's Foundation

Edgelit excerpt (1998)

Music ***Soundstill I (1997 version)***

Choreographer **Rachel Browne**

Dancer **Johanna Riley**

Pianist **Shirley Grierson**

Costume **Norma Lachance**

Reflections from the music community

Simone Auger

Kye Marshall

Marjan Mozetich

Natural Resources or What to Do Till the Power Comes On (1981)

Gregory Harrison

Beverley Johnston

Jonathan Smith

Glass Houses Revisited excerpts (1981)

Revised by Ann Southam in 2009 and by Christina Petrowska-Quilico in 2010

Pianist **Christina Petrowska-Quilico**

Remembering Ann

Postlude Emerging Ground (1983)

Ann Southam, C.M. composed all the music on the program tonight.
Reception to follow in theatre lobby. All are welcome.

Ann Southam was a composer, innovator, champion of Canadian music and Member of the Order of Canada. As we will hear tonight, she was much else besides this: a passionate lover of nature; a proud feminist; a creative and inspiring philanthropist who not only wrote cheques, but also rolled up her sleeves and pitched in when necessary; a woman who inspired devotion in friends and colleagues, all of whom will miss her piercing intelligence, warmth and wit.

Ann was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba but spent most of her life in Toronto. Her most vivid musical memories of childhood were of Don Messer's fiddlers, Ravel's *Bolero* and bagpipes – early loves that later expressed themselves in the composer's fondness for drones and repetition, which she wove into her musical textures with a sophistication and subtlety that belies their apparent simplicity.

Ann began composing in her mid-teens – as “an emotional outlet,” she later said. In 1960, she began studying with Samuel Dolin at the Royal Conservatory of Music. When Dolin introduced Ann to electroacoustic music, it was love at first splice, so to speak: she went on to become a pioneer in Canadian electroacoustic music, creating works of enduring emotional power.

Ann began teaching at the Royal Conservatory of Music in 1966. That same year, she met dancer and choreographer Patricia Beatty, who had just returned to Toronto after studying with the legendary Martha Graham and was looking for a Canadian composer. The two artists hit it off, and when Beatty, Peter Randazzo and David Earle formed the Toronto Dance Theatre (TDT) in 1968, Ann came on board as composer-in-residence. The 40-odd scores that she would create for the TDT were heard on over 100 stages across North America and Europe.

Ann Southam 1937-2010

And whenever Ann wrote concert music, choreographers pounced on it. Carol Anderson, Peggy Baker, Anna Blewchamp, Rachel Browne, Danny Grossman, Christopher House, Terrill Maguire and Julia Sasso are among the many artists who have created dances to Ann's music.

While Ann's very early works could be classified as lyrical and atonal, she later adopted 12-tone procedures, though never very strictly. Her compositions, especially with a return to the piano in the 1980s, were built up out of more minimalist patterns of pitches that were pulled from a particular 12-tone row that she returned to throughout much of her musical life. These patterns would turn around one another, repeating and re-arranging in ways that Ann equated with the nature of inquiry – a constant questioning of the musical material. But her interest in lyricism was never lost: the pitch combinations and planned patterns always resulted in emerging melodies.



At about the same time that Ann became interested in minimalist music, she also discovered feminism. It was as an avowed feminist, in the face of an overwhelming maleness in Toronto new music circles, that she proudly and persistently pursued her own musical voice. This same sense of mission led her and a handful of colleagues, including Carolyn Lomax and the late Mary Gardiner, to found the Association of Canadian Women Composers in 1981.

Especially in its early days, the association lobbied vigorously on behalf of women composers and provided encouragement by commissioning, presenting and championing their works. Ann served as the Association's first president until 1988, was named a life member in 2002 and then honorary president in 2007.

By the 1990s, Ann had abandoned electroacoustic music, and was finding new inspiration in music "writ by hand to be played by hand," as she often said. She enjoyed composing for specific artists: pianist friends such as Ruth Kazdan and Jane Blackstone; the superb percussionist Beverley Johnston, and most prominently in her last decades, two pianists of very different musical temperament: Eve Egoyan and Christina Petrowska-Quilico.

Ann initially hired Petrowska-Quilico to record a demo tape of her *Glass Houses* (1981) and *Rivers* (1979-1981) series; the pianist went on to take the latter, and the dazzling *Glass Houses No. 5*, to stages and airwaves across Canada and internationally. In her last years, Southam wrote *Pond Life* and revised *Glass Houses* for Petrowska-Quilico to premiere and record.

Ann's collaboration with Egoyan began in 1997, when CBC producer David Jaeger brought the two of them together. Egoyan's deep listening powers – listening to both the subtle resonances of the piano as well as the composer's wishes – made her a cherished collaborator and inspiration in the composer's last decade.

Ann was also a devoted advocate for Canadian music in education, and a strong supporter of emerging composers. She wrote music for young musicians, was actively involved in composer-in-the-classroom programs, and for many years dedicated herself to the Alliance for Canadian New Music Projects, a national organization that fosters the study and performance of contemporary Canadian music. She was also a steadfast supporter of Arraymusic's Young Composers Workshop.

Ann rebelled against the social strictures of her time and class, surviving the “social nightmare,” as she later called it, of “growing up gay in the 1950s.” Yet she was proud to be a Southam, and took the responsibility of her lineage seriously, sharing her material wealth, often discreetly, with organizations and individuals. But apart from a youthful fondness for fast cars (which she drove with the skill and nerves of a fighter pilot), she lived simply – a true minimalist!

Like many creative women in male-dominated fields, Ann suffered from chronic self-doubt. Her financial independence was in this sense a mixed blessing: it enabled her to write what she wanted, but provided a pretext for her to question her worthiness of such good fortune. Yet an independent income cannot buy the commissions that steadily came her way, or the outstanding performers who lined up to have a new work from her.

No one wrote music like Ann’s, and there was no one like Ann -- enthusiastic, inquisitive, energetic, optimistic, enraged by the world’s injustices and intoxicated by its wonders and mysteries. She was not religious in a formal sense, but the word “spiritual” often comes up when people talk about Ann. In a 2005 interview with the CBC’s Eitan Cornfield she said,

I like the idea that the world and all of creation is just inventing itself as it goes along, and so that every decision you make, every decision that I make, is part of this, and essential to this – this evolving whatever. I quite like that. It kind of tickles my brain.

It’s a beautiful sentiment, and one that resonates throughout her life and her music. It’s one that we can carry forward, never losing sight of why Ann was so dear to so many.

TAMARA BERNSTEIN
with contributions from JASON VAN EYK



Notes

Glass Houses No.1 and No.5 (1981)

Arranged for two marimbas by Gregory Harrison

The first time I heard *Glass Houses No. 5* was in early 2009, on a Canadian Music Centre Sounds New Podcast featuring Ann Southam's works. It was performed by pianist Christina Petrowska-Quilico and choreographer Christopher House.

I was immediately drawn to this piece because of its minimalistic yet jazz-like nature. Though very repetitive, the tune felt unrestricted and free. Soon after, I decided to arrange some of the *Glass Houses* for marimba duo by splitting the two hands into four hands. I was very fortunate to perform this for Ann Southam in the fall of 2009 at the University of Toronto. It was even better when I saw the joy, enthusiasm and interest she had for my arrangements.

Gregory Harrison

Simple Lines of Enquiry (2007)

In December of 2004, Ann came by our house to deliver a simple brown folder labeled "A little 'Quiet Music' for Viva Anoush Egoyan-Rokeby", a Christmas present for my seven-month-old daughter. Within this folder were exquisite selections of early versions of *Simple Lines of Enquiry*.

At a time when I was fragile from the fatigue of early motherhood, the present, though a gift to Viva, was a gently powerful communication to the artistic me. Ann was bringing new material for the two of us to work on together, as well as inviting Viva in to the mix.

Over the next four years Ann developed the complete set of twelve movements. She and I spent many hours listening together in my studio. It felt as though we were tuning our ears to the specific vibrations of *Simple Lines of Enquiry*, a place between and beyond us. To me this music is a testament to Ann's love of nature, natural processes, the living sound of the piano and resonance moving through time and space. The response to the recording, released in 2009, temporarily lifted our spirits away from the darkness of Ann's illness.

Death was a surprise to Ann, who was imagining and starting to work out new compositions – even during a brief stay in the palliative ward of Princess Margaret Hospital. Though she is no longer physically here, we continue to be in dialogue with Ann's radiant spirit through her music, some of which I have the pleasure of sharing with you tonight.

Eve Egoyan

Pond Life (2011)

Pond Life the dance began as a commission from Ann, to choreograph a solo dance piece to a series of compositions she had written, and which she eventually titled *Pond Life*. For a choreographer/dancer to be commissioned by a composer is an unusual situation to begin with: usually, the opposite occurs. Then, to be invited (as I was by Ann) to enter into an open-ended exploration/inquiry into the essential dance-music relationship WITH the composer, is also quite unique!

But of course, there was, and is, no one like Ann. For years, I had danced in works that were choreographed to her deeply inspiring music, notably by Patricia Beatty (*Seastill* and *Emerging Ground*) as well as my own dance dating from the 1980's, Marrow. I'd admired a variety of other dance works choreographed with her music, too. But the biggest thrill was to be in the studio with Ann at the piano, composing and revising in the moment, as I quested after those movements that would best express the truth of her incredible musical distillations. I treasure those hours of pure creative exploration, with a dear friend and artistic "voyager."

Terrill Maguire

Edgelit (1998)

A gradual unfolding of longing.

I dedicated this piece to Ann in 1996, marking the beginning of our collaboration together. The full cast included several senior women dance artists whom Ann knew well.

The title of the dance is from a poem by Adrienne Rich, with permission from W.W. Norton, publisher.

Rachel Browne

Natural Resources or What to Do till the Power Comes On (1981)

Ann left me no choice but to be myself whenever we were in contact with each other. This for me was a relief and totally enlightening! I was somewhat in awe of her and I will always be influenced by her honesty both as a composer and as a human being. In 1987 I asked her to write me a solo work for vibraphone and gongs and she said "YES!" This piece, entitled *Alternate Currents*, has become a staple of the percussion repertoire and many students and professionals have subsequently performed this work.

I am proud to help realize the performance tonight of an earlier work, *Natural Resources or What to Do till the Power Comes On* -- a delightful piece written originally for the Canadian Electronic Ensemble.

Beverley Johnston

Glass Houses Revisited (2008)

Ann Southam was a close friend and musical collaborator for 30 years. She revised her 1981 *Glass Houses* for me in 2009, giving her blessing to my further 2010 revisions, which we re-titled *Glass Houses Revisited*. I played them for her a few days before her death, and she e-mailed, "I'm still blown away by the way you play *Glass Houses*. They're your pieces, for sure!!!" Her unfinished program note identifies the pieces as "minimalist music." "The best known composer of this style at the time of their composition was Philip Glass. Subsequently the minimalist music of Steve Reich, with its processes of gradual changes, has become of considerably more interest to me. The tunes in *Glass Houses* were inspired by, but do not imitate, Canadian east coast fiddle music. Generally, these tunes are spun out, one new tune at a time [...] until all tunes are present, at which point they wind back to the beginning. From time to time the process is interrupted, in the interests of rhythm. The left hand is an ostinato (drone)."

Christina Petrowska-Quilico

Reflections



It's hard to think of new music in Toronto without the Presence of Ann—Presence in the richest sense that brought depth and intensity of Being to the community. Her music manifests her Presence so generously that the finest musicians are caught in its spell as they sound her joy and wonder at the mysteries of Nature, of winds and waters. As I listen again, her Presence awes and holds me still.

Austin Clarkson



A wise person once said that at times for some the greatest distance in the universe is between our head and heart. Not so with Ann. To me she was all heart. Now, deep in the winter of my life, I still have fond memories of her beginning in the late 1950's when we first met. Life gives us challenges, obstacles and trials. Taking on a challenge can be rewarding. But when strong obstacles or hindrances are encountered, it helps to have a friend.

Ann Southam was such a friend. Her belief, enthusiasm and patronage made it possible for me to continue on the path of evolution in my work. Ann herself took on challenges in the creative realm of music, overcoming her own obstacles by doing so. Ann Southam went 'over the horizon,' but will live on through her music. She left the world a little better than she found it.

Henri van Bentum

I first came to know Ann Southam through her music, by playing *Three in Blue*, her composition in the conservatory piano book. Her music was strikingly different from the other pieces I was playing: witty, elegant, and amusing.

I came to know her personally when we were both part of the group that formed the Association of Canadian Women Composers. We held many meetings, usually at Ann's apartment, to decide on the practical operations of the organization and write the constitution.

Ann's apartment at that time was near a forested area, so in addition to listening to one another we also listened, with Ann's guidance, to the bird calls and train whistles that surrounded her home. She was listening all the time, and her music is based on that listening, and on exploring sound.

Gayle Young



The Order of Canada, of which Ann Southam was made a Member

In the beginning and the end of the year 2010, I lost two best friends and great mentors: Mary Gardiner and Ann Southam, who themselves were dear friends. In the last ten years or more, the three of us belonged to a self-organized private club named CLC, which stands for "Composers Luncheon Club." We had plenty of laughs and fun, topped with great food and music. There were also dark periods of sadness and uncertainties for me, during which Ann and Mary stood by me all the times. Mary listened well, while Ann was quick to analyze situations and offered solutions. This is the kind of true friendship I will treasure for the rest of my life.

Ann was always low-keyed about her own music, but she would be there for other composers' important premieres or even rehearsals of new works. In my case she was always interested and enthusiastic about my works. In 2007, after a performance of my theatre work *Bridge of One Hair* produced by the community-based Jumblies Theatre, Ann was chatting with the theatre director; when she learned that the children's costumes were to be auctioned, she immediately donated three thousands dollars to make sure the children kept their costumes for future performances. She never mentioned this to me until I found out later. She was just genuinely happy that she could help. This is the Ann we know who is sincere, never expects anything in return with her big-heartedness.

In April 2008, Ann looked worried and tired. She was diagnosed with lung cancer. For two years, as she struggled through surgery, chemotherapy, and various drugs treatment, I witnessed my friend's health deteriorating. She became frail, and more isolated. We managed to do our CLC meetings off and on, and whenever I saw Ann, she would keep energetic and afloat, never self-pitying. She was there for Mary Gardiner during Mary's last days, a frequent visitor at the hospital and a cheerleader for her family.

The Ann I remember is a strong and loving human being, a true artist who has a vision and a believer in beauty. Ann is my role model and I miss her dearly.

Alice Ho



As a child, I was in awe of the towering trio of Ann, Trish Beatty, and my mother, Aiko Suzuki, moving and mixing with the dancers at the parties after stunning Toronto Dance Theatre premieres. I especially remember how each of these women had a unique peal of boisterous laughter that would ring out during these loud parties and often in conversation at our house!

In memory I recall my mother's sets, Trish's elegant and deeply moving choreography - the dancers, the lighting and costumes - and, of course, Ann's wonderful music! I especially remember the surging, wild electronic music Ann composed for *Boat, River, Moon*. It's amazing to me now to think what Ann was able to achieve with analogue means!

As I grew older, my own composing came up in conversation with Ann very often. And, since she had known me since I was such a young child, she offered me an ear, asked a lot of questions, and offered me friendship - we talked about the mysteries of composing, both the difficulties, and the revelations.

Though she and my mother are both gone now, I still see Ann's bright eyes, feel her insatiable curiosity and positive energy, her support of young composers and women artists, and hear her strong, joyful, flowing music. And that wonderful peal of laughter still rings in my ears!

Chiyoko Szlavnic

Ann Southam was passionate about music education, women's issues and the world in which we live. She supported organizations like the Canadian Women's Foundation, the University of Ottawa, WWF-Canada and their initiatives, like the ones shown here.

Thanks to Ann's generosity and enthusiasm, girls all over the country are growing up strong and empowered, assisted by programs funded by the Girls' Fund at the Canadian Women's Foundation.

The Ann Southam Music Reading Fund was established to support research examining how piano students learn to read and express musical notation through well-controlled gestures at the keyboard. The University of Ottawa will also be naming a room of the Piano Pedagogy Research Laboratory in honour of Ann Southam.

Ann Southam was a loyal and long-time supporter of nature conservation through WWF-Canada. She generously donated every year for more than 20 years and extended that commitment by also remembering WWF with a gift in her Estate. Over the past two decades, Ann's support enabled numerous conservation successes for Canada, from the protection of Canadian forests to the reintroduction of endangered species like the black footed ferrets to the creation of marine protected areas on each of our coasts. WWF is extremely grateful for Ann's support, in helping to protect nature for tomorrow.



A student participates in sight-reading studies using eye-tracking technology.



Evaluating various approaches to teaching music reading.



A polar bear and her cub rest on an iceberg in the Arctic Ocean, Canada.

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National Geographic Stock /
WWF-Canada



WWF-US, WWF-Canada, and Parks Canada staff walking across the prairie at Grasslands National Park, Saskatchewan, Canada, as they prepare to release black footed ferrets (being backpacked in crates) into their natural habitat, October 2, 2009.

© WWF / Troy Fleece

For more information about Ann Southam, her music, her legacy, and upcoming performances featuring her works, please visit www.musiccentre.ca/asoutham



Ann Southam climbing out of the pit at MacMillan Theatre (c. 1974).
Ann was working the sound equipment for the Toronto Dance Theatre performances.

THE ANN SOUTHAM TRIBUTE COMMITTEE

Peggy Baker, Tamara Bernstein, Elisabeth Bihl, Rachel Browne, Eve Egoyan, Jason van Eyk, Christine Forsyth, Caroline Hughey, David Jaeger, Emma Jenkin, Beverley Johnston, Terrill Maguire, Christina Petrowska-Quilico, Julia Sasso, Ron Snippe, Molly Weaver.

Ann Southam: the creator of a legacy



A creator of electronic music, ensemble works, a stunning series of solo piano pieces, and much more; Ann Southam was the creator of a legacy. Ann left more than a gift for music and dance performers, the Canadian composer community, and all music listeners; she handed down a memory that will last forever.

As a most generous benefactor of many arts organizations, Ann particularly left a legacy to the **Canadian Music Centre** (CMC), especially through her support during the move of the CMC out of an office tower and into the Chalmers House, where the CMC remains to this day. Today, many of Ann's works are accessible in the CMC Library and catalogue, which alone includes some 60 scores, 17 CDs and 65 archival recordings.

In the 1990s, when it was discovered that the CBC was about to discard all the air-check tapes of its Canadian classical music radio programs, Ann jumped to the rescue to support the CMC in preserving this important collection for its archives. Thus was born the **Ann Southam Audio Archive**, an enduring record of Canadian composers' works in live performance. This archive expanded as composers continued to submit their recorded concert pieces and score submissions, far beyond the original van-load of open reels from the CBC. By 2007, the early audio archive was transferred to a digital online audio archive and today is featured on the CMC's extensive website.

This new *CentreStreams*, currently streaming more than 11,000 archival audio recordings has become CMC's most visited and admired site, where performers, composers, teachers, students, researchers and music lovers worldwide can listen and study Canadian music. Most recently, Ann's own tape library has been integrated with the Canadian Music Centre's Archive, allowing the music world to hear these works.

Through Canadian culture and the Canadian Music Centre, Ann's legacy lives on.

If you would like to help enhance Ann's legacy to Canadian music please consider contributing to the Canadian Music Centre **Ann Southam Legacy Fund**.

Eve Egoyan plays
for Ann Southam

On a night when you feel your life might end
listen alone, listen in the dark.
This is music talking in its sleep,
a song of glass whose shadow is silence,
ice melting in low sun.

Notes climb, disappear, resurface,
floating phosphorescent in the sea,
strings of persistent attention
quietly, slowly resolving,
then dissolving into ink.

On a night when you have gone missing,
when you are taken apart,
you want music you can nearly see:
single birch in the night forest
then another gleaming deeper, further.

The way forward,
a simple line of enquiry.

Joanne Page

my friend writes music
ruthless winged music
that makes everything out of birds
and moonlight out of thinking
it must be quiet now
and then even quieter
for her page is the sky
her destination
the silent trumpets of time.

Patricia Beatty

Obituaries

OBITUARIES DESK: 416-585-5066 » FAX: 416-585-5699 » DEATH NOTICES: 416-585-5111 » FEEDBACK TO OBIT@GLOBEANDMAIL.COM

ANN SOUTHAM, 73 COMPOSER

Minimalist sound, maximum impact

Canadian composer of new music was in search of a feminist aesthetic: 'repetitive and life-sustaining'

TAMARA BERNSTEIN

Less than 48 hours before she lost a long battle with lung cancer, the composer Ann Southam sat listening to a radio station as it broadcast the well-known Humming Chorus from Puccini's opera *Madama Butterfly*. "Imagine being at the first performance of that!" she exclaimed to a friend. "What did people think of it?"

That was Southam all over: the attentive listening; the sense of wonder, the questions (which were never rhetorical); the absence of artistic snobbery; the ability to experience everything in life as if it were a "world premiere" — even when breathing itself had become a struggle.

Southam is one of Canada's most revered composers — the creator of mesmerizing electro-acoustic pieces that helped establish modern dance in Canada, ecstatically shimmering piano-scapes such as *Glass Houses*, and the haunting, contemplative music of her last decade, including the "immense, mysterious piano piece" *Simple Lines of Enquiry*, which New Yorker critic Alex Ross included on his list of the top 10 CDs of 2009.

Southam, who was made a member of the Order of Canada earlier this year, blazed a trail for women composers in a notoriously sexist field. She was also a transformational philanthropist, a proud feminist and a woman who inspired devotion in friends and colleagues, all of whom will miss her piercing intelligence, warmth and wit — not to mention her exclamations of "holy patoot!" "jeepers!" and "what a hoot!"

Southam's path was not always easy — she battled chronic self-doubt, and endured the "social nightmare," as she called it, of "growing up gay in the 1950s." But over her half-century career, she remained true to her singular artistic voice.

"When you hear Ann's music, you know it is a piece of hers and no one else's," says pianist Eve Egoyan, for whom Southam wrote many of her late works. "This was especially unusual early in her career, when composers in this country were just starting to break away from contemporary European sound worlds."

Southam was born in Winnipeg on Feb. 4, 1937, to Joyce Mary Southam (née Lyon) and Kenneth Gordon Southam. Her father was a great-grandson of William Southam, founder of the newspaper dynasty that bore the family name, and held senior positions with Southam Press Ltd. When Ann was three, the family moved to Toronto, where she lived for the rest of her life.

As a child she studied piano in a house full of music. Her father had an extensive record collection containing both classical and popular music; her mother was "a natural pianist," and "a great storyteller," the composer said in an interview last April. "The magic and mystery of life really turned her on, and I was inspired by that. That's one of her gifts to me."

Kenneth Southam died in 1952, when Ann was 15; it was around that time that she started to compose — partly "as an emotional outlet," she said.

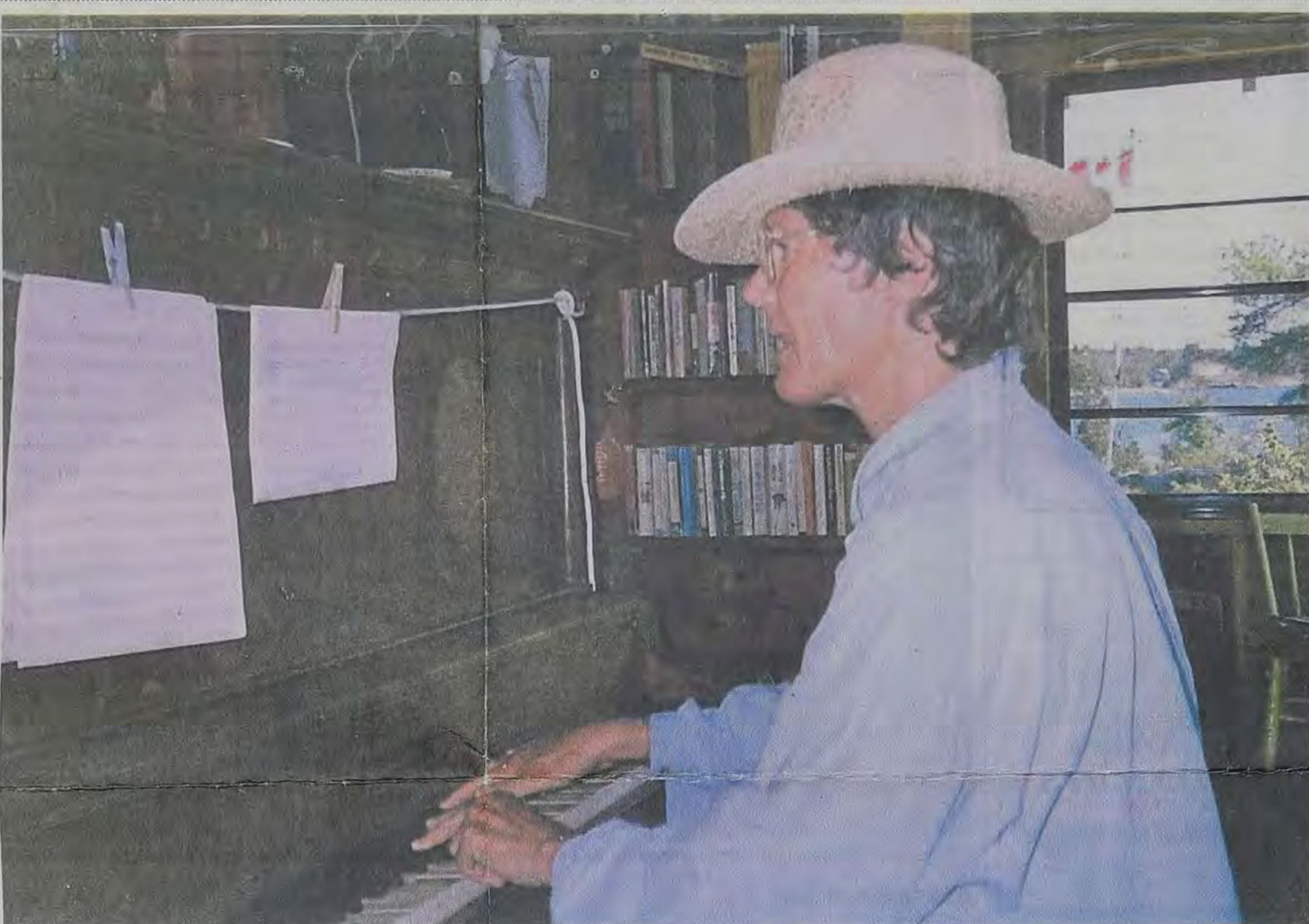
After leaving school, Southam found her way — via secretarial college and the University of Toronto's Music Faculty — to the Royal Conservatory of Music, where she studied composition with Samuel Dolin and piano with Pierre Souvairan.

Dolin created "a very free world" for his students, she said in April.

"He always felt that rules were there to be broken." And Dolin never condescended to Southam because of her gender — "we were all just composers."

Dolin introduced Southam to electronic music, and it was love at first sight, so to speak. So in 1966, when a young choreographer named Patricia Beatty asked Dolin to recommend a young Canadian composer, he sent her to Southam.

Beatty was ecstatic over the first score Southam wrote for her — *Momentum*, for a piece inspired by *Macbeth*; in 1968, when she co-founded the Toronto Dance Theatre (with Peter Randazzo and David Earle), Southam became the company's resident compos-



Above: Ann Southam during the late 1980s on an island at Pointe au Baril, Ont., on Georgian Bay. CHRISTINE FORSYTH



Left: Ann Southam, middle, with pianists Eve Egoyan, left, and Christina Petrowska-Quilico. LINDA LITWACK

er. Over the next 15 years, she would create 30-some electronic compositions for the TDT, using a Synthi AKS — a compact studio that literally fit in a small suitcase.

"Ann was one of the very extraordinary people who had a gift for creating contemporary music for dance," Patricia Fraser, the current artistic director of the School of the TDT, told *The Globe*. "Her work resonated for dance in a way that I don't know that I've seen in the last 30 years."

Choreographers invariably speak of the spaciousness of Southam's music; of the room it leaves for dance. The composer herself said last April that she "always imagined that the dancers were energy seen, and the music was energy heard. They occupied the same space, but the dancers weren't dancing to the music. [If] from time to time there might be a beat in the music, it just happened, and they might use it or not."

Most of the TDT's early works that became classics were made to Southam's music, says Christopher House, the company's current artistic director. His own first international success *Glass Houses*, which the TDT took to New York in 1985, was set to one of Southam's piano pieces.

"The music was so wonderful!" House said. "It captured something of that moment in time — an excitement about the infinite possibilities of movement; a re-awakened joy in physicality in our culture in the late 70s and early 80s." At the same time, Southam's work "connects to a deeper place," says Fraser. "It's not superficial, and that's one of the things in her music that touch young [dance] artists today."

Over the years, many other luminaries of Canada's contemporary dance scene have choreographed to Southam's music: Rachel Browne, Danny Grossman, Anna Blewcham, Carol Anderson, Peggy Baker, Julia Sasso, Terrill Maguire ...

The dance world, where sexuality was "higglety-pigglety," as Southam famously told *The Globe* in 2009, also provided her

with a social haven from the straight world. But in the 1980s, she stopped writing specifically for dance, and abandoned electronic music. For one thing, the new digital, computer-based technology didn't allow her the serendipitous "partnership" that she had enjoyed with her Synthi.

Southam also had discovered feminism, and became frustrated by the persistence of stereotypical women's roles in contemporary choreography.

"I just was wishing for more," she said in April. "I was looking for a way of writing music that would have a feminist aesthetic, because what was thought of as feminist music back in those days was usually vocal music, and it would be the words that would give the feminist meaning. I wanted something where the very workings of the music would reflect a feminist aesthetic."

Southam found the answer in minimalism — music in which simple musical materials are subject to a process of subtle change, over many repetitions.

"Traditional women's work" — activities like weaving, knitting, mending, washing dishes — is likewise "repetitive and life-sustaining," Southam told *The Globe* in 1997. "It takes great patience. It doesn't have the big climaxes that lead to something new, and often there's nothing to show for it at the end. ... I see 'process music' [i.e., minimalism] as the perfect way of expressing this, and as a wonderful metaphor for life."

Southam discovered process music through American minimalists Terry Riley and Steve Reich. But her minimalist music is unique, its emotional impact all out of proportion to the simplicity of her musical materials.

Egoyan, sister of Canadian filmmaker Atom Egoyan, has spoken of a persistent note of questioning that runs through Southam's music; there is also a constant play of tonality and atonality; of stability and emotional "homelessness." Southam said she literally saw "a red dissonant line" running through the consonant elements of her music. "Isn't that life, in a way: trying to accommo-

date dissonance?"

This ambiguity; the openness to instability, gives Southam's music its depth and humanity, and its enduring fascination. But the disquiet in her music is in constant dialogue with a fundamental optimism, a life force that seems rooted in Southam's passionate love of nature.

That love is reflected in the titles of such pieces as *Rivers* and *Song of the Varied Thrush*. And you can hear it in Southam's voice on the Centredisc documentary, when she describes the thrill of standing in a field, listening to the singing of frogs, birds, crickets. "I guess that is also a metaphor for life — this constant song!" she said.

A true minimalist, Southam lived modestly — her wardrobe consisted largely of immaculate sweats, and shirts that she purchased at a convenience store for \$19.99. She liked a bare fridge, and savoured the moment in fall when the last of the leaves fell, revealing the dancer-like "bones" of the trees.

For much of her life, Southam was modest to the point of self-deprecation about her talent and achievements. She had, of course, a sense of humour about it. When a concert presenter asked her to supply a couple of press quotes, Southam gleefully sent two favourites: "staggeringly boring" (from the *Montreal Gazette*); and "a rather shadowy presence on the new-music scene" (from an admiring review in *The Globe*).

One reason Southam had difficulty accepting herself as a serious, let alone major, composer was the fact that she had an independent income.

"Sadly, that negated all her artistic achievements in her own eyes," her brother Kip once said. But an independent income didn't buy Southam the commissions that steadily came her way, from the performers, presenters, choreographers and the CBC.

And the composer used her wealth with exceptional responsibility and generosity. As a philanthropist, she was not interested in stars. Just as she'd anxiously monitor the progress

of fledgling mourning doves outside her window, she liked to support individuals at vulnerable stages of their lives and careers — penniless young artists, senior dancers transitioning into new careers, wildlife threatened with destruction. In 1980 she co-founded, and heavily supported, the Association of Canadian Women Composers, which commissioned and presented concerts of music by women who were being shut out of mainstream programming. Her seven-figure support of the Canadian Women's Foundation focused on its programs for girls.

And Southam didn't just write cheques: She donated countless hours to institutions like the Canadian Music Centre and the CWF.

Although she never ceased questioning the ways of the world, and her own life, in her later years she seemed to have made her peace with life, even as her music moved deeper and deeper to its still point.

The self-deprecation tapered off to the occasional reflexive wisecrack.

She still raged at misogyny, but the Canadian Women's Foundation gave her a positive philanthropic outlet. She enjoyed a close, trusting bond with pianists Egoyan and Christina Petrowska-Quilico, for whom she wrote exclusively in her last decade. She enthusiastically declared the 70s the best decade of life.

So the cancer diagnosis in April, 2008, was an especially cruel blow. (Southam had stopped smoking decades before.)

She treated her illness as a journey of discovery. As ever, she listened: to the life stories of fellow patients and care workers, which fascinated her; to the noise of MRI scans, which she heard as strange new music.

She adopted Olivia, the indomitable true girl/pig of Ian Raconer's children's books, as a kind of alter ego. And she kept composing, up until a few days before her death.

On the morning of Nov. 25, a neighbour was startled to hear a robin singing its heart out, as if it were spring, outside the composer's house.

Shortly afterward, Southam slipped from sleep into a coma, and never returned.

"There was a size to her work," Beatty said. "She was very Canadian in the best sense. I'm not talking about being diffident and careful. I'm talking about the size of the land — the scale and the space — and the size of the psyche and spirit that can go with that. That was Ann."

The Canadian Music Centre is organizing a public celebration of Southam's life and music, to take place in the new year.

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