

Professor Walter Buczynski

(b. 1933)

Pianist, composer



Professor Walter Buczynski is a leading Canadian composer, pianist and musical educator.

Born in Toronto, he studied musical theory with Godfrey Ridout and piano with Earle Moss at the Toronto Conservatory of Music. After his *First Piano Trio* won the Composers', Authors' and Publishers' Association of Canada competition for composers in 1954, he went on to study with some of the world's leading pedagogues: composition with Darius Milhaud and Nadia Boulanger, piano with Rosa Lhévinne in New York and Zbigniew Drzewiecki in Warsaw. His *Suite for Woodwind Quintet* won the 1955 Fromm Foundation Award at the Aspen Music Festival in Colorado, and the same year he made his orchestral debut as pianist, performing the Chopin *F minor Piano Concerto* with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

Buczynski taught piano and theory from 1962 to 1969 at the Toronto Conservatory (by then, the Royal Conservatory of Toronto), and in 1969 joined the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto as professor of theory and composition. He served as president of the Canadian League of Composers in 1974-75. In 1977, he scaled down his pianistic career to concentrate on composing and pedagogy. The same year, he received the Queen Elizabeth Silver Jubilee medal, and in 1992 the Governor General's 125th Anniversary of the Confederation of Canada medal, for his contributions to Canadian cultural achievement.

Buczynski's compositions are written in a modern but accessible and often humorous spirit, sometimes angular and sometimes lyrical, incorporating traditional themes along with elements of jazz, rock and boogie-woogie. They have been performed across Canada, by Buczynski himself and a number of other distinguished pianists, and have frequently been recorded and broadcast.

Since retiring from his post at the University of Toronto, Prof. Buczynski has resumed his solo career. He performed at the 2008 Sweetwater Festival in Georgia, and on his seventy-fifth birthday received the Gloria Artis medal from the Polish government.

Photos from top left clockwise:

• Walter Buczynski playing at Chopin Competition in Warsaw, 1960 / Photo – Dionizy Gladysz, ZAIKS • W. Buczynski at the Art Gallery of Ontario with Prof. Earl Moss, 1977 • W. Buczynski with the renowned Polish pianist Witold Malcuzyński, 1960 • W. Buczynski in Toronto • W. Buczynski, 1955 / Photo by Arts' Photo Studio
Other photos – private archives