

McMichael Magazine

From the McMichael Canadian Art Collection

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Charles Edenshaw

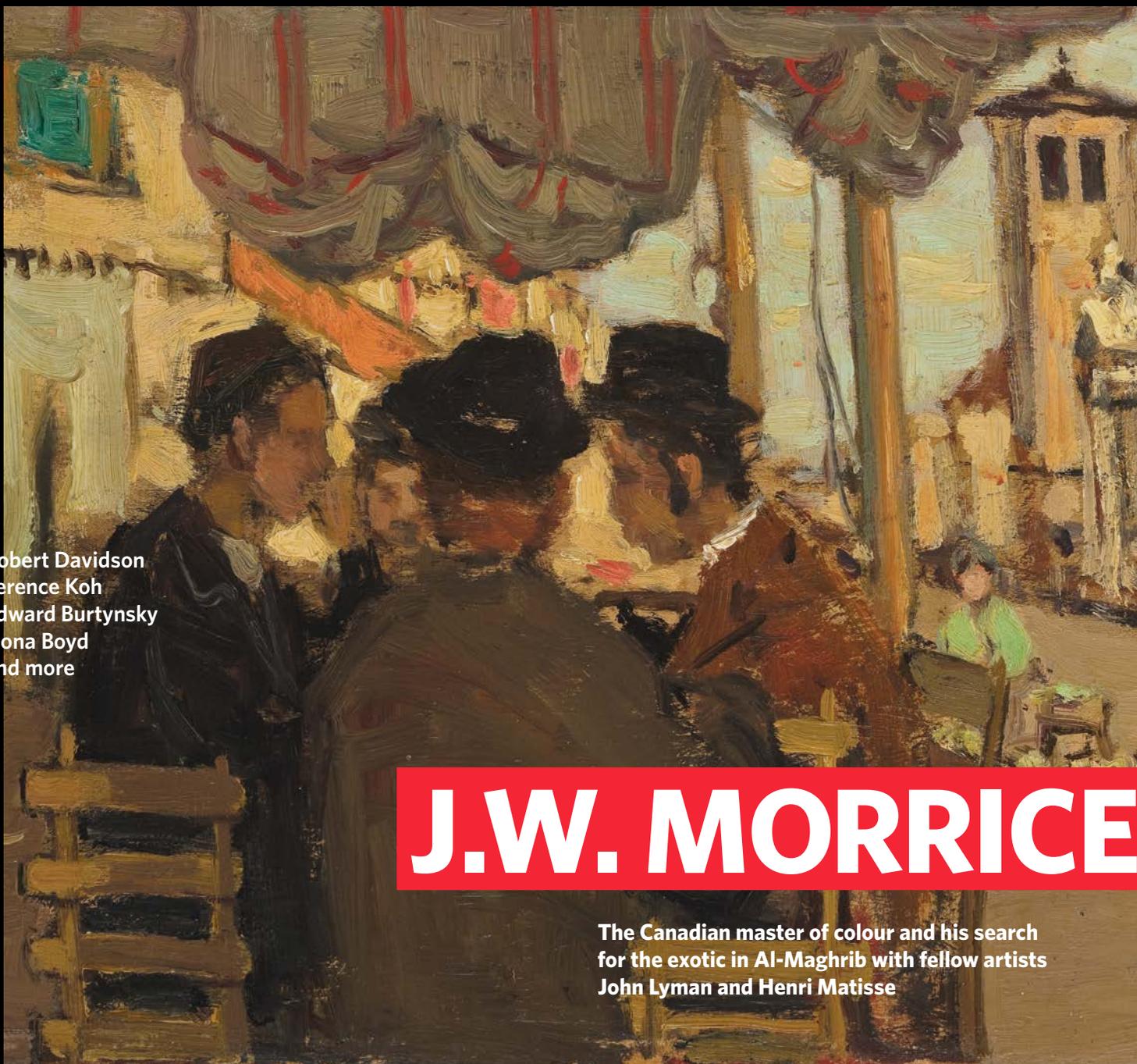
An indomitable spirit and singular talent—the secrets and surprises of his iconic work / **P.18**

Arctic Exposure

A photographic foray into a land otherwise inaccessible and unknown / **P.26**

In Memoriam

McMichael pays homage to Sorel Etrog, sculptor of the CFA's Genie Award, and Molly Lamb Bobak, Canada's first official female war artist / **P.38**



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Robert Davidson
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Edward Burtynsky
Liona Boyd
and more

J.W. MORRICE

The Canadian master of colour and his search for the exotic in Al-Maghrib with fellow artists John Lyman and Henri Matisse

Interview



THE RETURN:
LIONA BOYD

Liona Boyd has introduced millions around the world to the art of classical guitar. She has won five JUNO Awards, the Vanier Award, received five honorary doctorates, and was named to the Order of Canada and the Order of Ontario.

By RACHEL WEINER, MEDIA RELATIONS
AND COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Photo by THOMAS TRACY

She has recorded with Sir Andrew Davis and the English Chamber Orchestra, Yo-Yo Ma, Chet Atkins, Eric Clapton, and David Gilmore, among others. In 2003, Boyd was diagnosed with Musician's Focal Dystonia, a neurological condition that forced her to leave the stage for six years, during which time she reinvented herself as a singer/songwriter, and returned to the recording studio in 2009. In 2013, she released *The Return...to Canada with Love*, a new album that features songs inspired by the country where she grew up. On July 10, 2014, Boyd was in concert at the McMichael, performing songs from her new album among the Canadian masterworks that inspired them.

You recently moved back to Toronto. What prompted your return after all these years?

The epiphany for me came when I was watching a documentary by Peter Raymont on Glenn Gould and I saw how he had toured all over the world—conquered the world musically—and how he would still go to his cottage on Lake Simcoe in the autumn. I saw the scenery and got a pang of great nostalgia. Suddenly I just knew, I was going back to live in Canada.

What inspired you to write an entire album about Canada?

It started with one song: "Canada My Canada." I was in Berlin with my former husband, who was a member of the World Presidents' Organization. We were with a group of 300 delegates and it was suggested that we all divide up into countries and sing a song that represented our nation. Every group besides ours had their act together. They all knew songs about their countries, but when it came to the Canadian group, we were stuck. We didn't know the same Gordon Lightfoot or Stompin' Tom songs and we'd forgotten "The Maple Leaf Forever," so we ended up stumbling our way through "Alouette." It was kind of a disaster. So I decided that in Canada, we really need a good song about our country—one that the school kids can learn. So I wrote "Canada My Canada."

That particular song features some very famous Canadian voices. How did that come about?

My vision was to have all different Canadian musicians join me, but I never thought I could pull it off. I called people like Jann Arden, Dan Hill, Randy Bachman, Michel Bérubé, Divine Brown, John McDermott, Eleanor McCain, and Serena Ryder. The Etobicoke School of the Arts Choir sang the chorus and they were fantastic. Then by fluke, the hockey players that beat the Russians in '72 were being inducted into Canada's Walk of Fame and I managed to get into the same room as them with my en-

gineer. I had written out the chorus to "Canada My Canada" in great big letters and they sang it.

What is your connection to the McMichael?

My parents brought me to the McMichael as a teenager, and then in the 1980s, I performed at the gallery at the invitation of Mila Mulroney. It's a lovely setting.

The McMichael is renowned for its collection of works by Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven. What made you dedicate your song "Silver Birch" to them?

The song "Silver Birch" is very evocative of Northern Ontario and of course, that's the landscape of Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven. Growing up in Canada, I used to look at the paintings of Tom Thomson—especially the famous *Jack Pine*—because they had them up in all the schools. Even though I didn't know much about Thomson and the Group of Seven, I was certainly familiar with them and aware of their art. I thought this song really captured the landscapes of the Group of Seven, so I dedicated it to them.

You also wrote a song about Emily Carr that seems to resonate with your own experience of travelling the world and ultimately returning to the place where you grew up. Do you feel a particular kinship with her?

Yes, I read a lot about her and she was such a pioneer and so eccentric. I guess I'm eccentric in a way. She didn't follow the traditional path. But we're also quite different. When she went to Europe, she missed Canada so much. She was not comfortable in London, whereas I loved living in Europe. But we both came back to live in Canada. The refrain from that song is about Vancouver Island and I've played every little place there. It's a landscape that I'm so familiar with. I like the smell of the air.

You also sing about the Maritimes, the Prairies, the Arctic, Toronto, and Montreal. Have you visited all of those places?

I've had all kinds of adventures across Canada. When someone says 'Do you want to play Flin Flon or Fort McMurray or Whitehorse?' I always say yes. I've played every little fishing village from Grand Bank to Antigonish. I took an icebreaker from Prince Edward Island because there were no planes flying. In Ontario, I took a canoe trip up the Missinaibi River. I felt like a *voyageur*. Canoeing through the white water, eating bannock, having the Cree people sing to me. That was a wonderful experience. I've always loved nature. That comes into a lot of my songs. The forest, the trees, and the spirit of the Canadian North. **MM**