



André MATHIEU

Concerto for piano and orchestra No. 4

René André Rodolphe Mathieu (18 February 1929-20 June 1968) was a Canadian pianist and composer, born in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, in the parish of Saint-Jacques-le-Majeur to father Rodolphe Mathieu and mother Wilhemine Gagnon-Mathieu. As a very young child he revealed an exceptional talent for the piano and for composition, which encouraged his father, Rodolphe, to give him his first lessons. He composed *Trois Études* for piano at four and gave a recital of his works 25 Feb 1935 at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, creating a sensation. Early in 1936 he was soloist in his *Concertino No. 1* on CBC radio with an orchestra under J.-J. Gagnier. He was given a grant by the Quebec government to go to Paris to study piano with Yves Nat and Mme Giraud-Latarse and harmony and composition with Jacques de la Presle. In December 1936 his recital at the Salle Chopin-Pleyel was received enthusiastically by Parisian critics. He again performed his works 26 Mar 1939 at the Salle Gaveau, and the critic Émile Vuillermoz wrote, "If the word 'genius' has a meaning, it is surely here that we will be able to find it." Mathieu was only ten years old, and Vuillermoz added..." I declare that at the same age Mozart had written nothing comparable."

Mathieu returned to Montreal the following summer only for a holiday, but the war compelled him to remain in North America. He gave a series of recitals in Canada and made a remarkable debut 3 Feb 1940 at New York's Town Hall. Settling in New York with his family, he continued his studies in composition with Harold Morris, at the same time fulfilling numerous concert and radio engagements. In 1941 he premiered his *Concertino No. 2* in Montreal with the Concerts symphoniques de Montréal (Montreal Symphony Orchestra). The same year, the work won first prize (\$200) in a young composers' competition organized by the New York Philharmonic to mark its centenary. Mathieu performed it 21 Feb 1942 at Carnegie Hall and again shortly thereafter with the National Orchestral Association, New York City. He also played his compositions at a concert of the League of Composers.

Mathieu returned to Montreal in 1943 and gave numerous recitals, performing Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Debussy, Liszt, and Ravel, as well as his own works. On 18 Nov 1945 he presented his most recent compositions, including a *Sonata* for violin and piano, at the Windsor Hotel. In the autumn of 1946 he returned to Paris for a year to study composition with Arthur Honegger and piano with Jules Gentil. In 1947 he wrote a third "romantic" concerto for piano and orchestra; an abridged version, titled the *Quebec Concerto*, was played by Neil Chotem in the Canadian film *La Forteresse* (in English, *Whispering City*).

Piano Concerto No.4 was completed in 1947, this is his third "romantic" concerto for piano and orchestra; an abridged version, titled the *Quebec Concerto*, was played by Neil Chotem in the Canadian film *La Forteresse*. It also appeared on several of Mathieu's concert programs between 1948 and 1955, but for many years there was no complete record of its score. However, Mathieu had a performance of this piece recorded on 78 rpm discs at a concert on December 7, 1950 in the Ritz Carlton of Montreal, and gave the recording to a woman friend. In 2005, while Alain Lefevre's work to revive Mathieu's work was underway, the woman met Lefevre backstage after a Concerto de Québec, and delivered to him the recordings. Lefevre worked with conductor and composer Gilles Bellemare to reconstruct and publicize the composition, and on December 10, 2013, 70 years after the last of Mathieu's three appearances on stage at Carnegie Hall in New York City, Lefevre appeared at Carnegie Hall and gave the New York premiere of Mathieu's previously lost Piano Concerto No.4.