



Ann Southam is a Canadian composer born Winnipeg on 4 February, 1937 and died in Toronto on 25 November, 2010. Early on, Ann Southam was interested in visual arts, but she turned to composing at age 15 after attending a summer music camp at the Banff School (now The Banff Centre). After studies with Samuel Dolin (composition) at the Royal Conservatory of Music and with Pierre Souvairan (piano) and Gustav Ciamaga (electronic music) 1960-3 at the University of Toronto, she began teaching at the Royal Conservatory of Music in 1966. Her association with the New Dance Group of Canada (later Toronto Dance Theatre) began in 1967, and she became composer-in-residence in 1968. She composed many electronic scores for this company, and for other dance companies and choreographers. In 1977, with Diana McIntosh,

she helped to create Music Inter Alia, which promoted Winnipeg new music concerts until 1991.

Southam's early works were written in a Romantic style (ie, expressive music predominant in the 19th century). She later adopted 12-tone procedures, though never strictly. In the 1980s, Southam began drawing away from electronic music, while simultaneously developing an increasing interest in music by American minimalists Terry Riley and Steve Reich. *Glass Houses* (1981), for example, is constructed from short tonal units that combine and re-combine, creating an overall sense of lyricism. Around this time, Southam made an important professional ally when she hired the pianist Christina Petrowska-Quilico to record a demo tape of parts of *Glass Houses* and *Rivers* (1979-81, rev. 2004). The inspiration she found in such collaborative relationships inspired Southam to write an increasing number of works for acoustic instruments. In 1988, she composed *Throughways*, for chamber orchestra, with no electronic element. A commission of the Music Gallery, the work was premiered there by the Hemispheres Orchestra 9 Nov 1989.

In the 1990s Southam abandoned electroacoustic writing, creating wholly instrumental works such as *Song of the Varied Thrush* (1991) for string quartet; *Webster's Spin* (1993) for string orchestra, commissioned by the CBC and premiered by the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra 22 Mar 1994; and *Full Circles* (1996, rev. 2005) for Arraymusic. Later she began collaborating with Eve Egoyan, who premiered *Qualities of Consonance* (1998) at the Music Gallery 28 May 1999; *Figures* (2001) with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra at the Massey Hall New Music Festival 22 Nov 2001; *In Retrospect* (2004) 26 Mar 2004; and *Simple Lines of Enquiry* (2008) at Toronto's Enwave Theatre 30 May 2009. The Manitoba Chamber Orchestra premiered *Music for Strings* 20 Sep 2000. In July 2006 Angela Pickett, Teresa Doyle, and Kate Poole performed an acoustic version of *Re-Tuning* in St. John's. Christina Petrowska Quilico gave the first complete performance of *Rivers* in May 2005 at the Music Gallery in Toronto, and premiered Southam's *Pond Life* for solo piano in 2008 at the Sound Symposium in St. John's.

Ann Southam's earlier works, especially for piano, are lyrical atonal pieces. Lyricism remains an important element of the later electronic scores and of such works as *Counterparts* for orchestra and tape and *CounterPlay*, a CBC commission for string quartet and tape. *Of Waves* (based on electronic wave forms), commissioned and premiered (1 Apr 1976) by Milton Barnes's Toronto Repertory Orchestra, John Kraglund wrote: "Its cycles of sounds were effectively achieved by the location of sections of the orchestra in a semi-circle... While there was an element of chance music in the style, the effect was pretty controlled... alternating long lyrical lines with angular, staccato phrases - interrupted by silences."

Southam's return to acoustic composition also came about in part through an interest in the physicality of performing. *Four in Hand* (1981), written for pianists Jane Blackstone and Ruth Kazdan, is a single-

movement work for piano four hands that uses free 12-tone harmony and motifs, which lead to a closing D major chord. The composition essentially has the performer "blasting about the keyboard" (Musicworks, Summer 1998). It also demonstrates Southam's predilection for reconciling the 12-tone system with traditional practices. *Re-Tuning* (1985), however, is more indicative of the direction Southam's music took in years to come. Made up of 25 modular sections that are repeated and spun rapidly one into another over an electronic drone, this piece was heavily influenced by Southam's collaboration with Rivka Golani.

Southam is one of Canada's first prominent women composers. When she came of age as a composer, in the 1960s, it was comparatively uncommon for women to be recognized in the field of music composition, and for any composer, regardless of gender, to be recognized in the burgeoning field of electronic music. She was on the vanguard of a generation that profoundly and positively changed the landscape and social mechanics of contemporary Canadian music. Southam, an avowed feminist, proudly - and even provocatively - incorporated this change in her music. In *Musicworks* (no. 101, Summer 2008), Eve Egoyan and Gayle Young observed that for Southam, ". . . there is a close connection between composing for or playing the piano and other forms of work done by hand, such as weaving, that reflect the nature of traditional women's work - repetitive, life-sustaining, requiring time and patience. But through it all, runs a thread of questioning"

Southam was a member of the Canadian League of Composers; and a founding member, first president 1980-8, life member (2002) and honorary president (2007) of the Association of Canadian Women Composers. She was a sponsor for new music events, eg the *Excentricities* (1998) concert featuring women composers; the *Arraymusic* Young Composers' Workshop; and *Continuum Contemporary Music*. She was also an associate of the Canadian Music Centre, which named its recording collection the Ann Southam Digital Audio Archive. She received the Friends of Canadian Music Award in 2002. In 2010 Southam was named a Member of the Order of Canada. A forthcoming book on Southam's life and music was announced in 2011. The project is under the direction of Christina Petrowska Quilico and composer Constantine Caravassilis.

Christina Petrowska Quilico premiered the complete set of *Rivers* and recorded them for Centrediscs in 2005. She has also recorded Southam's *Pond Life* which includes 4 pieces written for Petrowska Quilico. In 2010 she recorded *Glass Houses Revisited* by Southam who wrote the pieces in 1981 and revised them in 2009. Petrowska Quilico, with Southam's blessing revised and edited the set in 2010 and performed them to acclaim at the Glenn Gould Studio in Toronto.

Rivers and Glass Houses require crisp articulation on the part of the performer to bring out the harmonic changes within the continually evolving rhythmic patterns. The effect is hypnotic, calming and exhilarating at the same time. The music is characterized by a flow and energy produced by the rhythmic cycles which repeat within interchanging melodic motifs.