

## Guelph festival attracts international entertainers

The Guelph Spring Festival will bring international performers and Canadian artists together in the southern Ontario city from April 30 to May 22.

The festival will also present the first Canadian production of Britten's powerful church opera, *Curlew River*. From the international scene, Metropolitan Opera soprano Gilda Cruz-Romo returns with pianist Richard Weitach to open the festival on April 30. French pianist Jean-Philippe Collard plays Ravel and Fauré, and with Canadian soprano Rosemarie Landry, songs by Debussy. First prize-winners in the Banff International String Quartet Competition will also give their first performance in Guelph.

The legendary Dave Brubeck offers a memorable evening of jazz while multi-talented actor Henry Woolf brings wit and pathos to *Hancock's Last Half Hour*. Britten's biographer Donald Mitchell will offer an introduction to Britten's moving church opera *Curlew River* which stars Metropolitan Opera tenor George Shirley. Mummenschanz brings mime magic, and British conductor John Alldis directs the 500 voices of Choirs in Contact in Haydn's

glorious oratorio, *The Creation*.

Canadian tenor James McLean and harpist Gianetta Baril will perform at the picturesque Elora Mill Inn. *Répercussion*, four dynamic young percussionists from Montreal, offer music from Bach to Québécois folk songs with charm and panache. Tenor Mark DuBois and baritone Mark Pedrotti in concert will sing great melodies from opera to Broadway. The Guelph Chamber Choir presents the world *première* of a work by Claude Vivier and *La Messe Basse* by Fauré and *Dixit Dominus* by Handel with soloists Diane Loeb and Jane MacKenzie. Young violinist Gwen Hoebig and cellist Desmond Hoebig will perform with Orchestra London under Alexis Hauser. Virtuoso pianist Anton Kuerti is joined for the *Liebeslieder Waltzes* by pianist Patricia Parr and soloists Janet Stübbs, Jane MacKenzie, Mark DuBois and Christopher Cameron in the *Beauty of Brahms*. Lyrical tenor Glyn Evans and soprano Barbara Collier sing Victorian Parlour Songs in one of the handsome stone churches of Fergus. And there is a dynamic performance by the interna-

tionally celebrated Royal Winnipeg Ballet.

Britten's powerful church parable *Curlew River* also stars Canadian baritone Mark Pedrotti, Gary Relyea and Ingemar Korjus. Music director is Nicholas Goldschmidt and stage director is Bill Glassco. Lighting, costume and set design are by Jim Plaxton, with masks by Felix Mirbt. The male voices of the Elmer Iseler Singers provide the Monks' chorus.

## Violin-maker designs world class instruments

In the sublime world of violin-making, James MacCleave stands quietly among the best, reports Alan Adams of the *Canadian Press*.

Mr. MacCleave's violins have echoed through the concert halls of Europe and North America. The 68-year-old retired school teacher's violins are patterned after those of the Italian masters, but he considers his instruments just a part of a lifelong hobby of working with wood.

It was in 1935 when MacCleave first applied himself to the craft of wood-working. Since then, he has turned out everything from three-piece bedroom suites to guitars and violins in the small shop behind his two-storey house in rural Cumberland County, Nova Scotia where he lives with his wife, Evelyn.

Mr. MacCleave, who relies on word of mouth to sell his instruments, cannot remember how many he has made. But his first one still stands out in his mind.

He was working on a guitar and somehow got the idea of trying a violin. After a few moments of thought, he deciphered the design and primed himself for the task.

"I did not think it would be too hard," he said. "And I figured I did well with what I had to work with."

Spruce for the soundboards and maple for the sides, back, top and neck come from Europe and the ebony for the fingerboard is from Africa.

"I rub every piece and decide from the sound if it is any good," said Mr. MacCleave.

He starts by wedging the sideboards in a frame. While they gradually come to hold the shape of a violin, he carves the back and front pieces. He then glues the pieces together along with the fingerboard and lets the violin set before putting the final touches to it.

It usually takes him 150 hours to complete an instrument.

## Catalogue of Canadian composer's work published

The National Library of Canada has published a listing of the works of Canadian composer Alexis Contant with a bibliography, discography and an inventory of the Contant papers.

Montreal-born Alexis Contant was one of the few nineteenth-century Canadian composers who did not go abroad either to study or to pursue his career. According to Helmut Kallmann, who wrote the preface to the catalogue, Contant "became Canada's first composer of the large canvas", writing masses, oratorios, and chamber music, in addition to piano music, songs, and other church music. At the time of his death, Contant had written more large-scale pieces than any other Canadian composer.

*Alexis Contant: Catalogue* reflects all the information currently available on the life and musical career of Alexis Contant. The 1979 exhibition *Alexis Contant: The Composer and His Milieu: 1858-1918* provided much of the impetus for its compilation, but it contains information that has come to light even since then.

Two indexes, one of titles and first



Alexis Contant

lines and one of authors and composers, complete the work.

*Alexis Contant: Catalogue* can be ordered from the Canadian Government Publishing Centre, Supply and Services Canada, Ottawa, Canada K1A 0S9.