Wind quintet builds fine head of steam

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Considering the paucity of 19th century material for the specific combination of flute, oboe, clarinet, French horn and bassoon, it didn't come as much of a surprise to find out that a concert presented on Thursday night at Pollack Hall, featuring the group Les Vents de l'Est, concentrated on music composed since 1900.

Les Vents de l'Est, whose unusual name is bound to distinguish the ensemble from any look-alikes in Vancouver, is made up of members of the wind section of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra — Carolyn Christie (flute), Marc Laberge (oboe), Michael Dumouchel (clarinet), Jean Gaudreault (horn) and Nadina Mackie (bassoon).

Will be broadcast

It was another of the free public taping sessions organized by the CBC Radio in collaboration with the Faculty of Music of McGill University and will be broadcast some Saturday evening as part of the series, *Music from Montreal.*

The one exception to the ensemble's 20th century formula was the *Quintet in E minor,* by the 19th century composer, Antonin Reicha.

Reicha was a flutist as well as a composer, and there is no question, at least if the quintet chosen on Thursday is typical, that he exploits the instruments to the hilt. The second movement alone, an *Andante with Variations,* puts the musicians through their paces in a rigorous manner, and there was some particularly difficult scoring for the bassoon.

Christie's very dexterous flute-playing in the finale tended to be swamped by the bassoon and horn, although that may have been mostly the fault of the acoustics, and here and there one felt that the phrases could have been of a more beguiling, flexible nature.

Les Vents de l'Est (Carolyn Christie, flute; Marc Laberge, oboe; Michael Dumouchel, clarinet; Jean Gaudreault, horn; Nadina Macie, bassoon), in a concert organized by CBC Radio and the Faculty of Music, McGill University.

Quintet in E minor, opus 100, no. 4 — *Antonin Reicha*
La cheminée du Roi René (1939) — *Darius Milhaud*
Rengaines (1937) — *André Souris*
Quintette, opus 13 (1967) — *Jacques Hétu*
Quintet (in the form of a Chôros) (1928) — *Heitor Villa-Lobos*

But further in the evening, in more rewarding works, those shortcomings didn't surface. Milhaud's *La cheminée du Roi René,* named for the street in Aix en Provence that salutes the popular 15th century monarch, had stunning detail, with each of its movements, from its simple *Aubade* to the short, snappy *Joutes sur l'arc,* neatly framed and executed. The latter title refers to the jousting tournaments that you still come across in southern France.

Well-played movement

Rengaines (1937) is a cycle of 11 caricatures by André Souris, a man with a colorful sense of humour. There is a chirpy waltz, a sarcastic polka, a langorous cadenza (played persuasively by Dumouchel on the clarinet) and a Romance, in which the principal material is clumsily allotted to the bassoon.

The *Quintette,* opus 13, a composition by the contemporary Canadian composer Jacques Hétu, had a particularly well-played slow movement, while the *Quintet* written by Villa-Lobos in 1928, in which he drew on the Brazilian serenade known as the Chôro, was an interesting choice, even if it did not end the concert with a typical display of fireworks.