

# Edmonton group puts music before gimmicks

Darkroom  
Dinwoodie, Nov. 26

review by Patrice Struyk

The Law Students Society knew what they were doing, hiring these guys. Darkroom, one of the most promising Edmonton bands, sure draw the people. It's not surprising, either. They came into Dinwoodie on Saturday night and turned it into a nightclub.

Darkroom is not a flashy band. No gimmicks. Their lighting is, if anything, understated. This band doesn't need superfluties for they are professional and tight, and their original music is sophisticated new-wave.

No matter what Darkroom played, from "Proven Guilty" to their hit single "In Dim Light", they kept the feet going and the dancefloor packed. Their semi-ballad, "Growing Older", with its slowed tempo

yet insistent back-beat, stood out. Not only is it prime mood music in the mold of the romantic new wavers of today, but also a great vehicle for Jim Gray's seductive voice. Speaking of whom, he has an androgynous Bowie-esque quality and manner which is very appealing these days.

The rest of the band are quite low-key, and don't jump around wildly or make spectacles of themselves. Perhaps it's the calm assurance that comes from knowing that you're good.

And Darkroom's mere presence at a cabaret swells the attendance, as they seem to attract a certain devoted following. Teased hair and black leather were the norm for the group that congregated in front of the stage to dance by themselves or just to watch the band.

Of course the band got an encore - crowd consensus was obviously that Darkroom produces more than a pretty picture.



Photo Bill Inglee

Darkroom - developing into a class act

## Canada Music Week 1983

# Composers exhibit talents in well-attended concert

New Music at the  
University of Alberta  
Convocation Hall  
November 27

Review by K. Arthur

Neither Grey Cup fever nor slippery streets deterred an enthusiastic crowd from attending this enjoyable concert of works by U of A composers at Convocation Hall. The music was presented in a nicely balanced program and was enjoyed both by the participants and the audience.

The concert began with Violet Archer's Sonata for clarinet and piano, played by John Newman and Janet Halsall. The work exploits both the ruminative and the playful sound of the clarinet. It was played very well, although a slower tempo in the tranquil movement would have expressed more of its mournful quality.

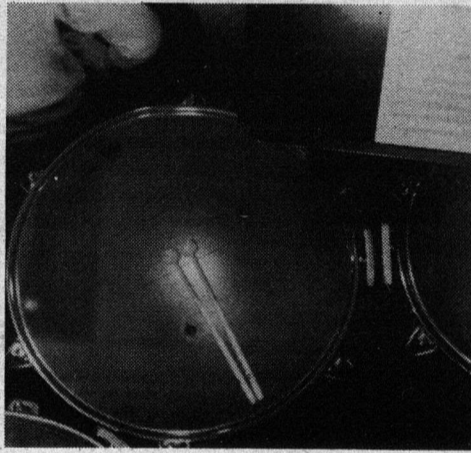
Manus Sasonkin's Concerto for Two Solo Pianos is strongly influenced by the keyboard writing of J.S. Bach, but its intent is similar to that of contemporary composer Lukas Foss. Performers Alexander Munn and Ernesto Lejano had the nicely balanced sound that the piece required.

Birds at Daybreak, a song cycle by Violet Archer with texts by Irving Layton, did not enjoy a very good performance. Tenor David Astor's voice possessed a strident quality in the upper register which proved rather grating on the ear. Inter-

pretively, he did not have much feeling for the text, and sang all three songs with no

sense of light and shade to the words. Pianist Karen MacNaughton accompanied very well, filling in the strength that should have been in the singing.

Malcolm Forsyth provided a light hearted comedy for four trombones entitled Eclectic Altos with Pokerbass. The four musicians made very good use of the



stage, and the music borrowed from ragtime, Henry Mancini, and the theme from Robin Hood - a nice example of a serious composer having fun.

The choral piece on the program was a setting of Psalm 121 by organist Gerhard Krapf, performed by the U of A Concert Choir under Leonard Ratzlaff. The choral writing immediately reminded one of Handel, but it spoke a language of its own. The performance by the concert choir was excellent. The enunciation was very clear, the voices were nicely and smoothly blended, and the rhythm kept strong. Tenor Trent Worthington deserves a special note, providing a strong solo in a voice I find would be pleasingly appropriate to early music.

Alfred Fisher's song cycle Zakhor (Remember) was the most challenging and difficult piece of music on the program. It is a setting of six texts ranging from parts of the Talmud to a poem by Henry Edwards, with moods changing from melancholy, to

mystery, to yearning. The songs are also difficult to sing, as they range in language, style and technical demands. Baritone Harold Weins was certainly up to the task, with a wide and clear range even up into the falsetto. He provided sensitivity too, bringing out the spiritual and poetic qualities.

The final work of the program was a quartet entitled Quartet '74 for Trombones by Malcolm Forsyth, played by the Malcolm Forsyth Trombone Ensemble. The music is pleasant but strongly argued, with a piquant, Spanish-influenced second movement. The music is a very nice vehicle for the quartet of four trombones, who played with great spirit and technical assurance.

A very enjoyable concert and a credit to all concerned.

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