

# Udo Kasemets



Born Estonia, 1919. Studied in Estonia and in Germany, among others with Ernst Krennek, before coming to Canada in 1951. Formerly piano and composition teacher in Hamilton and Toronto, choral conductor, accompanist and music critic. Currently lecturer and promoter of avant-garde programmes. Editor of the BMI Canavangard series. Affiliated with BMI Canada.

## LIST OF WORKS

September 1969

### Orchestral

- \* Recitative and Rondino (1954)  
(based on songs of the Copper Eskimos)  
string orchestra
- Sinfonietta (1959)  
small orchestra

### Orchestra with Soloist(s)

- \* Concerto for Violin and Orchestra (1955-57)  
full orchestra
- \* Passacaglia (1959)  
solo flute, solo violin, medium orchestra

### Chamber Music

- \* Trio for Violin, Viola and Cello, Op. 33 (1954)
- \* Sonata da Camera, Op. 40 (1955)  
cello solo
- \* Recitative and Fugue for 2 Violoncelli, Op. 41a (1955)
- \* Quintet for Wind Instruments, Op. 48 (1957)  
flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, bassoon
- \* Sonata Concertante, Op. 50 (1957)  
violin, viola, cello, piano
- \* 12 Easy Duets (1964)  
(based on well-known songs) 2 recorders BMI
- \* Timepiece (1964)  
solo performer or ensemble BMI Canavangard
- \* Calceolaria (1966)  
(Time/space variations on a floral theme)  
any number of performers in any media BMI Canavangard
- \* Contactics (1966)  
(a choreography for musicians and audience)  
BMI Canavangard
- \* Variations [on Variations (on Variations)] (1966)  
basic version scored for singer, instrumentalist (playing  
any one or more instruments) and one or two stereophonic  
tapes BMI Canavangard
- \* Octagonal Octet and/or Ode (1967)  
(a calceolaria (time/space) variation based on I Ching  
Trigrams and Hexagrams and (optional) words extracted from  
Ezra Pound's Confucian Odes)  
octet: 8 performers, any media  
ode: 1, 2, 4 or 6 performers BMI Canavangard

### Choral

- \* Choroelae Gaudiae, Op. 32 (1952)  
(4 Old English Christmas Carols)  
SAT with piano
- \* Two Songs for Male Voices (1957)  
TTBB

### Vocal

- \* Poetic Suite, Op. 37 (1954)  
(to poems by Kathleen Raine)  
soprano, piano, string orchestra
- \* The Thousand Nights and One Night, Op. 39 (1954)  
(to anonymous Arabian lyrics from the 13th century;  
translation by E. Powys Mathers) voice, piano
- \* Canciones, Op. 42 (1955-56)  
(to poems by Federico Garcia Lorca)  
high voice, flute, guitar
- \* Three Miniatures (1956)  
(to poems by P. B. Shelley)  
voice, piano BMI
- \* Two Symphonic Songs (1956)  
(to words by Dylan Thomas)  
voice, piano
- \* Five Songs for Children (1964)  
voice, piano BMI

### Piano

- \* Piano Sonata, Op. 24 No. 1 (1951)
- \* Six Preludes for Piano, Op. 30 (1952)  
Prelude No. 2 published in  
"14 Piano Pieces by Canadian Composers"  
F. Harris
- \* 5  $\sqrt{5}$  (1962-63)  
2 pianos BMI Canavangard
- \* 1 + 1 - one plus one - volume 2  
(10 easy pieces on well-known songs) BMI
- \* Squares (1969)  
piano 4 hands BMI Canavangard

\* In the library of CMC  
(MS unless otherwise stated)



**Q.** What first interested you in music?

**A.** The sounds of human voices.

**Q.** What have been your most profound musical experiences?

**A.** . . . hearing the "ST. MATTHEW PASSION" for the first time . . . hearing "THE ART OF FUGUE" for the first time . . . hearing Varèse's "IONISATIONS" for the first time . . . entering New York's Town Hall during a rehearsal and hearing the gentle sounds of Morton Feldman's "SWALLOW OF SALAGAN" revolving and floating about the auditorium . . . later that evening seeing and hearing Max Neuhaus manipulate the extended silences and diminutive sonorities of the same composer's "VERTICAL THOUGHTS V" . . . hearing a chorus of birds improvise during the hours of dusk in the northern woods . . . hearing the premiere of the ultimate musical composition of the 1960s: John Cage's and Lejaren Hiller's "HPSCHD" . . .

**Q.** Who is your favourite composer?

**A.** Any and all composers of integrity and imagination, of prophetic vision and pioneering spirit (Charles Ives, Edgard Varèse), of probing mind and uncompromising idealism (John Cage), of technological inventiveness and artistic ambitiousness (Gordon Mumma, Max Neuhaus), of profound humanity and cultivated sensitivity (Morton Feldman, George Cacioppo), of exploring intellect and distinct personality (Toshi Ishiyangi, Pauline Oliveros).

**Q.** What are the extra-musical influences in your work, if any?

**A.** The ideas, concepts and observations of Buckminster Fuller, Marshall McLuhan, Norman O. Brown, Henry Thoreau, the writings of James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, Gertrude Stein, the poetry of e. e. cummings, Charles Olson, Ezra Pound, Jackson MacLow, the choreography of Merce Cunningham, Yvonne Rainer, Lucinda Childs, Judith Dunn, Steve Paxton, Alex Hay, and much visual and cinematic art from Marcel Duchamp to Michael Snow.

**Q.** How much time do you give to composition?

**A.** My life isn't compartmentalized. Whatever I think, feel, do, has an effect on all my other

thinkings, feelings, doings. Hence, there is no special time given to composition: all time is given to composition.

**Q.** By which of your works would you most like to be known?

**A.** I am a temporal man. My work is temporal. To me it has significance only at the moment of its doing. If it is important to be known at all, I prefer to be known by what I *am* doing rather than by what I have already done.

**Q.** Is there, or ought there to be, a distinctive Canadian music?

**A.** Distinctive Canadian music died its death when the white man took the land from Eskimos and Indians and imported his own brand of music based on Greek theories, written down in Italian notation and duplicated on German-invented printing presses.

**Q.** What should be the place and pattern of music in general education?

**A.** The quest is the survival of mankind. The quest is to cope intelligently with the technological revolution. The quest is to cultivate a new breed of man of deep humanity, far vision and open mind. . . . All education has to lead toward these ends. . . . Integrated teaching of sciences, humanities and arts. . . . Music and other arts to create a new alertness of senses, a keen understanding of the independent and interactive workings of natural phenomena, the foundations of creative thinking. . . . Arts to help to build a bridge between technology and humanities. . . . Arts to establish new channels of communication. . . . Arts to develop a man of universal thought and feeling.

**Q.** What interests you most, and what do you most deplore in current trends in composition?

**A.** I am fascinated by any and all artworks which offer new insights into the miraculous micro- and macroworld within and around us. The rest doesn't interest me.

**Q.** What is your favourite form of music?

**A.** It's not form but content that matters. The contents of music are sounds. Among the many sounds I love, my favourites are still the sounds of human voices.