

Editor's Note: An Introduction to *Legendary Ladies of Music* is a non-credit course offered through the Department of Extension. The lecture-recital series is free to all students. Tuition for non-students is \$40. The series begins Tuesday, November 17 at 7:30 PM, Second Floor, Memorial Hall. Preregistration is necessary so call the Department of Extension 453-4646 for further information.

LEGENDARY LADIES OF MUSIC

The cold almost kept her away, but it's the people who got her to stay.

When pianist Arlene Nimmons Pach came to Fredericton on tour 23 years ago with her violinist husband, Joseph, our best February weather greeted them. "The streets were awful to look at, it was cold, and there was sand everywhere," Arlene Pach recalls.

Urged by the University of New Brunswick to stay on as resident musicians, the duo at first declined. Mrs. Pach remembers: "At that point we were from Vancouver, and we really didn't want to move East because of the weather." But in the end, it was the people that won the pair over. "In the two days that we were here we met such a fascinating blend of really interesting people. We said, 'Okay, let's try it for a year.'"

Now well into their second decade as musicians in residence at UNB, the Pachs continue to rivet audiences with their performances and enlarge their nucleus of faithful followers. Early in their careers, both musicians chose to focus on chamber music, rather than strictly solo performances, reasoning that they could perform as a duo and have a family life as well.

One of the rewards for playing chamber music in Fredericton is the lack of pretense in the audience. Pach remarks: "You find that particularly people who come to chamber music concerts don't come to them to be seen. If you go to hear the Brunswick String Quartet play at noon in d'Avray Hall, you are not there to be seen. You are there to hear the string quartet."

Pach finds audiences in Fredericton "really highly qualified," but hastens to add that being knowledgeable about music is not a prerequisite of enjoyment. In fact, one thing Pach would like to see gone from our discussions of classical music is: "The idea where you say to somebody, 'Do you like classical music?' and they say, 'Oh well, I don't know anything about it. I can't go to a concert because I know nothing about music.' And of course, that's exactly the attitude you shouldn't have. Music speaks to you like love or anything else."

Pach agrees that learning about music is like learning a language as a child. You don't sit down and study a book. No one taught you to speak, but if you listened, you soon picked it up. It's only when you want to develop more dexterity with the language that you have to study it *per se*. The same is true for music. She says, "It's not so much a question of knowledge when you start. Afterwards, the doors open in so many ways. There are so many interesting biographies and studies for you to follow according to your own particular tastes."

Indulging her musical tastes is what Pach likes to do, and when she is not touring, she opens the doors for others with her lecture-recital series. This month she'll acquaint music lovers with other women in music in her four-part series: *An Introduction to Legendary Ladies of Music*, starting November 17. The lecture-recitals will be held in her studio on Memorial Hall's second floor, and will show the roles of women in music, dating from 17th-century Baroque with no exams or homework. It's just for enjoyment and a certain amount of edification.

"The series is on various roles that women have had in music which I happen to like a lot to play. I was really interested to discover that a lot of it fell into this category. It's not just about women composers, but women as 'muses,' critics, composers, performers. For instance, there's some gorgeous music that Brahms wrote for Clara Schumann. There's music that Chopin wrote when he was within the sphere of influence of George Sand. It's also about legendary pianists themselves who happen to be composers on the side."

Women in music, like women in literature, are just starting to be recognized. Pach herself became interested when a friend brought her some music of women composers of the 17th and 18th centuries. Part of the reason for women's obscurity was that while their works were known, there gender may not have been. Pach was amazed at what has been hidden: "I was surprised to find out myself what had been written by women. For instance, I was really astonished to discover that a beautiful piano and violin piece that my husband and I always played as

works, was a fantastic pianist and superb violinist. Pach says, "At the age of six years old, she was writing music that's actually a lot more interesting than a lot of music that Mozart was writing when he was six."

The difference for these women was that they did what they wanted to do. She cites Clara Schumann as one woman who didn't think of herself as a woman as opposed to a man:

"She thought herself as an artist, that's all. And of course that's what she did mostly with her life, compose."

Pach is going to start the lecture series off with Schumann, who she sees as: "Being everything the other women were in differing degrees of intensity. She was a rather attractive woman. She was a child virtuoso pianist, and a child composer. She was the wife of one of the greatest composers who ever lived, and the object of one of the most legendary love affairs of musical history of all time. She had 8 children, was a teacher of some of the finest pianists and shaped the concert tradition of the Western world."

Schumann established a concert format that we still, more or less, use today. The fact that she was an actual partner of the great men of music, like Schumann and Brahms, is a testament to her genius. They all treated her like an equal, unusual conduct for the time.

If Pach says that Clara Schumann embodies a little bit of all the women in music, she should include herself in that line. Wife, mother, teacher, performer, and promoter for the New Brunswick String Quartet, Pach should be included in the group of women in music who are an inspiration. It's a long list, Pach admits, and she could easily spend a lecture on each woman. She says, "It could easily take years, that's why it's called 'An Introduction.' We're only starting."

By MARTY AVERY

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