

An English translation of the article A College Turns 100 by Lillian Heron, professor and coordinator of Marianopolis College's music program, in the current issue of the Fédération des associations de musiciens éducateurs du Québec's magazine.

A College Turns 100

Marianopolis College is steeped in history, with roots going back to 1908, when the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre-Dame founded Quebec's first bilingual women's college, École d'Enseignement Supérieure and Notre Dame Ladies' College. The college was housed in the Mother House on Sherbrooke Street (now the home of Dawson College), not far from the site of the first school in Montreal, founded in 1657 by the same Congregation under the leadership of Marguerite Bourgeoys. The new bilingual college's affiliation with Université Laval allowed it to offer courses and examinations that met university rules and standards. In 1919, Université Laval awarded diplomas to the college's students for the last time. From then on, Université de Montréal awarded the college's diplomas.

In 1926, the college's French and English divisions moved to a building on Westmount Avenue that had been built a year earlier for the Institut Pédagogique, the Congregation's teachers' college. Mother Sainte-Anne-Marie, the Congregation's educational director, believed it would also be desirable to train music teachers and, that same year, founded the École Normale de Musique toward that end. Internationally reputed professors were invited to teach there. The music-teacher education program was launched and, from 1929, directed by Robert Schmitz. Until the tenure of its final director, Sister Marcelle Corneille, C.N.D., the school enjoyed an enviable reputation for 50 years, both as a training ground for specialized teachers for the Quebec school system and as an academy for professional musicians, several of whom are now world-famous.

Meanwhile, the college's English division, by now known as Marianopolis ("City of Mary") College, moved to Peel Street in 1945. Two years later, Université de Montréal awarded B.Sc. degrees to Marianopolis students for the first time. Under the direction of Sister Mary O'Neill, C.N.D., the music program took flight, and she remained at the helm for two decades. The B.A. with a major in music was approved in 1964. The college maintained its affiliation with the same university, which continued to issue its diplomas until 1972. The program was a success, with a number of its graduates contributing actively to Montreal's music community to this day.

In 1969, Marianopolis College welcomed male students for the first time, and introduced a two-year diplôme d'études collégiales (D.E.C.) program. To meet government requirements for the program, and in keeping with the college's tradition of affiliation with universities, the deans of Marianopolis and of McGill University's Faculty of Music reached an agreement whereby Marianopolis College music students participate in McGill's choral and instrumental ensembles. A few years later, the affiliation was

extended to include private instrumental and singing instruction given by McGill professors.

Marianopolis College moved to a new home in 1975, in the former Petit Séminaire de Philosophie building on Côte-des-Neiges. For more than a quarter of a century, the college's reputation for academic excellence grew and its student body with it. In 2002, the General Council of the Congregation agreed to provide a long-term lease on its current Mother House to Marianopolis. As a result, in the summer of 2007 the college returned to its former Westmount Avenue home, moving into a fully renovated building. The music program occupies the former premises of the École Normale de Musique. In addition to enjoying use of the Art Deco auditorium (1955) for its concerts, the program also benefits from computer labs equipped with the latest recording, composition, sound reproduction, score writing and ear-training technology.

Today, Marianopolis College remains the only private English-language college in Quebec to offer a two-year D.E.C. in music and three-year double-major D.E.C. programs in Science and Music, Social Science and Music, and Creative Arts and Music. It is still associated with McGill University's Schulich School of Music, with students participating in McGill's acclaimed ensembles (Symphony Orchestra, Choirs, Wind Symphonies); private instruction by McGill professors; and access to the university library. All other courses and public performances are given at the college. Over the years, the collaboration between the two institutions has proven to be the road to success for many of the college's music graduates. Today they are performers, professors, composers, choir directors, orchestra conductors, musicologists, radio hosts, sound engineers, and more.

The vital link between the college's rich history and its dynamic present is its determination to provide its students academic excellence in a welcoming and inspiring setting. In 2008, the college is celebrating its centennial. Happy anniversary, Marianopolis.

Sources: Archives of Marianopolis College and of the Congregation of Notre-Dame Motherhouse. Special thanks to Sister Marcelle Corneille.