

# Entertainment

## Con Hall kaleidoscope

**New Music at the University of Alberta**  
**Tues., Nov. 18, 8 p.m.**  
**Convocation Hall**

review by John Charles

A kaleidoscope of Canadian music took over the Con Hall stage on Tuesday.

Five U of A faculty composers presented works in celebration of Canada Music Week. Though they may not be works our grandchildren will listen to avidly, they added up to a thoroughly diverting evening.

William Renwick's tiny organ prelude, *Jesu, Rufe Mich* (1986), was probably created for church use, not for intense listening at a new music concert. Following a centuries-old organ tradition of brief variations based on hymn tunes, Renwick's piece employs pastel hues to accompany the serene tune. The composer gave the appealing premiere performance.

Alfred Fisher's *Five Movements For Bassoon and Cello* (1980), pitted two dark instruments against each other, then entwined them in gruff duo.

Fisher's music for cello was often soulfully Romantic, while the bassoon reacted as a perky kibbitzer. In the third piece, a conversation sprang up as the cello responded to the bassoon's trills.

All five concentrated miniatures proved immediately accessible, and were excellently played by Sherri Goethe, bassoon, and cellist Mark Eeles.

Violet Archer's *Ikpakhuaq* (1985) was played at last year's Archer Festival, and made a vital impression. Tuesday's performance of this brief piano trio, based on Eskimo weather incantations, was danced by Jacqueline Ogg and her troupe of nine.

Though colorfully costumed, the dancers provided rather banal pictorial movements which limited the music's power rather than releasing it. Archer's music is dramatic and gripping in its use of solo violin or cello, and urgent piano rhythms, but what we watched looked like Saturday matinee at the Provincial Museum. We were even shown slides of Inuit sculptures and drawings so we'd know exactly what the dancers were enacting.

Musicians Jane O'Dea, Anne Kenway, and Mark Eeles played with great conviction.

Malcolm Forsyth's ingenious work for solo horn and nine winds turned out to be another exhilarating, quirky gem by a remarkably gifted composer. Entitled *Fanfare And Three Masquerades* (1979), it was the sort of jokey piece full of musical quotes that might have been precious. Instead, it provided the richest listening experience of the evening.

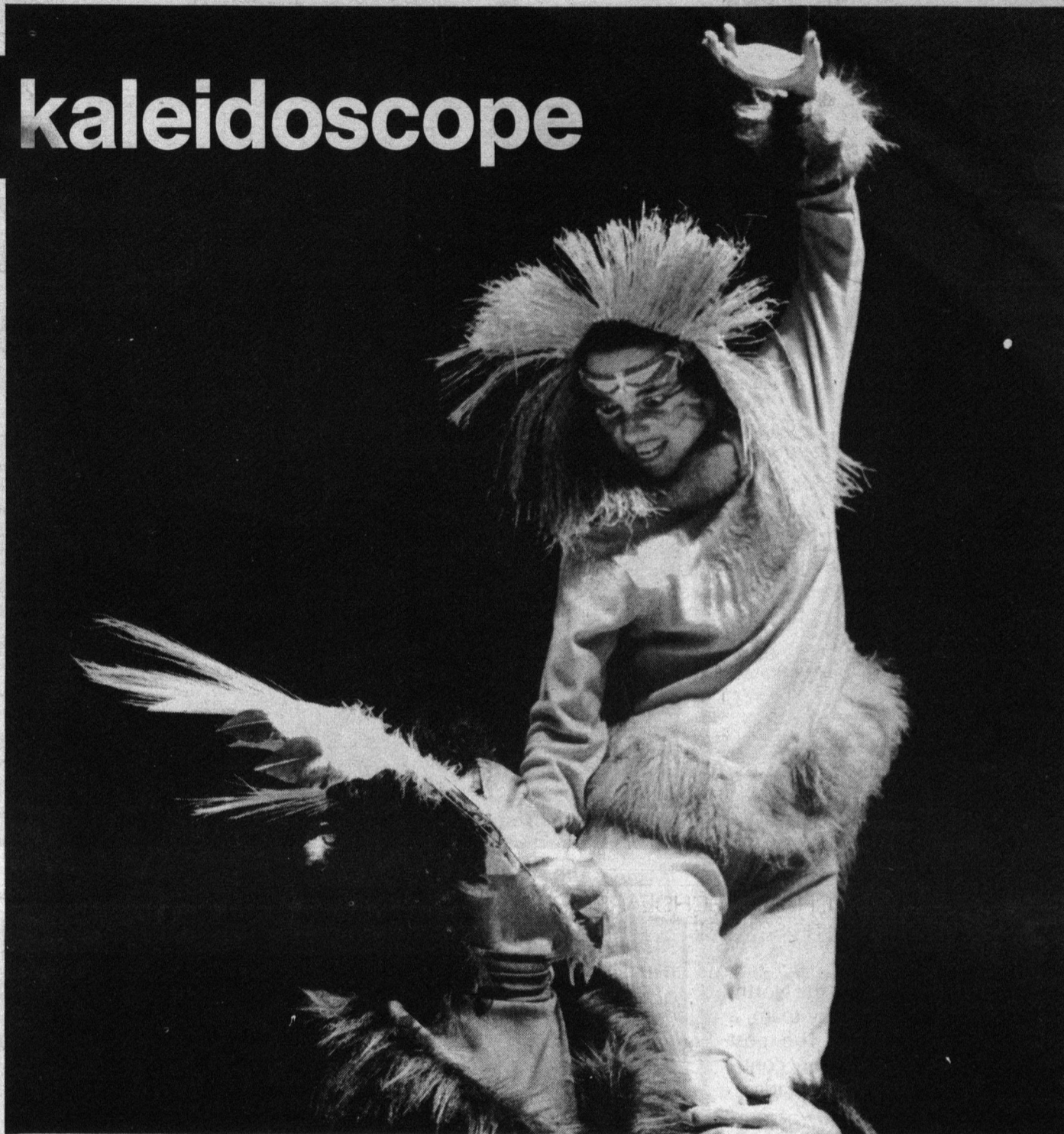
Brahms, Miaskovsky, and Schumann are quoted in snippets and at length, but Forsyth makes his own music out of this potpourri, with sombre yet colorful orchestration.

Horn soloist David Hoyt was in splendid form, and this composer-conducted performance was one of the best Edmonton's heard in a while of any music.

The final work was the niftiest. *Resonances . . . Dissonances* (1986) by George Arasimowicz, was a video-tape work using "computer generated/modified video and digitally sampled/synthesized sound," to quote the composer's note.

With Debbie Arasimowicz's dancing as the pivotal image, on a big screen in front of the stage, the 12-minute work begins with clouds and a sense of suspension, which segues into slow graceful dancers, then up-tempo dancers, and an anguished, imploring woman who crawls toward us, as abstract, sci-fi images menace her. The images then return to the initial ones.

Since it's a highly subjective show, I take full credit/blame for all adjectives above. Arasimowicz writes of the conflict of innocence and yearning as against mechanization, sinfulness and corruption (to paraphrase). As for the music, it moves from high,



Violet Archer's *Ikpakhuaq*

photo McClure

slow strings (reminiscent at times of the opening of Sibelius' *Sixty Symphony*) to a rock beat and back again.

*Resonances . . .* was entertaining, and it's

one of the few mixed media events I've witnessed which ran smoothly with ten TV monitors along the side of the hall. But for this viewer it didn't add up to anything particu-

larly moving or provocative or original, though it vividly underlined the variety of directions in which Canadian composers are moving.

## Richler lecture brings fun, fear

**Daniel Richler Lecture**  
**SUB Theatre**  
**November 18**

review by Dragos Ruiu

Daniel Richler is a journalist at heart. He talked to a very receptive and enthusiastic crowd at SUB Theatre last night about censorship, music, teenagers, media, and education. He presented the facts and attempted to get people to think...

I think a few people were disappointed. The crowd wanted rebellion. They needed someone to get up on stage and tell them that all this censorship stuff is @\$%\$. That they should fight. Well, he didn't do that, to the dismay of some.

Instead of appealing to the anger, he tried to engage intelligence. He presented the facts in a very difficult issue, an issue that doesn't break down into black and white judgments.

He was pretty funny, the audience laughed and clapped at all his jokes. He received rounds of applause when he started talking about CBC's Video Hits and the "Daffy Duck" mouthpiece that hosts it ("Heere's Corey Hart...").

There were many points brought up in his discussion, and it is unfortunate that some became lost in the complexity of the issue he portrayed.

There were harsh words for both defend-

ers and attackers of video's and rock music. On one side, we managed to get an insight to the misguided, ultra-conservative parents' groups and evangelists who stooped to any level to smear music's reputation. At one point, before a senate committee, they tried to link rock and mass murderers. "Imagine Jack the Ripper with a Walkman..."

Then the group of irate senator's wives (irate because her daughter's ears were besmirched with the allusions to masturbation in a Prince song. Now, you show me an eight year old who can understand that...) saying that they want 'voluntary' ratings of records. "We aren't asking for government action, we want these measures to be voluntary..."

To this Richler responds, "If they are not asking for government action, what the hell are they doing in the senate?"

Then there was the other side, the illiterate, mental amoeboids saying "Like, you know man, Rock doesn't bear psycho-analyzing. It's just party, man!" And the ruthless musicians willing to do anything to make a buck...

Using some specific examples, he shed some light on the seedy side of the musicians. We saw several real cute ole bands, with some real cute ole album covers showing real cute ole bloodied, gruesome, dismembered female bodies being stepped on by the bank! And we got to see some banned excerpts from videos. They were

interesting, and not at all anywhere as crude as some of those album covers. Some of the video clips which were NOT banned were a lot more offensive.

Then there is the industry itself, willing to sell its musicians to the legislators for a few concession on blank tape taxes. DJ's and VJ's willing to peddle anything the record companies give them, regardless of quality. ("Now, at number three in the charts...")

And the teenagers themselves who are too illiterate to understand the subtleties of even their precious lyrics. "I talked to this girl dressed in studded spandex and leather and asked her if videos affected her. No way! She answered. Yeah, right..." Richler said.

A pretty bleak picture, from either side. "But there are some bright points," Richler points out. He gave several examples of enlightening and informative songs and videos. He explained how video can be used as a teaching medium, if anyone cared enough...

"The technology is exploding, soon it will be everywhere. No matter how much they legislate against it..." says Richler.

Even more informative was the 'Christian' who took Richler to task for his saying "they often see Satan in every nook and cranny." He essentially stated that his role as a Christian was to look for Satan in every cranny and to convert as many of those around him as possible. Yikes...!

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