

Concert Series

Between the first of January and the first of April this year the Department of Music of the University of Alberta will present over fifty concerts in its Centennial Concert Series.

On Sunday, January 22 the Centennial Festival Orchestra will perform Ralph Vaughan Williams' "The Lark Ascending" with violinist Jerry Ozipko as soloist; Beethoven's first piano concerto with Hugh Stacey as soloist and his second piano concerto with Tess Thornton as soloist; and Bruch's G minor violin concerto with Yoko Oike as soloist. The concert is in

Convocation Hall at 8:30 p.m. and there is no charge for admission.

Among the other concerts to come are string quartet concerts on Sunday, January 29, February 5 and February 12, another Centennial Festival Orchestra concert on February 19, U of A Mixed Chorus Concert February 2, 3, and 4 and many other vocal and instrumental concerts by university staff and students as well as visiting artists.

Many of the concerts are free. A detailed calendar showing the entire Centennial Concert Series is available from the Music Department office in the Arts Building.

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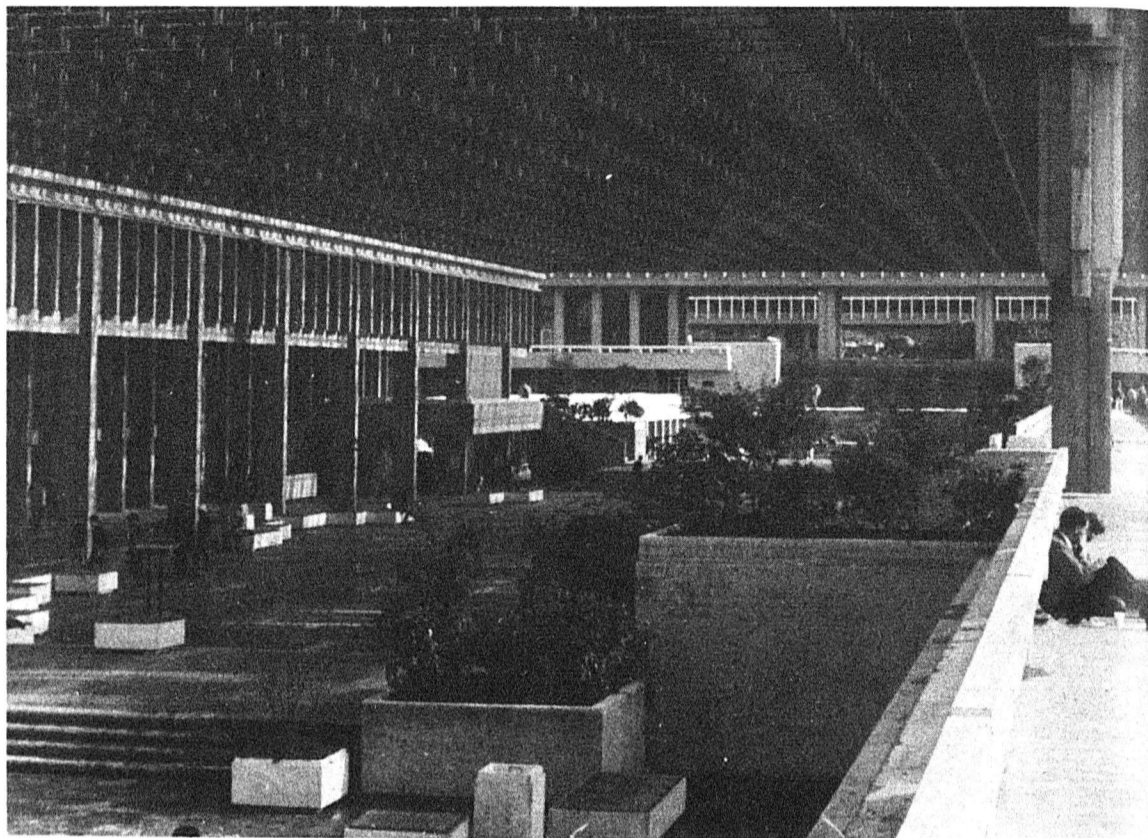
That's nice, but... But this:

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—photo courtesy SFU Peak

PLEASANT UNDER GLASS—This is the mall of beautiful Simon Fraser University (known to UBC students as Simon Fraser Academy), located in Burnaby, British Columbia. Most of the mall area is protected by a glass roof, and the classrooms, theatre, and library open from it. This ingenious arrangement enables students to escape the rainy coastal weather. Much of the building is finished in plain concrete which, with the predominance of stairs and walkways, gives the university a truly Spartan air.

Books, etc.

or, Says Mac—Clue in!

COLUMNIST JOINS IN-CROWD—I blush to admit it, but I have finally succumbed to the forces surrounding me. A few weeks ago I broke down and bought a copy of Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media*, now available in a Signet paperback at 95 cents.

This is probably the most talked-about non-fiction book of the decade (with the possible exception of Ralph Nader's book on auto safety, which the laws of good taste will not allow me to discuss here), and has single-handedly driven more undergraduates to the brink of despair than any other.

I'm not talking about those students who have read it, but rather about those who haven't, but nonetheless are forced to listen to conversations and lectures which call on McLuhan to witness points of view on Yeats, the fall of the Roman Empire, and any other of the pressing issues of our time.

The name of McLuhan is, in short, in the air everywhere these days. Like Tolkein, he is a fad, and, I hasten to add, like Tolkein he is a fad for a very good reason.

Marshall McLuhan is generally described as a "communications philosopher". It is singularly odd that such a specialized profession should skyrocket to fame in the way it has. The reasons, I think, are two: McLuhan is an old U of T man, and is thus assured of a good discipleship among the Canadian intelligentsia; and, more important, what he is saying could conceivably be the most significant insight of the century.

And there we have one of the great controversies of our time. The critical world is divided into two factions: those who think of McLuhan as a babbling little boy spouting one inanity after another, and those who view him as a prophet of a new age, holding the key to social salvation.

Both factions are too extreme in their views. The confusion probably stems from McLuhan's strange writing style, which can be interpreted variously as mystic—hinting at truths far beyond those which are patently expressed—or as confused and meaningless, because it really is quite illogical and difficult to comprehend (though not as difficult as I had been led to believe).

There can be little doubt that McLuhan does have something to say. He sees the present day as a turning point, where society is becoming decentralized and is returning to the tribalism of preliterate times. Why? Because what he calls "cool" media (those which require intense participation, such as television and telephone) are gaining predominance over the "hot" ones, notably print, which have shaped society for the last five hundred years.

What he says is probably true, provided you accept his basic maxim that "the medium is the message". The problem is that he is arguing solely on his own premises; hence understanding McLuhan is not as difficult as knowing how seriously to take him.

Obviously there are a lot of people who are taking him too seriously, and quoting his books as if they were the sum total of knowledge. But he does not deserve to be ignored. Read *Understanding Media*, but read it critically. If nothing else, it will enable you to understand what your friends and professors are talking about.

WHO SAYS GATEWAY STAFFERS HAVE NO TALENT—Bruce Powe was the managing editor of *The Gateway* some fifteen years ago, and now he has gone on to better things. He has, by way of a Centennial project, written *Expresso '67*, a guide to the real World's Fair at Baie Murphy, Quebec. This fair is built around the theme, "The Whirl of Man", featuring "Man the Seducer", "Man the Exploiter", and so on.

In addition to this handy guide to Canada's second World's Fair, Mr. Powe has provided a number of handy hints on how your community can celebrate our Centennial of Conflagration, anytime between now and 1970. He includes a number of Centennial Pageants on historical events (the Real Rebellion, etc.), which promise to be a storehouse of Truly Canadian bad puns for years to come. Anyone who has ever read the little plays which occasionally find their way to the Arts Page will be familiar with the style.

At the Bookstore, under \$1.50.

—Terry Donnelly