

Creative Arts Remi Boucher

UNB • STU

By Marcus Peddle

Québec guitarist Rémi Boucher performed at Memorial Hall last Friday night in front of a large and appreciative audience. Mr. Boucher is well known throughout North America, as well as Europe, and is touring the Atlantic provinces as part of the Atlantic Debut series.

The programme listed "A Fancy" by John Dowland as the first item, but the concert began with *Suite in A minor* by Bach. Dowland, in fact, was not even played. The rest of the concert was delivered in this manner, with some unlisted pieces added by Mr. Boucher, creating some confusion in the audience. This is not an especially bad thing, unless you are a reviewer struggling to catch the names of composers and their music - a reviewer with the additional handicap of not speaking French, and thus finding it difficult to follow Mr Boucher's heavy French accent. Further complicating understanding was the noise created by some latecomers. As a result, I was only able to jot down the proper titles and composers of several pieces.

It occurred to me, however, during the "Venetian Gondolier's Song" (from Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words*), that the lyricism, dynamics, and

range of feelings found in the evening's selections rendered any other context unnecessary. Mr. Boucher's talent, the voice of the composers, said everything that needed to be known.

He displayed his command not only of standard guitar techniques (tremolo and harmonics, for example), but startling manoeuvres, including using the body of the guitar as a percussive instrument, creating a snare-drum effect on the strings (while simultaneously playing a melody!), and a beautiful slow strum which Mr. Boucher says he discovered while learning flamenco style. In a piece by a German composer, the strings were quickly strummed with a straight, regular rhythm while his left hand changed chords and played melody. It created an uplifting sensation, similar to the orchestral arrangement of Mussorgsky's "The Great Gate of Kiev."

Other pieces performed were An Invocation and Dance by Rodrigo (of *Concierto de Aranjueq fame*), a Canzonetta by Mendelsohn, The Four Elements by Jacques Marchand, and an encore titled "The Toy Soldier."

This concert was the last presented for the 1994-95 Creative Arts Council this year, ending the season not with a whimper but a bang.



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