

## the Arts

## Violinist Szekely

Zoltan Szekely, the internationally-renowned Hungarian violinist who is presently a guest of the University of Alberta, will make his final public appearance this week.

He will appear with the University of Alberta String Quartet on Friday, March 29 in Convocation Hall.

And while he will not perform at that time, he will take part in an informal public forum with members of the Quartet.

On Friday evening, beginning at 8:00 p.m., the University of Alberta String Quartet will perform the 5th and 6th Quartets of Bartok as the final chapter in a series of Bartok concerts that they have given on campus over the past few weeks.

At the conclusion of the performance, Szekely will join the Quartet and take part in an informal question and answer session, designed to give the audience a chance to talk to

Szekely and the Quartet about Bartok, about the Quartet and about music in general.

Szekely, first violinist of the Hungarian Quartet for 35 years and a close friend of the late Bela Bartok has been in Edmonton for the month of March, as a guest of the university, the Edmonton Chamber Music Society, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and Access North TV.

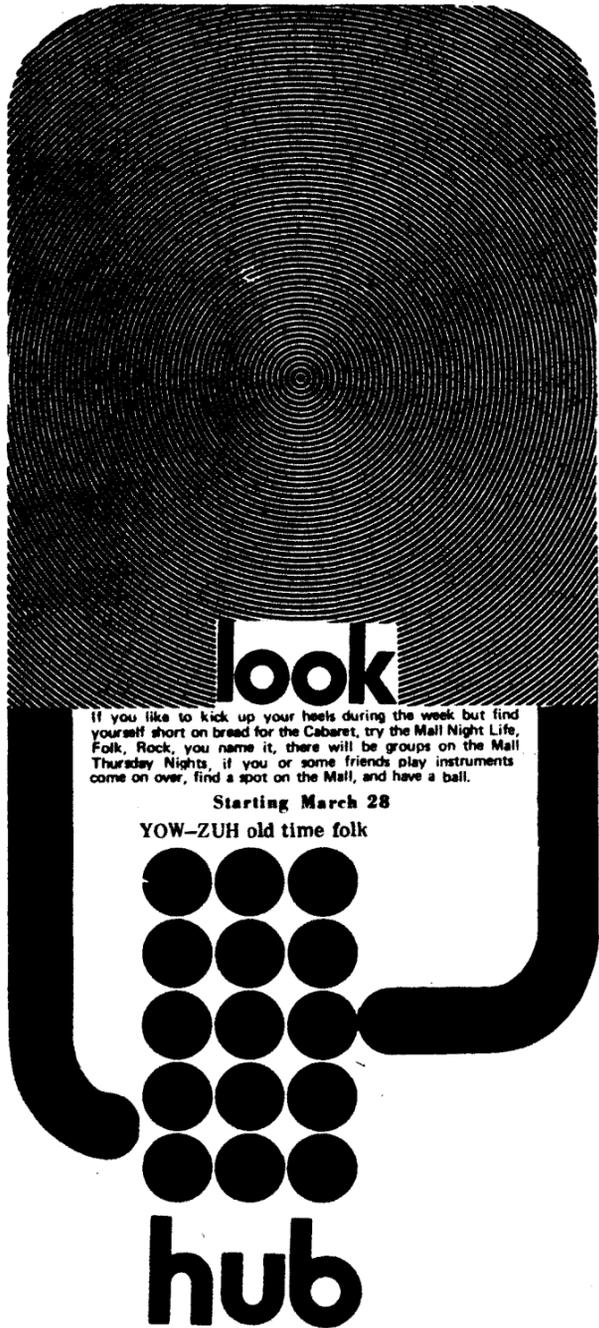
He has given several performances for these various groups during his stay, and has spent a great deal of time talking about and performing the works of his friend, Bela Bartok.

According to Thomas Rolston, first violinist in the University of Alberta String Quartet and the man who initiated Szekely's visit, "it is a fitting conclusion not only to the Bartok series but to Szekely's visit to Edmonton."

The evening of music and discussion is free and the public is invited to attend.



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**hub**

## Next at the ESO

The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra will be presenting the tenth concert in their main series, Saturday and Sunday, April 6 and 7 at the Jubilee Auditorium. Pierre Hetu will conduct and Vladimir Viardo, winner of the 1973 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition will be the featured artist.

The program includes Franz Joseph Haydn's *Symphony No. 44* Schumann's *Piano Concerto in A Minor, op. 54*, Prokofiev's *Classical Symphony*, and Jacques Ibert's *Divertissement*.

Tickets are available from the Bay 424-0121. Students get very good discounts. Rush seats for one dollar go on sale an hour before curtain at the Jubilee. 8:30 p.m., Saturday night and 2:30 p.m. Sunday afternoon.

Music critics are predicting that Vladimir Viardo, winner of the Van Cliburn competition, is on his way to becoming a superstar after this contest -- much as Van Cliburn did after he won the 1953 Tchaikovsky Competition in the U.S.S.R. At the time of his victory in Fort Worth, Viardo was 23, the same age Cliburn was when he won in Moscow.

Viardo became a Cliburn fan when Cliburn played a concert in Moscow in 1970, but the two didn't meet until the Texas competition. Even before he met Cliburn Viardo called Cliburn "Perhaps the most important influence" on his own understanding of music. "When I heard Van play, I realized that making the kind of music I want is like taking a very deep breath," Viardo explained.

Viardo went into the finals in Fort Worth the night seeming to be a favorite of the international panel of jurors. It had already been announced that he had played the Aaron Copland commissioned work best of any of the 50 contestants from eighteen countries, and that he had tied for the best playing of the Rachmaninoff Etude-Tableau.

Born near Sochi, on the Black Sea in the south of the Soviet Union, Viardo has lived with an aunt in Moscow while studying at the Tchaikovsky State Conservatory, where he is now a fourth-year student. Viardo, who is unmarried, says he enjoys books, poetry, and the cinema. He usually practises at the piano about four hours a day.

Prokofiev's "Fleeting Glances" would seem to be a work he particularly enjoys playing. It was his choice in "The Cliburn" repertoire category that called for a work of the contestant's own choosing. In the category that called for a work by a composer of his country, Viardo chose a group of Shostakovich Preludes. His choice of concerti for the finals included Beethoven's Concerto No. 4 in G Major,

which was deemed by one critic "stunning...as noble and impassioned a performance as one will hear in a year of Sundays...full-blooded, matured and thoroughly convincing."

During his performances in the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra's Main Series program Mr. Viardo will perform the Schumann A Minor Piano Concerto. The orchestra will be under the direction of Pierre Hetu.

## Turandot reviewed

With all the embarrassing musical moments within the composition of Puccini's opera *Turandot*, I found it very difficult to take the Edmonton Opera Association's production of this work seriously at its Monday evening performance. The opera quite simply does not work and despite the valiant efforts of Pierre Hetu and the ESO, certain members of the cast, and the chorus, no amount of patient labour could raise it above the level of being at one and the same time tedious and ridiculous.

Only a very small attempt is made by Puccini to make the action on stage believable. This is not to say that it must be realistic; one asks only that the story be well motivated, both in terms of the music and the libretto, and that some amount of imaginative credibility is generated.

Because of the nature of the work, any production of it depends upon a garish set, an impressive number of extras on the stage, as well as some extraordinary acting on the part of the principal characters. Monday evening's EOA production received an appropriate dosage of the first two, and only an embarrassingly small proportion of the last.

Bernabe Marti, as the protagonist, Calaf, a prince who seeks the hand of Princess Turandot in marriage, cut about as romantic a figure as a cucumber in heat and could not act to save his sprouts. His voice was not expansive enough for the part that he played and had very little of the richness which

a tenor requires. But, it must not go without saying that his rendering of the aria *Nessun Dorma* in the third act, as well as Liu's (as sung by Ruth Huang) *Signore, ascolta* must rate as the vocal highlights of the evening.

A strong supporting performance was given by the bass, Claude Corbell, in the role of Timur, the aging father of Calaf. Ms. Pauline Tinsley, as the cold, cruel Princess Turandot, had a chilling measure of stage presence, but her voice was too inconsistently projected. From her barely audible work in the medium areas of her tessitura to the overbearing power of her high notes, she could not bring to her music the same gripping character that she visually portrayed. The love duet between her and Calaf (Morti) in the third act, for which Franco Alfano and not Puccini must be blamed, came off as nothing less than downright silly.

One pleasing and encouraging thing about the EOA's *Turandot* was the work done by the orchestra and the chorus. The past two operas this season had these two constantly battling for the ears of the audience with the ESO generally winning hands down. This time a good deal more care was taken with balance and texture and the heavyhandedness of previous operas was gratefully absent. What came to the ear was a much more sensitive interplay between orchestra, chorus, and soloist. The audience discovered that it does have a chorus of semi-professional singers of which it can be reasonably proud.

Allan Bell

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Best Supporting Actor - RANDY QUAID - Best Screenplay - ROBERT TOWNE

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