

arts

New compositions highlight concert

Review by Ludwig

The fourth and final concert of the Department of Music's Explorations VII series was highlighted by new compositions of two resident composers. The program was in keeping with the series' objective of presenting the public with works which are new and performed.

The program, chaired by Professor Wesley Berg, began with a spectacular motet for forty voices; *Spem in Alium* by Thomas Tallis. The difficulties in performing the massive work for eight quintets seem to have been met by the Concert Choir under the direction of Barry Cook deserve commendation for presenting the work. The audience was impressed with the excitement and anticipatory of a more solidified presentation at a later performance in Convocation Hall.

Two works by Canadian composers Healy Somers and Harry Somers followed. The performance of Somers's *God the Master of this Scene* was outstanding. The piece, commissioned for a wedding, demands great concentration and discipline from the performers, and this was evident in the very convincing performance on Thursday evening.

George Frederic Handel is best remembered for his sacred oratorio, the *Messiah*, but the eighteenth century composer also wrote a great deal of secular instrumental music. In keeping with contemporary trends, his *Sonata in G, Op. 1, No. 5* was performed on instruments as similar as possible to those for which the music was written. Gerhard Krapf, playing the harpsichord, and Linda Jonas Schroeder, playing the flute, did a masterful job of creating the chamber atmosphere with which the composition was intended. The size of the auditorium was a slight detriment to the very excellent performance as the sound of the quiet instruments was sometimes lost in the large room.

Night Elegy, a group of three songs based on the work of Hermann Hesse, was composed by Dr. Lawrence Fisher. Dr. Fisher is a recent addition to the faculty and is chairman of the composition department. The work premiered on Thursday evening and played three aspects of lamentation. The critically strong performance by soprano Else Blom, violinist Thomas Rolston, cellist Claude Gauthier, and harpsichordist Michael Bowie, and harpsichordist

Gerhard Krapf gave great weight to the sombre composition. Although the work was atonal, its strong form and structure gave it cohesiveness and direction, making a very strong impact on the listener.

Paul Hindemith was an early twentieth-century composer who once enjoyed great popularity but whose vogue is swiftly fading with time. Although noted for his early experimentation with new techniques, at the midpoint of his career he decided to make his work more accessible. The result was a proliferation of works like his *Sonata in E*, a two movement work for piano and violin. The work was highlighted by a well-balanced performance by Prof. Lawrence Fisher, violinist, and Prof. Helmut Brauss, Pianist, two artists who have often worked together.

Steps, a five-movement contrasting piece for piano and viola was commissioned to Dr. Malcolm Forsyth by the Canada Council for the Banff School of Fine Arts in 1978. Dr. Forsyth, a resident faculty composer, is a well established writer of increasing international renown. Since Forsyth is of a different

school of musical thought than Fisher, *Steps* was more tonal than *Night Elegy*. The work performed by Michael Massey and Nicholas Pulow began very structurally but by the third movement seemed suspended in time. By the fifth movement structure was reestablished, and it concluded with a witty embodiment of the rhythmic and melodic interest of the earlier movements. The composer fully utilized the extreme limits of both instruments, treating the piano as a percussive rather than melodic instrument.

The concert concluded with a light *divertimento* piece by Carl Nielson, an early twentieth century composer. The light musical excursion by the Scandinavian composer was atypical of a man better known for his larger operatic and orchestral works. The violent tonal conflicts generally associated with his works were not evident in his *Serenata in Vano*. The short piece was performed by Ernest Dalwood, clarinet, Michio Wakabayashi, bassoon, David Hoyt, horn, Rebecca Denson, violincello, and Margorie Montjoy, base.



Cheremosh returns

An energetic mosaic of Ukrainian dances hits the stage again as the Cheremosh Ukrainian Dance Ensemble performs, with enthusiasm which overwhelms the audience. The physical prowess of the boys in their athletic displays and the graceful movements of the talented girls complement each other during an evening of fine entertainment. Under the direction of Mr Chester Kuc, who founded the group, Cheremosh this year is celebrating its tenth anniversary. For a decade the group has brought a high quality of amateur talent to audiences across Canada, as well as in California, at the Spokane World's Fair in 1974, and even in England in the summer of 1977.

Today, the group has over one hundred members and a repertoire of dances covering most of the provinces of the Ukraine. Cheremosh has the most authentic and varied Ukrainian costumes of any Ukrainian group in Canada, inspired by both traditional and contemporary styles. Theatricality, the group has progressed since it was founded in 1969, enabling the ensemble to perform in an exciting and unique manner. Cheremosh does not preserve old traditional dances in their original form but seeks to freeze images in time, with themes related to Ukrainian folklore, customs, history and character. To accomplish this, the group encourages some of its more talented members to attend dance seminars in New York, Regina and the Ukraine. Veteran professional artists and instructors from the Ukraine share choreography and new ideas in dance technique, to be brought back to other members of the group.

It takes long hours of dedicated hard work to put together a performance of this calibre, featuring such a wide variety of dance styles. For example, in this year's show there will be a dance sequence that depicts a traditional Ukrainian wedding from the Central Ukraine which turns into a celebration for the entire village. Often, the group features guest artists from internationally known groups, and this year's guest is a baritone who is an accomplished bandura player. He is Volodomir Luciew, from London, England, and he is performing with Cheremosh for the first time.

The evening of February 3 and the afternoon of February 4 at the Jubilee Auditorium are the dates to remember for an action-packed show of lively entertainment. Tickets are available for reserve seats at the Bay Ticket Office and the Ukrainian Bookstore.

Governor-General Award winner coming

Students Union Special Events will present poet, playwright & filmmaker Michael Ondaatje in a play based on his work on Monday February 5 at 8:00 p.m. in AV L-3 of the Humanities Centre. Michael Ondaatje is one of the best and best known writers of his generation, winner of the Governor General's Award for *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid* in 1978 and the Books in Canada First Novel Award for *Through Slaughter* in 1976. He has also written three highly regarded collections of poetry, *The Englishman's Boy* (1967), *The Man with Seven Toes* (1973), and *Rat Jelly* (1973).

Ondaatje adapted *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid* for the stage and the resulting play has been performed in Toronto, Vancouver, Edmonton and Regina as well as at various theatres in the United States. He has also made three films: *Sons of Captain Jack* — a documentary about the concrete poet by Robert Creeley; *Carry on Crime and Punishment* — a four part moral adventure starring the poet's dogs, friends, and *The Clinton Special* a film about the Theatre Passe Muraille's *The Farm Show*. He is currently in the English Department at Glendon College in Toronto, where he lives with his wife, the artist Kim Ondaatje, children and dogs.

Ondaatje has appeared on the Canadian television scene, most importantly in the famous 1966 play *Log Cabin* edited by Ray Sounster, *New Wave* magazine. Ondaatje has received critical kudos for his work. Other writers, as well, have praised him for his

many different efforts in poetry and prose. Al Purdy is quoted on the backcover of the first edition of *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid* as saying: "Ondaatje seems to me like some kind of illusionist, the lyric and prose part of *Billy the Kid* being a flat mosaic of different colors which blend into a shimmering kaleidoscope as you near the end of the book. Ondaatje is a very good writer." That this is a fairly typical reaction explains both its popularity and its critical acceptance, and why it won the Governor General's Award.

Ondaatje's subjects range from Billy the Kid to Buddy Bolden, the legendary New Orleans trumpeter who is the protagonist of *Coming Through Slaughter*, from Henri Rousseau to King Kong from his parents to his children from exploding stars to a Shell vapon strip covered in flies in the barn where he writes on his farm each summer, and they cover almost everything imaginable among these possibilities. He can be witty, comic, darkly brooding, warmly compassionate, savagely violent and bitingly tender. Things are never quite what they seem in Ondaatje's poetic universe, but they are always perceived in a rich and vibrant manner.

As a reader of his own work, Ondaatje is both persuasive and charming, yet he has never yet given in to that worst of all temptations for the poet, the temptation to be nothing more than an entertainer. He realizes the power inherent in his work and he lets that power speak for itself through him. Sometimes there is comedy, even farce, often there are subtly shifting moods that draw an audience in to some emotional complicity with the poem. But, whatever the poem or the mood it conjures up, you can be sure it will be memorable.

Ondaatje's most recent small book was advertised, in typically outrageous fashion, as a book on 'dance'. It is titled *Elimination Dance*, and it is very funny, indeed. The fact that the comedy contains a barbed hook simply reveals once again that what is entertaining need not be simply superficial. His reading won't be superficial, but it will be fun.

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In last Friday Gateway, our review of Walterdale Theatre's *Abelard and Heloise* incorrectly credited the role of playing the role of Sister Godric. In fact, the role was admirably handled by Vivien Bosley. We apologize to Ms. Bosley for this error.