

# An encounter with the unexpected

Encounters  
Con Hall  
Sunday, Oct.

review by John Charles

The Music Department's Encounters concerts emphasize the unexpected, and you can't get more unexpected than a last-minute cancellation.

Ernesto Lejano's performance of Liszt fell through at Sunday's Con Hall concert due to an infection of his left hand. And on four hours' notice, his 16-year-old pupil, Micah Ui, stepped in with two works of Chopin.

Under the circumstances it's not fair to review the very talented and disciplined Ms. Ui, though she did bring poetry and clarity to the *Andante Spianato et Grande Polonaise*. It was gracious of her to perform at all, and she can be heard under proper conditions on Nov. 15 at Central United Church in a full-fledged recital.

The special blend of Encounters evenings is the juxtaposition of old and new, instrumental and vocal. The vocal contribution on Sunday was the first performance of faculty member Gerhard

Krapf's *Psalm 107*.

Written for baritone Harold Wiens, and the Con Hall organ — ably played by Marnie Giesbrecht-Segger — this is a 20-minute cantata on the well-known psalm that begins: "O give thanks to the Lord, for he is most gracious."

Krapf's conservative musical idiom is familiar from much other German church music. The organ has a brief prelude and coda, and accompanies the singer, sometimes with chordal outbursts for dire events, and eerie harmonies when "dried-up rivers" are evoked. The work's shape is a bit sprawling; it's in a single movement, rather than a series of smaller movements, and aside from the lovely phrase which recurs at the words "Let them thank the Lord," there aren't many connecting devices to provide a sense of unity.

The work's strength is in the vocal line, which hovers between aria and recitative, and gives Wiens ample opportunity to reveal his richly mellow and eloquent voice. Wiens has seldom sounded more impressive, or more involved with text and music, and with his example it's likely Krapf's work will prove a useful addition to



Harold Wiens

the repertoire.

German texts with translation on alternate lines were provided in the programs, which made it easy to follow.

The evening's wild and hairy work was Murray Schafer's *The Crown of Ariadne*. Schafer is one of the few Canadian composers with an international reputation, and the flamboyance and ingenuity of this piece shows why.

Written in 1979, for solo harp, it includes a lot of percussion also played by the harpist. It's a ritual performance work, reminiscent of American composer George Crumb's dramatic chamber works — even including a *Dance of the Night Insects*, which Crumb has done in several works.

Watching harpist Nora Bumanis as she put on ankle bells, or brushed cymbals

with her fingers, rubbed harp strings with a stick, and flicked various bells, is a sensual experience, as Schafer clearly means it to be. It's as much part of the work as the delicate music she conjures up. And as she produces this thread of sound she becomes a modern Ariadne — the Cretan princess who led Theseus out of the Labyrinth with a thread, after he'd slain the sacred bull.

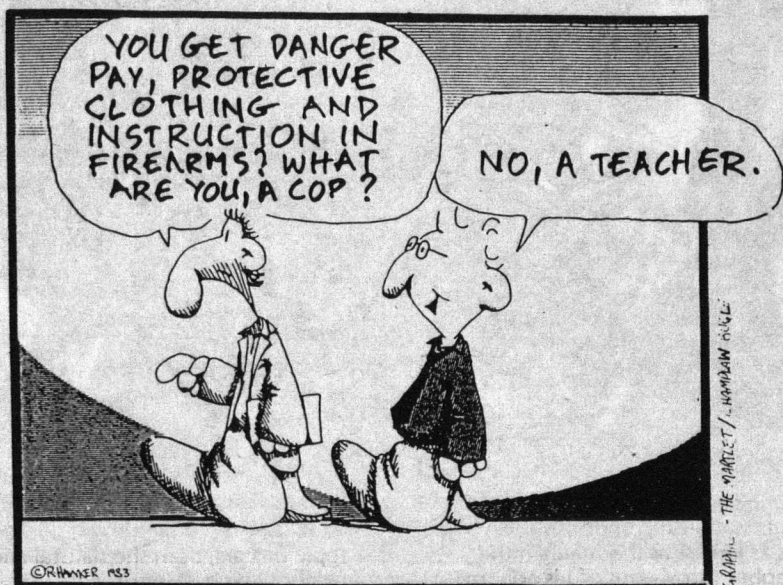
Bumanis played with bright, bold, primitive sounds, and clearly delighted in the work. She played three of the five movements, as some of her newly acquired percussion gear had not yet arrived. But she'll play the whole work in January.

Delight in the music was noticeably lacking from performers of the final work, Mozart's *Divertimento in B Flat, K. 287*. Though actually a sextet for two horns and strings, it's usually played by chamber orchestras, and to hear the proper intimacy and balance of this beautiful work was a delight.

But leader Norman Nelson, who played the showy, elaborate first violin part, maintained a self-effacing profile, and played that way as well. So there was little zest to the 35-minute work, and with everyone earnestly playing throughout, it seemed, for one, too long.

C'mon guys, this is festive dinner-party music, not a Lenten service! It was written for a Salzburg countess' birthday, but she'd have gone to bed early confronted with this performance.

Nelson's dark tone often sounded wonderful and pure, and there was a lot of solid playing throughout this sunny, featherweight masterpiece. But the serious approach rushed the first movement a bit, so the proper mood wasn't established. And there were enough bloopers from horn player Laszlo Klein to keep you on edge, while violinist Evan Verchomin had some problematic moments too — though nothing some ensemble sparkle wouldn't have buried.



## SUB THEATRE LECTURES

☆ presents ☆

**DANIEL RICHLER**

on  
"SEX, VIOLENCE  
and CENSORSHIP  
in Rock'n Roll

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 8:00 p.m.



**ANN MEDINA**

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT  
ON

"THE ROLE OF MEDIA  
IN INTERNATIONAL  
POLITICS"

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 8:00 p.m.

TICKETS: \$1.00 for Students  
\$3.50 for Non-Students

AVAILABLE AT  
ALL BASS OUTLETS, INFO: 432-4764

An informal information session about sexual harassment, hosted by student and staff member of the President's Advisory Committee on Sexual Harassment (PACSH), will be held on the dates and times noted below:

STUDENTS' UNION BLDG., ROOM 034  
Tuesday, November 4, 12:00 noon

CLINICAL SCIENCES BUILDING, ROOM 5-101  
Wednesday, November 5, 3:00 p.m.

STUDENTS' UNION BLDG., ROOM 034  
Thursday, November 13, 1:00 p.m.

BUSINESS BUILDING, ROOM 1-09  
Thursday, November 13, 3:30 p.m.

A short film will be presented, and members of PACSH will be happy to answer questions about sexual harassment or about PACSH. All students and staff are welcome to attend any of these sessions.