

Interview July 2019

1. Introduce yourself and when you starting playing guitar?

My name is Eric F Lemieux. I live and teach music in Canada. I consider myself more a composer than a performer, but I do both. I wrote music for films as well as music for concerts.

I started my guitar learning when I was around 12. I first learned the classical way of playing. At the time, I also liked to play some music by what was called the progressive English rock of the 70s.

2. Who are your influences?

They are many. Most of them are rooted in occidental instrumental music. For my guitar writing, I would say composers like Rodrigo, Garpar Sanz, Luys de Narvaez, Heitor Villa-Lobos, Jacques Hétu (a Canadian composer), Stravinsky, webern were significant but you will hear many other influences in my music also.

3. When did you start composing for the classical guitar?

I did write for the guitar in my learning period as soon as when I was 13 or 14. However, I did not take it seriously before I was 30. I did write most of my works for the solo guitar between the age of 30 and 36.

Since that time, I wrote for the instrument on different occasions but always as part of a larger project. Sometimes I was using the instrument as part of an ensemble, in a soundtrack for instance, or occasional solo guitar.

4. How do you write music? Describe your process.

It really depends on the type of project I would be writing for. I have a totally different approach in writing for film, solo guitar, or for a full orchestra for example. Everything changes : The language I use change, the way I think and work the inspiration is also different. In writing for solo guitar, I tend to just sit down with the instrument for a while and forget about anything else. I need that intimate contact with the fretboard to develop my ideas. It's a very physical process.

In that context I tend to have a melodic approach but I like to use some scales that are non conventional like the symmetrical modes and other systems. Most of the time I like to combine different systems of writing all together. I can also use more conventional harmonic systems but I would probably combine that with something else. The starting point is always playing the instrument.

In writing for film it's a totally different approach. In that context, the music you create has the purpose of sustaining the dramatic action or embody the psychological aspects of a character. Then I spend more time reading a scenario or looking at a scene already filmed, feeling what needs to be done and figuring out the appropriate mood that needs to be created for a particular story.

Nevertheless I must say I almost always use the guitar in the previous stages of writing for any combination of tuned instruments or even if combined with electroacoustics.

It's all different challenges. It's not a smaller challenge to write for solo guitar I'm telling you.

5. What do you think is your best work so far?

For the guitar I would probably say my “Prélude Hommage à Villa-Lobos”. It’s the introductory movement of my Second Guitar Suite.

6. I noticed you have written quite a bit of short (3~5 minutes) pieces for the guitar, have you written LARGER or more bigger works for the guitar?

Not yet. Maybe one day I could write a guitar concerto. Why not ? If there is a demand for it.

7. What are your future plans?

Right now I plan to take some good vacations for a large part of the summer. After that I’ll see how it goes.

8. Have you published any sheet music yet ? Where can we find them for sale?

Yes. My solo guitar works have almost all been published at Bergmann Editions.

<https://bergmann-edition.com/products/lemieux-suite-no-1-2-3>

9. Lastly, have you seen any of our live broadcasts on YouTube and if so what did you think?

I’m just discovering your broadcasts. So far I had the opportunity to listen to one of them and it’s clear to me you

know your field very well. So I welcome your channel warmly and I wish you all the very Best for what's coming up.

10. Any final thoughts or advice for guitar composers just beginning?

I would say at first it's a good idea to get familiar with a lot of different repertoire. So don't stick only to guitar music. Broaden your scope as much as possible in other fields and different languages. Then put the focus on finding your own voice. But I think the main thing is : know your instrument very well 😊