

# Master Of The Recorder



Recorder virtuoso Terri Hron. | PHOTO SUPPLIED

## THIS IS NOT YOUR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL RECORDER

BY PIOTR GRELLA-MOZEJKO

"Europe's a dying culture," Edmonton's Terri Hron states icily.

"Often, after having played in North or Latin America and compared my experiences to what I've seen in Europe, I think our culture is more exciting. Many people here have a European complex, but to me it is so absurd..." Hron delightfully prolongs the vowel making sure no one will doubt what she thinks of all that overrated Europe.

"We have nothing to be ashamed of!" she adds, her positive attitude now getting infectious. And since she divides her time between Edmonton (where her family is), Montreal (where her beau lives) and Amsterdam (where she spends much time working), she should know what she is talking about.

Hron carved out a very special niche for herself and her instrument of choice, of which she is considered

ultimate master. Initially trained at the University of Alberta, she deliberately picked the recorder, or, rather, recorders. There are several sizes, from the smallest soprano to the biggest great bass, the latter well over one metre long and producing low notes usually not associated with the instrument, stereotypically classified as bird-like in its range. Hron neatly explores these stereotypes.

Her ongoing project, *Bird on a Wire*, has already made history as an original and important contribution to Western art music. In the simplest of terms, Hron decided to marry two ostensibly incompatible worlds – that of the recorder, one of mankind's oldest tools of audible self-expression, with that of advanced digital technology, allowing musicians to invent and then generate practically any sound one's heart desires. Hron has achieved a level of rare mastery exploring these two sound sources.

She is a true ground-breaker – and a marvelously conscientious human being who emanates wave upon

wave of affirmative energy. Talking to Hron is as rewarding as listening to her play, and that is a testament both to her immense talent and maturity. This maturity is mirrored by her uncommon stance on the state support for the arts.

"I spend a lot of time in Amsterdam. In terms of art funding, things aren't so rosy over there any more. Why? Many artists got money too easily and then did not deliver the goods."

She says the government launched an investigation of sorts that found a lot of money have been wasted on projects of dubious merit.

"So the plug was pulled, no quarter given, literally.

"Here, in Canada, the system of funding may not be ideal – which system is? – but it teaches both the administrators and artists to be more careful in how the monies are applied to the creative process. There is much less money here, but it is not necessarily that bad – artists must be down-to-earth, making sure that how the buck is spent pleases their egos and, at the same time, satisfies the funding agency expectations."

She prefers the Canadian system.

"In a sense," Hron continues, "our system assures the integrity of artists' intent. We must be careful how we use the money, yet we can experiment.

"Even the most experimental work, when done well, will attract people, also those who know nothing about theory and techniques employed to create that work. An honest experimental work will generate an honest appreciation."

Inventive and honest like very few fellow Canadian artists, Hron speaks from experience.