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This Week:

FRENCH CANADA TODAY: A ROUND-TABLE SERIES

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QUENTIN MACLEAN: A MASTER OF MOOD MUSIC

HERE'S an organist with a phenomenal memory. More often than not he plays with no printed score. In radio, the producer has only to make sure there's a copy of the script on the music rack, and Quentin Maclean will deliver a background skilfully matched to the mood of the program. Currently, he provides organ accompaniment for the *Maurice Bodington Show* daily, for *Bob's Scrapbook* on Sundays, and for J. Frank Willis' *Nocturne* on Tuesdays. In this photograph, he is seen at the organ of the Holy Rosary Church in Toronto. For more about him, and the organ, please turn to page 2.

• An opportunity for English-speaking Canadians to find out more about how their French-speaking compatriots live and think in 1951 will be provided by a series of round-table discussion programs, scheduled to start on Thursday, September 20th — 8:00 p.m. on Trans-Canada. Most of the participants will be bilingual Canadians whose principal tongue is French and the chairman will be Gerard Pelletier, prominent Montreal journalist and broadcaster, and editor of *Le Travail*, a newspaper sponsored by the Confederation of Catholic Workers of Canada. He is also chairman of *Les Jeunes en Marche*, the French-network equivalent of

Citizens' Forum. Within the last 10 years, Quebec has changed from a rural province to an industrial one and this has revolutionized the whole pattern of life. No longer is it the "habitant" province of the tourist-folders. The industrial revolution has created new relationships between the worker and his "patron"; between the priest and his parishioners. New and old attitudes towards the traditional culture are in conflict. It is these problems which will be dealt with in the discussions.

There will be four of them, on consecutive Thursdays, and they will take in industry and labor, the church, the culture and foreign affairs. The same chairman and panels will broadcast a similar series on the French network. It is the first time the Trans-Canada and French networks have worked jointly to present in both languages and on both networks a series of discussions on some important Canadian topic. (A summary of the four programs will be found on page 10.)

'Background Music' Which Can Steal the Show

For 12 years, Quentin Maclean's organ accompaniments have been a stock feature of Canadian radio shows

NOCTURNE was on the air. In the studios, J. Frank Willis was reading a poem to a background of organ music by Quentin Maclean. For Frank, there was something special about the poem and as he read it, bringing to life every mood and picture that the poet had described, he knew it was a first-class delivery. It had to be because it was Frank's favorite poem. In the control-room the phone rang. The operator answered, "Could you please tell me," a listener enquired, "the name of that lovely piece of music Quentin Maclean is playing?"

Without detracting from Frank's reading or his choice of poetry, this incident is typical of the effect that Quentin Maclean can achieve on the organ. He is more than a musical accompanist to a program. He is an integral part of the show.

Quentin Maclean, who was born in London, England, in 1896, comes from a musical family. His father was the director of music for the Scarborough Spa for 24 years. After a general education by private tutors, Quentin was sent to the Conservatory of Music at Leipzig where he studied the organ under the eminent German organist, conductor and composer Karl Strube. He also studied composition with Max Reger, whose disregard for the conventional harmonic limitations caused much of his music to be called "revolutionary". Quentin's first public recital was in Leipzig when, at the age of 13, he played the organ at the Bach Festival Church. Five years later he was the soloist at the Bach Festival which was held in Leipzig.

After the First Great War — he was interned at Rubleben for the duration — he went back to England and was appointed assistant organist at Westminster Cathedral. In 1920 he went on an English tour as the organist for Lowell Thomas's travelogue "With Allenby in Palestine". It was his introduction to the film industry, and the following year he became the organist at the Fulham Grand Theatre.

His career during the late 20's and 30's reads like a directory of London cinemas. He played at the Globe in the Regal Marquee Arch and the Trocadero at the Elephant and Castle. He began broadcasting in 1925 when he gave the first British theatre organ program to be heard over the air, from the Shepherd's Bush Pavilion. Ten years later, with three other British organists, he took part in a program inaugurating the BBC's own theatre organ. During the remaining years of peace he was featured in numerous shows over the networks of the BBC, on Radio Hilversum, Radio Luxembourg and the overseas service of the BBC.

As a composer he has 16 works to his credit. His Concerto for Organ and Orchestra was performed at the

Winter Gardens in Bournemouth in 1935 under the direction of Sir Dan Godfrey, one of the eminent musical figures of the 30's. Among his other compositions are four Masses, all of which have been sung at the Holy Rosary Church in Toronto. There are also scores by him for solo harp, string quartet, a trio for piano, viol and cello, and a *Sinfonia Mater* for tenor and chorus. Recently he completed a concerto for electric organ or Novachord.

He decided to come to Canada in 1939 and when his ship was almost turned back at Cherbourg, he thought the end of the world had come. When he finally saw the shores of Canada he decided, like so many other immigrants, that life was really just beginning.

Shortly after his arrival in Toronto he started appearing as the regular organist at Shea's Theatre and began

his association with actor-producer J. Frank Willis. In those days the CBC Toronto studios were on Davenport Road and on one occasion Frank had to read poetry in the studio while Quentin played the organ in the theatre. They "flew blind" without any inter-communication whatsoever. The net result was a perfect program, just as if they had been sharing a single studio. Frank has said that Quentin is probably the finest musician in Toronto and was certainly one of the finest organists in the Old Country.

"But," Frank continued, "the truly amazing thing about Quentin is his phenomenal memory. I remember one occasion when I thought the music used in the roadshow of the original version of *Ono Vadis* would be appropriate. I could only remember snatches of the melody so I asked Quentin if he could recall it. Do you

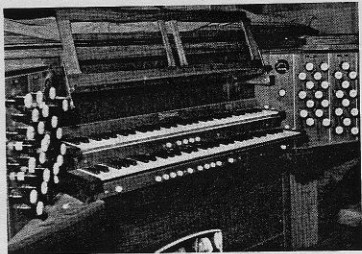
know, he sat down at the organ and after a minute he played it straight through as if it had been written the day before. He admitted later that he hadn't heard it for 30 years. That man doesn't need a score because he seems to carry the entire music library around in his head — note for note!

"Sometimes the program has been called Quentin Maclean at the organ with background poetry by Willis", Frank continued with a grimace, "but one of the funniest things that ever happened to us was on the day we moved to the Jarvis Street studios. Quentin and I were due to make a broadcast and as rehearsal began we heard a little scuffling noise inside the organ. Somewhere in the mass of pipes there was a mouse and we spent the entire rehearsal period chasing the little brute. We never caught him, but fortunately he didn't disturb the show. I think that when Quentin started to play, the mouse got out as quickly as it could."

In 1940, Quentin met Kay Stevenson who produces the *Maurice Bodington Show* nightly. They have been working together ever since. Kay is every bit as enthusiastic as Frank about Quentin's work. She remarked: "His days in silent films have given him a wonderful aptitude and library. In fact he could fill the entire show minutes with musical ad lib. Just now, 50 per cent of his music is from a score and the other half from his head. Of course, he is quite ready to turn his hand to improvisation whenever it is necessary. Sometimes I have heard him play music that was so perfectly in keeping with the script that it was difficult to believe that it was being played *ex tempore*. And if you want effects, Quentin can trick them all out of the organ — from bagpipes to express trains entering a tunnel. In fact you never can be quite sure what he is going to play next. But you can be certain it will be appropriate."

Four years ago he began to play for the *Maurice Bodington Show*. Maurice is convinced that Quentin has developed an uncanny sense of timing. After working out the script, Maurice turns it over to him and he works out the background music. Sometimes during a long piece of prose or poetry Quentin will change tempo or mood to tie in with the thought behind Maurice's words. The only difficulty Maurice finds with this routine is when Quentin produces some whimsical musical remark to the script. "I just don't know how to stop myself from laughing out loud," Maurice added.

Last year Quentin was transferred from Shea's Theatre to the Victoria where he played for one season. Just now his radio commitments keep him very busy but there is always time for the choir rehearsal at the Holy Rosary Church and he plays the organ there every Sunday.



A view of the organ in Holy Rosary Church, Toronto, seen also on our cover. The instrument was built by Casavant Freres in 1949 to a specification prepared by Quentin Maclean, in consultation with Stephen Stoot. In a technical vein, Maclean says: "This organ is an attempt to combine some of the best features of the 'baroque' and 'romantic' schools of organ design in an instrument of quite modest dimensions. Each manual division provides a complete and independent fine ensemble, approximately equal in power but well-contrasted in tone-quality, similar to the 'Hauptwerk' and 'Oberwerk' of the organs of the Bach period. Both the Great and Swell sections are under expression, there being no fewer than 64 shutters on the Swell side. The Pedal division is unenclosed, consisting of Bourdon, Gemshorn-Quint (10½'), metal octave, and trombone, each available in unison and octave pitch; the enclosed manual doubles are also playable in this department, giving the grand total of 12 Pedal speaking-stops, quite an innovation in a two-manual organ. Unusual mechanical features are the provision of a tremulant to the Great division, and the placing of the coupler draw-knobs alongside those of the Swell, instead of over the top keyboard as usual. This makes for a better-balanced console layout in a small organ. Some interesting tonal departures from the standard pattern are found in the Schulte-type diapason chorus; the Swell 'trompette' — a real, fiery French specimen; the Spitz-Flute celeste on the Great; and the unified gamba on Swell and Pedal, which serves in a three-fold capacity as a bright Swell principal, a flue oboe and a string bass all in one — truly a remarkable example of tonal versatility."