

## **Episode 06: Getting the Song Out with Matthew Fava - Transcript**

Elizabeth McDonald:

Hello everyone and welcome to the GETTING THE SONG OUT podcast! We are WOMEN ON THE VERGE

I'm Elizabeth!

Emily Martin:

I'm Emily!

Kathryn Tremills:

I'm Kathryn!

During COVID-19 we realized that we needed to keep the art song world at the forefront of the conversation. We had been talking about this project for a long time and Quarantine was the perfect time to connect with new and old friends across the country - incredible Canadian female composers ...

Kathryn Tremills

Today we are switching things up from composers to a guest who is a huge advocate and supporter of composers. Matthew Fava is the Director of the Ontario Region of the Canadian Music Centre. Sound clips on today's podcast are taken from artists mentioned and recommended to us by Matthew during his interview. We've just heard Beverly Glenn-Copeland's "Ever New".

Based at the CMC in Toronto, Matthew is an outspoken supporter of female and female-identified composers and is a person that is welcoming to all creators. His vision for the community, his thoughtfulness in his programming and his general awesomeness anytime we have worked with him, made him a perfect guest for our special episode of Getting the Song Out.

Here is the first part of our interview with Matthew from July 2020.

Kathryn Tremills:

Matthew, it's so great to have you here with us, and we're so excited to chat with you today on the podcast, as you're the director of the Ontario branch of the Canadian Music Center doing such incredible work, working for such important causes and projects. We're really curious how you got here. What is your story? What was your journey up to this point?

Matthew Fava:

It's a really lovely question to be asked, and I've had a couple of opportunities to reflect on that. So first I'll just reiterate my thanks to you, inviting me to be here. It is a pleasure to be here and

being here largely because I am a staff member at the CMC. Yeah, it's an important story to reflect on and there are a few components to this. On the one hand, I am here because my parents paid for music lessons when I was a kid, you know, let's just start at that point. I was very lucky that my parents could afford music lessons for me. And when I went into high school, I likewise pursued music. I was fascinated by music. I connected to music. I enjoy listening and creating it and sharing it with people.

So that has been encoded in my being, in my living for quite a long time. What really propelled me towards the CMC specifically, is that I spent a number of years working and volunteering in campus based community radio and it's through a community based or community oriented approach to journalism, to music programming that I started to think about what music we were being shown or what music was being shared actively through - let's say - just broadly mainstream media, and what was absent from that. But at an early point in my volunteering in campus-based media, I remember thinking about my interest in classical music, specifically Western European classical music as a violin player, and I started to wonder why I hadn't heard Canadian compositions as part of my training. Why I hadn't - I couldn't think of a single name of a composer, and furthermore, why couldn't think of a single female composer I had ever performed, I'd ever studied.

So these questions were swirling in my mind, and I happened to be at York University campus specifically when I started to ask these questions. And so I went to the sound and moving image library, and I just looked in their catalogue for Canadian composers, and, you know, and Ann Southam came up, specifically this portrait CD that was produced by Centrediscs, and that was my introduction to the Canadian Music Center, this outlet that was specifically championing the works of these Canadian composers, and through that recording project, the Canadian composer portrait series, and Centrediscs profiling a number of Canadian performers interpreters. And so I spent a lot of time listening at that point, and then a lot of time thinking through how I might share that in the context of a radio broadcast. I ended up doing my radio show at two o'clock in the morning, overnight on Mondays, but that was okay. But I think what's really important in my bringing up that slot is that I was programming directly after the bigger than hip hop, a hip hop show. That's programmed by a colleague of mine named Mark Campbell, and others. But Mark I'll bring up in particular because at the same time that I was spending time, devoting time to learning and thinking about Canadian composition in my experiences at the radio station, I was facilitating a whole variety of communities accessing this resource, this broadcast resource, accessing a shared space, participating in live performances. We were bringing the radio and radio team to remote broadcasts throughout the community. So whether that was proximal to the radio station on your campus, just outside in the communities, around Jane and Finch, or elsewhere throughout Toronto, and that was, that was important to me because I was able to see - I was taught, I was able to learn through the peers that I was interacting with, the communities I was interacting with, that the same kind of marginalization that certain experimental musics might experience.

There are versions of that that are impacting a number of communities, racialized communities, but also folks with disabilities, also queer and trans communities, that there are a number of

communities or individuals and identities that are marginalized within the kind of popular imagined culture of Canada. The popular imagined culture of North America or English speaking people, and what I was able to understand through my work in radio, through my work developing programming individually or collaboratively, or with other volunteers and other staff, is that we do make a number of choices. We make choices about what we want to listen to what we want to read, where we go to find information about these various artifacts - historical and contemporary.

So we can make active choices to engage with a wider array of - in this case - composed works of poetry of literature and so on. So there is a lot that I'm kind of glossing over as far as the significance of my time at CHRY, the community radio station, where I worked, but the ethos of that space, the fact that that space was overtly anti -racist, anti sexist, anti homophobic, the fact that it was provoking each individual volunteer and staff member to think critically about what we were sharing on the radio frequency on 5.5 FM and how we were trying to provide an alternative, an alternative narrative and an alternative sound from what we were getting either on mainstream classical stations in my case, or just in radio, mainstream news journalism - was really important.

So at a certain point when I left CHRY, that was the summer after my daughter was born. I got to spend this lovely summer with her and, and a job opportunity for the director of Ontario region at the Canadian Music Center opened up, hilariously at the time that I applied to the CMC. The other job opportunity I was pursuing was to be a baker at a gluten free vegan bakeshop in my neighborhood, and so, you know September, 2011 shows up and I'm given that fork in the road of, do I work at the gluten free vegan bakeshop? Do I work at the Canadian Music Center? And, and I suppose at that moment -

Emily Martin:

I'm sure the bakery world is sad that you didn't join them, but we are quite happy that you joined the CMC instead.

Elizabeth McDonald:

I'm sad. You didn't join the bakery world. That's amazing. However, again, like I'm Emily said...

Kathryn Tremills:

But what a different path.

Matthew Fava:

Yeah. It would have been a very different path, but it is the case that I chose to take the job at the Canadian Music center, and I feel quite lucky that I was offered the position because I don't have - I was mentioning that I had music training as a young child and into my teenage years, and I didn't study music in post-secondary, when I was at York. Instead I was studying sciences for a year and then I kind of fumbled my way through a really awful first year and landed in history and communications. But I spent a lot of time again between the community radio setting

and then also the music buildings, because they were - while I was there - the music faculty moved buildings, but spending time with the music faculty and music students, spending time in the string orchestra in the orchestra as a non-major who played second violin, and did so rather bashfully, kind of a few seats back, but it gave me an opportunity to connect with, again, a more vital conversation that was happening around music-making today.

And it also gave me the opportunity not only to work with Mark Chambers, who was conducting the orchestra, but to become aware of folks like Trichy Sankaran and understand, Oh, you're representing a whole other approach to notation, to rhythm, to pedagogy, and you're coinciding in this building. So in the same way that I was feeling in my experience at CHRY a physical space and an ethereal broadcast space, this footprint of our broadcast, but that can embody a lot of contrasting. And at the same time collaborative approaches to whatever your objective might be. Like when I saw the faculty at York, I was excited that there were as many different practitioners, there were as many approaches and traditions, and threads that were being followed by students and faculty all under the umbrella of music, and when I arrived at the CMC I carried a lot of that with me.

Kathryn Tremills:

So it's just so much more than just the music.

Matthew Fava:

Oh yeah, absolutely. There is the music, there is this product - if we have to use that term - but there is so much that establishes a context for that, not only for the listener, of course, but we're talking about the context for the creation of that, and that can happen at an individual level with certain composers, but with other composers and with other creators, that creative process can be collective. It can be group oriented and for a lot of these activities, for a lot of the ways that we reflect on and refine these ideas and these creative products, it is significant to have people share space and to have shared time together.

So when I arrived at the CMC part of the excitement for me was finding out that they were on the cusp of renovating the main floor of the building. This is 20 St. Joseph Street in Toronto for listeners who might not be aware, this is a century old mansion. It was purchased outright by the Canadian music center. It's owned by the Canadian music center. and up until 2012, the main floor of the building felt a little bit cold. It felt a little bit closed. It was a music library, but a library containing a lot of predominantly, you know, notated scores that require a high level of specialized training in order to decipher in order to perform. And so it is an incredible collection. I don't want to diminish that at all, but as we are all aware of this call and many people listening will be aware the cost of entry to be able to make use of that material, to be able to interpret, perform, or engage in critical study of that material is quite high.

So there is naturally going to be a diminishing of who will willingly of their own accord come to that space to pursue that work. We do have a broad community: musicologists, performers, educators, so on, who do make use of it, and as a community broadcaster, I made use of that

resource. I in particular made use of the Centrediscs record label and various materials that were on the CMC website. But when we're talking about that physical space, that physical space was not as inviting, was not as welcoming, was not making an active attempt to say, "a variety of musical forms of musical approaches of musical practitioners are welcome here. A variety of music can manifest here," and so when that space was created, when the library was condensed to a smaller footprint in the building and a wider space was opened in order to facilitate musical activity, I felt really excited because that, to me, seemed like something I had been prepared to think about, and in particular, I felt I was in a good position because I was an outsider. I wasn't a contemporary music specialist by any stretch of the imagination, but I had thought through a lot of the processes of maintaining and enhancing community oriented spaces and ensuring access to those spaces.

Kathryn Tremills:

So the building has changed so much. I remember vaguely how it was before and it's just expanded so much as you're saying, and offers so many more opportunities and expansion. Can you tell us specifically about what the mandate is for this, and how you function within the larger, the national, scene?

Matthew Fava:

Yeah, so the CMC, when we talk about ourselves, we say that we are a catalyst connecting you to the ever evolving world of Canadian musical creation. That's a fairly broad statement, but I think that the word catalyst or the notion of being catalytic is really significant to me, because it centers a function that I feel I can embody quite well, and that is facilitation. So as much as a lot of musical activity is predicated on curation and deciding on repertoire, you know, like this is a big part of the CMC existing is giving people this opportunity to look through our collection, because fundamentally when we were established in 1959, it was as a repository for the works of Canadian composers. We wanted to make those works available. We wanted to ensure that people had an opportunity well beyond that first premiere to engage with that piece, present that piece, study that piece.

So we provide this kind of core support when it comes to the curation and the presentation of contemporary music, but what was really exciting to me and what I've gotten to explore in my role is how we program a space in a way that doesn't focus my artistic biases, that isn't about, Oh, well, this music interests me. So I'm going to make sure this cross section of music is going to be propagated by virtue of the number of resources that I've got at my disposal - like the CMC has at its disposal. What was really important to me was to be as open and receptive as possible, was to create an atmosphere of invitation and to flatten the scene a bit, and I think again, people listening and yourselves and your experiences, I'm sure you're aware of that intense stratification in our industry.

Certainly we experienced that within Western European classical music, but if we were to extend beyond that, yes, an intense stratification and hierarchy, and there are so many people at that broad base who do not make a very meaningful living, or have a lot of meaningful

opportunities offered to them. And they have to struggle quite a lot in order to share their music in order to access musical spaces, creative spaces. So a really important aspect of my work became flattening that, and saying, yes, if the TSO calls and they want to do something, I'll talk with them. But if this undergrad student who just moved to Toronto calls, yeah, we're going to talk, I'm going to make sure that I have an hour in my day, you know, to the same time that I might budget for my conversation, with the representative from the TSO. I'm going to make sure there's time in my day to talk with you and whatever questions you have, I'm going to engage with them. Whatever stories you tell I'm going to listen to.

And that was an important practice that I was able to establish fairly quickly, partially because I had no clear roadmap through what this position was meant to do. I saw some of the ways that my predecessors had provided a particular information sharing role, and I was able to maintain some of that. So actively telling stories about the associate composer membership of the CMC. So apart from the library catalogue publishing function that I kind of alluded to earlier, my individual role would be helping to promote some of the individual stories. I could see that there was a basic administrative function around membership and supporting composers who were applying to become associate members of the CMC. But increasingly as a result of this redefinition or redeployment of space in the building, I wanted to try and establish some routines at the same time.

I didn't want to dictate those routines. I didn't want to pretend that I could divine this priority or set of priorities for that space and for the organization, and that again made it really critical to me that I listen actively. I invite opportunities for my listening to the stories and experiences of community, and so that's maybe a little bit of a generalization based on your question, but there is that hyper-local manifestation of my role, which I feel is facilitating access to that space and helping community members shape what the CMC is, what it will be.

Emily Martin:

So to say on a personal note, that's actually one of the reasons why we have you today, because you made us - not just as a personal thing, you made us as a trio feel so welcome when we first met you. And when we used the CMC for our first premier, and felt like there was the space that we could really collaborate, but also experimented. So you can talk about it on the radio, but we've actually experienced it. So I just want to say that's something that's very dear to us and why you're an important part of this music team.

Elizabeth McDonald:

Well, I'm looking at, you know - our first premier was a commission from Emilie LeBel who we all know and love collectively, and she wrote something for us, but for Emily Martin, and I - really challenged us, we had never bought a piano before. You know, Kate had a little bit more experience in what Emilie had written for her, but for Kate or for Emily, Emily and I (there's too many Emily's in our lives right now). Just to be clear.

So what Emilie LeBel wrote for Emily Martin and I was really in some ways outside of our experience, and so being able to do that in your space, in our collective space, in a way that we

could experiment and because the space is small, not feeling like we were going to be intimidated by just like the largesse of like a hall or whatever, the intimacy of being able to just say, Hey, this is an experiment. We were still nervous as hell, but this is an experiment. This is new for us. Plus we're talking about the Syrian refugee crisis and we're doing - making noise. We've never made before.

Emily Martin:

And we're white. We're not serious.

Elizabeth McDonald:

Yeah.

Emily Martin:

So that's like a whole other level of safe space.

Elizabeth McDonald:

Yeah, the level of risk for us was pretty high. Which I, anyway -

Matthew Fava:

Sorry, go ahead, please finish your thought.

Elizabeth McDonald:

Well, no, it was, it's just sort of leading me into this idea of the collaborative space that you're talking about and how you've expressed it. It's so much more than just sort of accommodating us like white women. It's so much bigger, there's so many more conversations about that, and I'm wondering as you evolve and grow and we're having all these conversations now, how do you see yourself evolving and growing? You said in an email, and I quote "it will be too important to connect work around representation, gendered and racialized violence and the culture slash policy that defined creative spaces," and to be honest, some of that thinking is new for me personally. And I'm sure that I'm not alone in that, so maybe you can sort of delve into that and how you're sort of putting that altogether at the CMC.

Matthew Fava:

Well, Oh, well -

Elizabeth McDonald:

Yeah, I know it's so huge.

Matthew Fava:

I think it is important and I'm glad you brought it up because I think our immediate community that includes educators and administrators and artistic directors and so on - that immediate community that encompasses the contemporary classical scene, that has its roots in Western

European classical forms and traditions. We're going to be failing a lot in the next five to 10 years. We're going to be struggling with how to augment our language, our thinking, not only our thinking about how music is made, but where it's made, how it's shared, how it's thought about, how listeners connect with it. I think we're going to be growing in a lot of ways together and individually, and we are going to be failing, and that's OK. There's going to be a lot of discomfort for white people and that's required.

You know, I think that I've had the opportunity in the last month and again, people might be listening at different points in time, but we're talking after a period of extended daily actions, confronting state sanctioned violence against black people, against indigenous people. That grew largely out of the urgency of the response to the killing of George Floyd, but that clearly has a connection to ongoing work, ongoing organizing. So not wanting to diminish the organizing that proceeded, this particular wave of anger and rage directed at policy makers and directed at these institutions that carry out violence. So maybe because of that, I think it is important. I don't mind saying that I've failed a bunch individually and I feel really lucky that at this point in time, I have a little bit of a base from which to evaluate my own decisions, my own inactions.

And so what - maybe I'll share this story because it connects back to my experience in community radio. When I started working in community radio, I think I was 22 years old. It was spring of 2007. And so I got this job as the music director at this radio station. So again, the campus based station that I was working at CHRY on the campus of York university, it is a special place for a variety of reasons, but it's also a space, like so many academic spaces. It's a space of unprecedented privilege and your borders on a community that within this city has been disproportionately policed, that deals with a disproportionate amount of poverty, that is uniquely underprivileged. And so there's a real tension there between how your work imagines itself and the way that this rounding community is excluded from that York doesn't imagine that immediate community being a part of it.

Now, I shouldn't pretend to speak for York in 2020, but I'm speaking for York at the time that I arrived on campus. I arrived on campus in 2003 and was there as a student in an undergrad program. And then as a staff member at a community radio station, but I arrived as a privileged student, as a kid who grew up in the suburbs, who was there because his parents could help him to pay for his education, and I was able to volunteer at the radio station and engage with a volunteer body that was predominantly, Caribbean and African diasporic peoples, a lot of communities that were specifically from Jamaica, Trinidad - and so I was very quickly immersed in a wider cross section of, of soca, of Calypso, of reggae musics. And this was music that had been so far removed from my experience, and that became so intimate at the time that I arrived at CHRY but I got this job as a music director, and that meant that I was going to work closely with all of the programmers, that I was going to be tracking their playlist. So they would be listing all of the songs that they were playing. I was going to be compiling charts. So our weekly, top 30, and what I found very quickly when I started in the job is that there were a bunch of programmers who weren't filling out those documents, and I was trying to, you know, in the



hyper administrative way that I assumed that the role would be, that I would have to be within the role, I would follow up with the programmers, the DJs, and I would say, Oh, Hey, I really need your place sheets. I know that we're getting music from local artists, or maybe the artists are giving you recordings directly, but I don't have them in my database.

I don't know if they're new releases, if I should be charting them, and so I knew from the very start, it's like, okay, well, I don't know this music very well - any of these musics really well, and the programmers aren't talking to me, and so I made the misjudgment of going to our annual volunteer meeting, and in my speech - you know, every staff person says like a few minutes about what they're doing and what they want to communicate to programmers, what's coming up in the next - and I said, I don't remember the precise language, but you'll know from what I say that essentially you'll understand the effect of what I said. I said, "Oh, I'm not a big fan of reggae." And I was trying to say that as an invitation to like, I need you to - in my mind, the intention, and this is a big word these days, the intention of what I was saying is I need you to tell me, I need to learn from you.

But what I said is "I'm not a big fan of reggae." And so I sat down, having said my words, and one of the programmers and stood up and said, "why are you bringing in this music director, he hates reggae music?" I kind of said, well, no, I didn't say that. You know, I was really, I was angry because I'm like, you're putting words in my mouth, but what I think we need to understand today is: who was I? What was I visibly? And what was I visibly to the person who was listening to me and who interpreted what I said? I was a privileged white guy from the suburbs who showed up to a space, a community radio space, that had been built, sustained defended by predominantly black community members for decades. And I said, "I'm not a big fan of reggae."

And so, you know, right away that I was inserting a level of hostility and I was building upon a well-documented racism and discrimination directed towards Caribbean communities in this city and in this country. And so did mine tensions matter in that moment? No, they didn't, it didn't. I did not have, at that time, in my early twenties, the ability to perceive all the ways that I occupied space and all of the experience and values I was bringing, and the ways that I, in a really ignorant way, cause harm to community members in that space who had been there much longer than me, who had done a lot of work that I was unaware of. But this is, I guess, just kind of getting to the point of as, as white people, as individuals in the cultural sector, as individuals who are in music education, who have institutional power we -

Oh, sorry, that was the other dimension, right? That I was a staff member. I was a paid staff member and this person was a volunteer and just like adding that dimension to the power dynamic in that room. But, but the point is when we kind of take that scenario that I encountered and then look to the ways that the CMC functions and the ways that the CMC interacts with communities, the things, the language that the CMC says, it's like, how do we actually build trust with racialized communities and marginalized communities? But even the work that you were doing to discuss gender within this sector, like what is the CMC doing to build trust with women,

with female identifying or non-binary folks? There is a lot of work that has to be done in order to say, we're aware of these systemic issues around gender violence, violence towards racialized communities, the marginalization of these various voices and what work has to be done in order to foster a safer space, an inviting space, and then address broader systems in the industry. So apart from, you know, like the microcosm of a performance space at the Canadian music center, what work do we do to advocate for, and to actively shape or reshape the industry in a way that it is actually welcoming and supportive of a wider segment of our community?

Emily Martin:

So I, you know...can I push you a little bit?

Matthew Fava:

Sure.

Emily Martin:

So I agree with all of this. I think, you know, finally we're asking these questions, which is, you know, it makes me sad now that I'm asking those questions, that we haven't asked those questions before. But knowing how thoughtful you are, I know you have already thought about what are those actionable items that the CMC could take in the future, right. Want to take or are going to take?

Matthew Fava:

Well, I realized that maybe I do want to answer this question, and I know you asked earlier what my connection is to the larger structure of the CMC, because I guess that does matter. I'm not the president and CEO of the Canadian Music Center. I'm the director of -

Emily Martin:

Well you'd be a very good one. So we'll see in the future.

Matthew Fava:

Thanks. But yeah I am a director, but I only direct myself. I don't have other staff that report to me, but I do get invited into a lot of conversations with my peer group, with my fellow directors at the CMC. And so I am able to bring up a number of initiatives that I feel are significant, and so I might hint at a few things here and I'll try and actively connect them back to the broader work. Even though they might be these very specific nerdy things, but, yeah, there are some very specific things the CMC can do. When I arrived at the center again in the fall of 2011, we were creating a new website and a new catalog, so folks could visit our website and search for music. What a great thing. The problem with our catalog is that again, as an organization established by composers, working in a Western European classical model, the catalog was built to serve a very specific instrumentation, and so even though the name Canadian music center should mean music. And when we're talking about the word music, we're understanding it to mean all kinds of musics, even though the name is Canadian music center. If you went to the website and you tried to search for music, you would only really be searching for certain things.

Specifically, you could use an advanced search tool and you could look for a piece for piano and soprano, but let's say you wanted a piece for pipa, or you wanted a piece for tabla.

I mentioned Trichy Sankaran earlier. If you wanted a piece for mridangam you know, Trichy has been performing in Toronto and Canada for decades. There have been a lot of works written for him, or with him involved as an ensemble member. You couldn't, because any non-Western European orchestral instrument was lumped into ethnic. So very tragically, if you wanted a piece for [inaudible], or if you wanted a piece for shakuhachi, if you wanted a piece for tabla, you would not be able to look directly for that. You would have to look in these other ways. And there were a lot of pieces that just weren't classified as a result that weren't searchable as a result. They were reduced to this ethnic label. That's, that's a real tragedy.

Emily Martin:

Well until we interviewed Leslie Uyeda, we didn't know that she had a piece for Taiko.

Matthew Fava:

Oh interesting.

Emily Martin:

Yeah, soprano and Taiko drum. And I think there's another instrument, but yeah. I mean, this is the thing, right? Until you get to know a composer, you don't understand their output.

Matthew Fava:

Yeah, and until a composer can see that this organization that's built to serve composers actually makes my work visible. Why would I go there? Why would I submit my music there? And there are a number of composers. And again, going back to the opportunities for listening in my first year at the CMC, I try to host these orientation sessions for new associates because I said, why wouldn't we have an orientation session? Why wouldn't we invite them in and actively tell them what we do and help them navigate what is a slightly bizarre staff structure? And as a result of that, I realized, Oh, a lot of the other composers who have been members for years don't know that we have a new website or that we have new tools. I should do a session for existing associates, and it was through that, that I met folks like Matthew Tran Adams and he said very plainly when I was walking through the website tools. He's like, well, Matthew, all of my pieces have been othered. Like all of my pieces have been made ethnic, and he's written for a lot of East Asian traditional instruments to situate that. But it was for me an immediate call to action that, Oh, what an incredible failing on the part of the CMC to exclude, not just, you know, other musics, but vast traditions that, that stretch just as far back, if not further than a lot of the orchestral instruments, we were codifying in that catalog.

So that's been ongoing work and I've been really glad to work with my colleague, Joseph Glaser right now, who started at the CMC last year. And we have been manually going through the catalog and okay, we want to actually find everything that has ethnic percussion, we want to look at the notes, we want to contact the composer if we need to, we want to add to that table,

that searchable table in the CMC collection, we want people to actually be able to find all of the pieces that have been written for that particular instrument. We want them to be able to search for that instrument. I mean, like as another glaring example, Canadian composers have produced a number of works for Gamelan and Gamelan wasn't searchable. So making Gamelan searchable, for example.

Emily Martin:

I don't know if you know this, but we're having a meeting as Women on the Verge with Joseph next week.

Matthew Fava:

Okay, cool.

Emily Martin:

And so something else, I just want to point out, two things I want to point out. First of all, your composers are called associates. That's something as an American, I didn't understand until I came to know the CMC. And I think just that calling them associates rather than composers or clients or something, is in a way, you know, equality, you know, equity of some sort. But I also wanted to point out with Joseph that you and Joseph have both been so open, you know, we've been asking questions, what are you putting things under? How do you know, what are those search fields? And both of you have been incredibly open to involving us in that conversation.

Matthew Fava:

Right. Well it's really helpful. Again, having, having community members who are engaging with the collection, help us realize the gaps in our thinking. That is a really vital component of how we make improvements. But I know I've kind of, again, we've hit upon this very nerdy specific thing of like how, how a catalog works, how a catalog is designed, but it does matter. Language does matter as we've established and as I'm hoping, a lot of people appreciate more and more, but I think there are other things that we can do. And you know, at this moment, I won't comment too extensively about it. I know that within the realm of social media, which I don't engage with very actively as an individual for better or worse, but I know that there are a lot of organizations issuing solidarity statements that they want to acknowledge that there is systemic racism, that there is an experience of policing. There is an experience of institutionalized racism that indigenous and racialized people, black people experience. And so I think that at the same time that various people are making these statements, I think we need to get more comfortable again with terminology. I think we need to be more comfortable saying, okay, so that means we are in a white supremacist system. We need to be able to use that language.

And we need to understand that not only does that system persist, but that we benefit from that system, and so this is the challenge for the CMC we've established, or I've kind of indicated in this conversation here, say that the CMC not only was established in this postwar context, or maybe I didn't really get into that, but the CMC was established in this postwar context. And in this context of heavy investment in industry and culture, to define a uniquely Canadian

perspective, a uniquely Canadian approach to art making, and you know, this is also the time when CBC television was established in a uniquely Canadian approach to broadcasting. But what was at the heart of that, what was defining that, what was included in what was actively excluded? And we know that there were a lot of communities that were excluded. We know that this was still a point in time when indigenous communities were largely criminalized for cultural expression, for expressing their culture. But this was also a time where a lot of indigenous cultural artifacts were treated as such, were treated as these artifacts locked in time that were resources that could be extracted by Canadian artists.

And this is going to be, it has been discussed like I've got my copy of Dylan Robinson's "Hungry Listening," which I think is going to be required listening and reading for a lot of people. But he talks really eloquently about exactly this mindset, this extractive mindset. And so the complication for composers that they might only be wrestling with now, because composers have been on the edge of kind of a popular discourse around appropriation around intercultural collaboration. I think I need to consider that language a little differently now, because we have been outside of the kind of popular discourse around music, we've been insulated from a discourse around, appropriation around racism, around how colonialism informs our aesthetics, our compositional process - but there is going to be a reckoning. We can't put it off, but this is kind of the point is that we've put it off for so long, and we now need to understand in the same way that we are critical of the kind of material extractive industries of mining of oil, we have to think that that same logic applies when artists extract materials and don't address consent, don't address acknowledgement or compensation for the communities, where that work originates and where that work rightly resides.

I do think that there's going to be a lot of work that the CMC should do and can do around reeducation around establishing a new set of practices and protocols around establishing a new base from which people are thinking about and engaging with. And so thinking specifically about settler artists are engaging with indigenous content, but that extends to how a white person might engage with narratives that are defined and held and propagated by black communities, for instance. We need to start asking whether we are the ones to tell that story. And in a lot of cases, we're not, we're not the right people to tell that story. And we're also not the right people to be paid through public funding to tell those stories.

Kathryn Tremills: Wow! Matthew has such a wealth of information to share - I think we need to pause it here and bring you the rest of the interview in a second installment! We'll leave you for now with an excerpt from "Afanyala" by Maylee Todd.

Elizabeth McDonald:

Thanks again for listening - we are excited to keep bringing you more badass Canadian composers' thoughts and music...

Kathryn Tremills:

Please go to our website for program notes, and links mentioned for this podcast.

Emily Martin:

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