

Entertainment

Encounters music series a triumph



Malcolm Forsyth

Encounters Concert Series
U of A Music Department
Program One
October 5
Convocation Hall

review by John Charles

The Encounters concerts, launched Saturday night, may prove to be the best classical series anywhere in town this season. Certainly this concert was a triumph, with music from different epochs and for different combinations all containing a lofty spirituality that was directly communicated to the listeners.

Series chairman Malcolm Forsyth balanced the program admirably, giving us music that was centuries old and new music by a faculty member. The special festive aura of this concert came not only from the music itself but also from the performers' sense of involvement, making the concert a true celebration of music.

Two musical birthdays were celebrated — Domenico Scarlatti's tricentennial and the 400th anniversary of Heinrich Schutz's birth. Scarlatti's more than 500 keyboard sonatas form a diminutive musical world all their own, and exploring them can be as rewarding and intriguing as a vast Bruckner or Mahler symphony.

Robert Stangeland played six of these one-movement works with stylish accuracy.

Some pianists are drawn to these works because they offer an opportunity for rattling off a lot of glittering trills and rapid toccata passages. But except for the final two sonatas, Stangeland avoided that temptation. He produced an appropriately bright crisp tone for the *F minor Sonata*, but brought out the haunting contrasts of hammering left-hand and caressing right in the *G major Sonata*. The sunny, extrovert *E major Sonata* was splendidly played, followed by the *B minor Sonata* (K. 87), with Stangeland capturing the sombrely majestic, improvisatory qualities handsomely.

Whatever the individual mood, these pieces are very much little soliloquies, like an Emily Dickinson poem, and their epigrammatic charm makes them addictive.

Arnold Bax's *Elegiac Trio* (1916) is a delicately brooding work for the unlikely combination of flute, viola and harp. Bax was a British neo-romantic who died in 1953. He has a cult following for his gorgeously colorful symphonies and tone poems, so it's instructive to hear how inventive he is with such a subdued, rigorously controlled trio.

Bax loved Celtic myths and wrote many works for harp because of its legendary associations. This 11-minute work seems occasionally meandering, but Bax creates sounds which seem ancient yet new, and the interweaving melodies are ingeniously handled in solo, duet, and trio, resulting in grief struck music that is markedly unsentimental.

The three performers — all ESO members — were Shelley Younge, flute, Stephen Bryant, viola, and Nora Bumanis, harp, and they gave a concentrated, warm performance.

Bryant is usually a violinist, but his tone on the darker viola was rich and lovely. And Bumanis' expertise with this expressive music made you realize what a trivialized instrument the noble harp often is.

Alfred Fisher's *Small Worlds: Music for String Trio* was commissioned by the Suzuki organization and premiered two months ago at the Jubilee Auditorium. Saturday's performance was technically top notch since violinist Norman Nelson, violist Michael Bowie, and cellist Colin Ryan have mastered the work's bristling difficulties — extended trills, split-second dovetailed phrases and extreme dynamics.

Good music, like any other art form, is usually about something, not just a pattern of

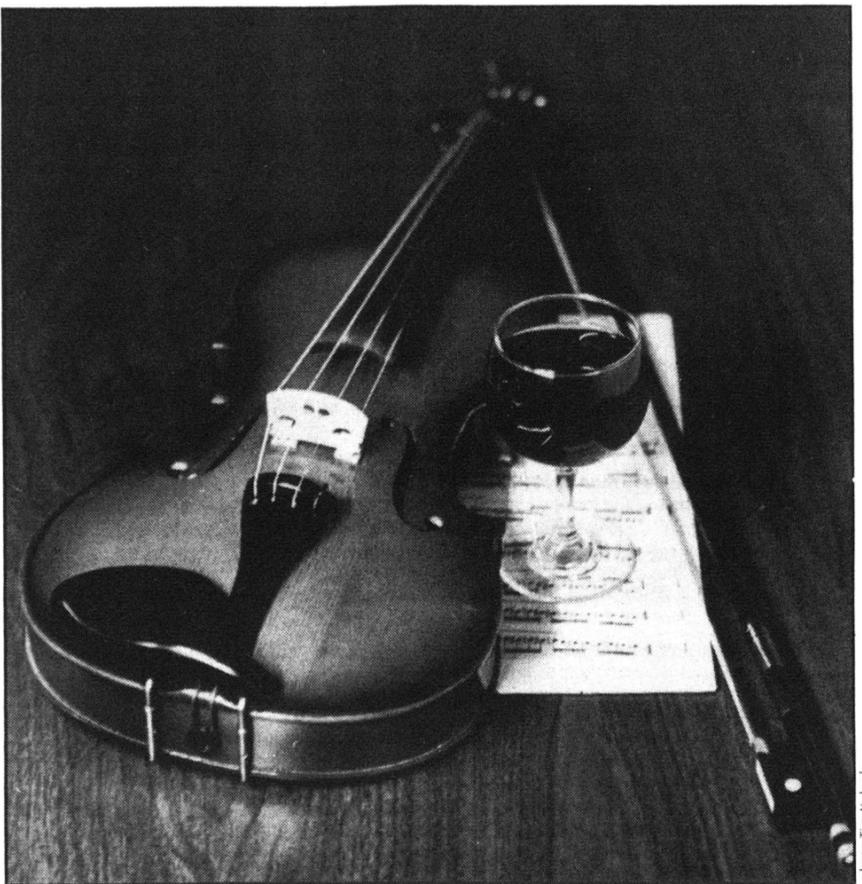


photo: Jim Kubash

sound in space, and Fisher's work contains a view of the world which, though meant to be intuited, nevertheless provides a striking coherent and powerful experience.

The spirituality of this work is especially notable in the fourth and sixth movements. The fourth is a set of variations based on a richly harmonized hymn-like melody. The sixth, entitled *Other Worlds*, retraces the work's themes from the still viewpoint of eternity, with eerily sustained high cello notes and tiny ripples of sound from the violin.

Having heard a tape of Fisher's piece several times, I can affirm that it becomes more interesting on each hearing.

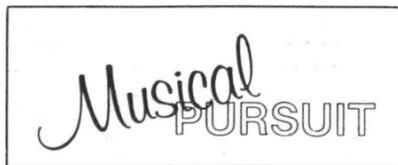
Three radiant motets by Schutz, sung by the

U of A Madrigal Singers and conducted by Leonard Ratzlaff ended the program.

The 26 singers all seemed to have good individual voices, and while the women had a more consistently blended tone, the sound was generally well balanced.

Most spectacular was the second motet, *Herr, nun lassest du deinen*, etc., written for two choirs in such a way that the singers stood in four separate locations to display the elaborate antiphonal effects. The audience was thus surrounded by the music, which vividly suggested the omniscience of God. If a certain joyous intensity was lacking — which is the essence of Schutz — these were still strongly disciplined performances.

Pulling back the covers



by Don Teplyske

The response to last week's Musical Pursuit was overwhelming. Several correct entries were submitted and one was randomly selected; congratulations to Ben Murray who receives a five dollar record token from Auracle Records (10808 - 82 ave.)

Today's Musical Pursuit category deals with re-recordings of hit singles. In the clues below, the original artist and the covering performer are mentioned. Your mission is to list the nine songs and to drop them at the Gateway office, Room 282 SUB. As usual, the prize is a five dollar Auracle Records token. The Continual Pursuit artist remains a mystery, though the entries continue to come in. Today, I recap the previous clues and provide a fourth. Good luck.

Feature Topic: Pulling Back The Covers

1. In 1984, Tom Robinson scored British success with his version of a 1974 Steely Dan classic.
2. Inarguably the best cover band of all-time, Ramones (on *Rocket To Russia*) recorded the Trashmen's 1963 surfing anthem.
3. Recently, the Manhattans did a job of Sam Cooke's bit hit from 1957.
4. Grand Funk Railroad destroyed Little Eva's dance ditty from 1962.
5. The Drifters made it big with it in 1964 and

Rickie Lee Jones redid it in the 1983.

6. In 1966, Eddie Floyd recorded it and in 1979 Amii Stewart became a disco star because of it.

7. Rod Stewart (1984) and Santers (1983) have recorded this song recently but Free's 1970 version is still the standard.

8. Jimmy Jones recorded this song in 1960 while James Taylor did it seventeen years later.

9. I'm not sure why anyone would attempt to record a Bruce Springsteen classic, but Frankie Goes to Hollywood did on their debut album.

Continual Pursuit

Clue #1 — Son of a Jamaican pro soccer player, this singer wrote detective stories as a teenager.

Clue #2 — His first two novels were "The Vulture" and "The Nigger Factory".

Clue #3 — Along with his partner, he was Arista Records first signing in 1974.

Clue #4 — One of his best known songs contains this lyric: "See that black boy over there, running scared — his old man and the bottle."

Last Week's Answers

1. Connie Francis was born Constance Franconero
2. Mary Wells recorded "My Guy"
3. The Shangri-la's were produced by Shadow Morton
4. Brenda Lee recorded "I'm Sorry"
5. Martha Reeves and the Vandellas recorded "Dancing In The Streets"
6. "Ode To Billy Joe" was by Bobbie Gentry
7. Mary O'Brien changed her name to Dusty Springfield
8. Tammi Terrell recorded with Marvin Gaye
9. Aretha Franklin demanded "Respect"



Chris and Cosey

...played SUB Theatre last Saturday