

# on campus:

## DUO PACH - part 1

-Liz Smith

This is the first in a number of discussions with people around the campus - primarily people in the arts.

Mrs. Arlene Pach is the subject of the first article. Next week the interview will be with Joseph Pach. The Pachs are musicians in residence at UNB.

Arlene Nimmons Pach grew up in Kamloops, British Columbia. Her father, a dentist, played the fiddle in burlesque clubs to put himself through college, and retained his love for music all his life. Mr. Nimmons encouraged both his son and his daughter to become musicians.

As Mrs. Pach remembers, "Dad didn't want his kids to be average musicians. He wanted us to do it with complete commitment." Arlene Pach is a rationally (if not internationally) known pianist. Her brother Phil Nimmons has the Nimmons and Nine Plus Six jazz group in Toronto.

At the University of British Columbia, Arlene Pach majored in philosophy and planned to become a professor of philosophy. By this time she had a piano degree of associateship of the Royal Conservatory of Music. This was the highest degree of its type the Conservatory gave.

"If you have a talent in the arts", says Mrs. Pach, "the drive stays there. You mellow in other fields. The Royal Conservatory wanted me to take a course in Toronto."

She left Vancouver to study piano at the Royal Conservatory, but not to take the course. As she explains,

"Music is a separate existence from organized training. You must have individual freedom. The confines of the ordinary academic structure are not suitable for the magic of music."

"There is a stage with instruments when you have to do nothing but practice. You really do have to work very hard. Anyone who is in the arts learns the basic lesson of the sense of accomplishment from work."

She adds, "If you have some commitment to an idea, you waste a lot of time if you go out and look without some technique on how to manipulate your environment."

"Sartre said that the secret of Bach's genius was that he had learned to express himself within the confines of his environment."

Bach adapted himself to his sponsors. If he was employed by a choir, he wrote great choir music; if he was with a string group, he wrote beautiful music for them.

Arlene Pach learned to manipulate her environment to support herself while in Toronto.

She did concerts throughout Ontario, but, as she says, "You don't make a living out of solos. You have to do all those other things."

"All those other things" included playing for gym classes, ballet classes, and work as a rehearsal pianist for CBC television jazz shows. For two and a half years Arlene Nimmons worked

as a music critic with Nathan Cohen on a morning radio show.

While studying at the Royal Conservatory she met Joseph Pach and they were married. The "Duo Pach" was formed and Arlene Pach rarely played solo again.

After the Pachs had been married a few years they decided to get away from the music scene in Canada and the United States. They sold all their material belongings and with their young daughter, Laurie, they went to Vienna to practice.

"It was impossible to be a musician pre-Canada Council. Quebec was the only province that gave any help. We quit commercial business. Everyone thinks you're crazy to go after your pie in the sky."

For the last six years the Pachs have been musicians in residence at UNB. They were the first to hold such a position in a university in Canada.

Every Friday at noon the Duo Pach hold a chamber music concert. It is probably unique in Canada for a community to have live concerts this frequently. Yet only about 5 per cent of the people on campus ever attend.

One long-haired and bearded student sat in on a rehearsal at Memorial Hall recently, and before leaving said to Arlene Pach, "People on this campus don't know what they are missing."

"The kind of music we play is not for the masses. Ours is a very limited field," says Mrs. Pach.

Mrs. Pach suggests two main reasons why chamber music is not more popular on the campus. Society has turned people away from the classics towards rock music.

"One theory we have about the tendency to take drugs is that the news media, the musicians and the management agencies have taken music away from its original role - to provide solitude and self-knowledge; the aesthetics and spiritualism - the things kids are looking for in drugs - has been taken away from music. Music gives far greater kicks with no after affects."

"Chamber music is also a more developed taste. It comes later in life. Tastes in music are seldom static, the experience continuously varies."

"One sheer joy with music" Mrs. Pach says, "is that as you get older, all that's right within yourself gets greater. You are not always young and it's a mistake to think you always will be. I am doing something that in interest, participation and satisfaction gets greater and greater. There is no such thing as chronological time when you are developing as an artist."

Besides practicing herself every day for between three and five hours, Mrs. Pach has ten music pupils which she enjoys immensely - particularly those who have diverse interests in rock or jazz.

But as she says, "Dedicated musicians, practicing instrumentalists have to come before



trained teachers. All concert masters across Canada come from the studios of one or two dedicated people in Montreal and Toronto."

The Pach's three children all have an active interest in music. Mrs. Pach thinks that her daughter Laurie, fifteen, plays the piano better than she did at the same age. Ellen, eleven, plays the violin and has a natural sense of pitch. Joseph is only four but already shows interest, particularly in the cello.

"I would like my kids to be musicians," says Arlene Pach. "It's a great life. There are not many things you can do where you find out the truth about yourself."

The UNB Art Centre in Memorial Hall will take on the appearance of a bazaar on Friday, November 27th, when "Christmas Choice" opens. Paintings, drawings, prints, pottery and weaving by twenty Fredericton artists will crowd the walls and tables. The artists exhibiting include professional and amateur artists, students and townspeople, whose works cover a great variety of media and styles.

A Meet-the-Artists reception from 8 to 10 pm on Friday, November 27th, will open the exhibition to the public. It will then be shown until December 13th during the regular Art Centre hours - Monday to Friday from 10 to 5, and Sundays from 2 - 5.

UNB students Dean Steeves, Ann Hale and Faye Cameron will be included. All three had exhibitions of their work in the Art Centre last year.

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