

## An unforgettable evening of musical entertainment



"OK Guys! Purple Haze IN G!" Amsterdam guitar trio pause before a strummin' n' pickin' storm.

One of the finest guitar ensembles in the world, the Amsterdam Guitar Trio, will perform works by Bach, Debussy, Chopin and Meijering at the Playhouse tonight, at 8 pm. Deemed as superlative musicians for their virtually flawless technique, beauty of tone and originality of repertoire, the Amsterdam Guitar Trio promises an unforgettable evening of musical entertainment.

The Trio of Olga Frassen, Johan Dorrestein and Helenus de Rijke met almost by accident while they were studying at the Sweelinck Conservatorium in Amsterdam. Called upon to play a new composition, the three guitarists were immediately recognized for their great musicality.

In time, the Trio moved from interpreting contemporary music to transposing classical compositions. It is through this

revival of an old -- but now somewhat lost -- tradition of arranging and ornamenting their music that the Amsterdam Guitar Trio has given new life to a variety of compositions, ranging from 16th-century lute music to piano works by Debussy and Faure. In 1985, they won the prestigious Edison award for their transcriptions of the Brandenburg Concertos by Bach and Vivaldi's Four Seasons. In its 25-year history, the prize has only twice before been awarded to a guitar recording -- both times to Julian Bream.

In 1981, the Trio gave its London debut at Wigmore Hall, launching a career that has resulted in tours of the United States, Canada, the Far East and most European countries.

Tickets are \$10 adult, \$8 senior and \$5 for students.

The Royal Trust Tour of the Canadian Opera Company Ensemble presents Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffmann* next Wednesday at the Playhouse at 8 p.m.

HANS NIEUWENHUIS

The French title of *The Tales of Hoffmann* is *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. The word "conte" in French is also used for fairy tales and it could be appropriate to formulate the title, "The Fantasy Tales of the Poet Hoffmann".

The original version of the opera, in my opinion, is highly symbolic. Only the first and the last Acts are set in the real world (an inn), the other Acts are fantasies of Hoffmann and have a strong symbolic meaning, as many fair tales do. During his whole life Offenbach wanted to write that he called a "real" opera and he judged his other works as light entertainment. A real opera meant for him a work that dealt with a serious philosophical subject. An early attempt (*Die Rheinnixen*, a grand romantic opera in German for the Hofoper in Vienna 1864) failed due to an inadequate libretto. Offenbach used parts of this work for *The Tales of Hoffmann* such as overture for *Rheinnixen*.

One can say that *The Tales of Hoffmann* is a serious opera and not light entertainment full of nice pictures and visual display. This does not mean that Offenbach's many witty works that we know of, such as *Orpheus in the Underworld* and *La Vie Parisienne*, have completely disappeared. Like many good dramas of Shakespeare, *The Tales of*

## Men of genius leave interesting but complex messages behind" - Symbolic Opera at Playhouse



"OK Girls no good review, no goulash." The ladies get down to some serious opera.

*Hoffmann* contains elements of comedy and sometimes a wonderful sense of humour.

*The Tales of Hoffmann* is so rich in symbols and double meanings that it is difficult to choose which line to develop. The poet Hoffmann writes about love but in reality he is not very successful with women. He tries to escape in a fantasy world where he hopes to have better luck but his fantasies are no different from his reality. Every attempt to start and maintain a relationship with a woman fails. The three fantasies - Olympia, Antonia and Giulietta - are all fantasies about the same woman, therefore Offenbach wrote these female parts for one singer.

Hoffmann has only one happy relationship with a symbolic woman, the Muse. But the Muse knows that every artist

without experience in real life will never become a good artist. Therefore she guides Hoffmann and saves him when he is in trouble but never stops him from making contact with another woman. In the end, she (the Muse) will profit from the experience because the artist can use his experience from real life in his art. This, in my opinion, is the real message of the opera and it is the last message Offenbach left for us. Like Mozart's *The Magic Flute* and Wagner's *Parzifal*, it is a beautiful testament. But not unlike these works, *The Tales of Hoffmann* is a complex and difficult opera to understand in its full glory. Men of genius leave interesting but complex messages behind.



Sneak Preview  
Tuesday  
Oct 20  
\$5.00

TNB's Contact Theater  
Presents  
**McClure**  
by  
Munroe Scott  
A Theatre Aquarius Production

Former moderator of the United Church, Robert McClure, worked as a medical missionary in China. This is the story of his struggle and his triumphs there.

Wed. Oct. 21 - Sat. Oct. 24  
Edmund Casey Hall, St. Thomas  
University

8:00 p.m. Adults \$8.00  
Students \$5.00

For ticket information and reservations call the Playhouse at 458-8344.

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TNB Contact Theatre  
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## ★ ★ Culture for the uninitiated ★ ★

### Formalism, abstraction and diversity at UNB Art Centre

For the culturally illiterate, stepping into a room full of modern paintings can be a daunting experience. Waves of incomprehension, and inadequacy mingle with regret for the many masterpieces produced in kindergarten and so carelessly tossed in the garbage can after a brief exhibition on the fridge door. It is comforting, to learn, therefore, that there is a rhyme and reason to abstract art, and that it is, in fact, possible for we, the common folk, to understand it and to enjoy it.

"Saskatchewan Art: Tradition and Diversity", currently on exhibition at the U.N.B. Art Centre in Memorial Hall, offers a wonderful opportunity

for those eager to unravel one of life's little mysteries, or merely to view an interesting collection of work. Arranged by Cindy Richmond, intern curator at the Art Centre, the presentation showcases the work of fourteen young artists, representative of the contemporary art scene in the province.

As Ms. Richmond explains, Saskatchewan is heir to two dominant traditions in painting. In the nineteenth century, landscapes were the most popular subject matter, and this influence continues to the present day. In the 1950's, segments of the international artistic community rebelled against the political propaganda of the McCarthy era and

began to produce abstract works totally devoid of message. The emphasis with this type of painting (known as formalism) is on technique and aesthetics - the use of colour, light, texture, shapes and different media.

The influence of both of these traditions is evidenced in the work on display in Mem Hall. Landscapes remain popular, but are interpreted through Formalist technique. Increasingly, as noted in the title of the exhibit, new artists are diversifying both in subject matter and philosophical approach. In addition, the impact of different life experiences, and physical environment are present. The result is a show that runs the gamut from silent, monochromatic geometrical shapes through vibrant, fluid, unfinished images, to blatant social statements.

The key to appreciating the artists' efforts and not writing him/her off as engaging in incoherent self-indulgence, is to look at these pieces for what they are. With the exception of Grant McConnel and Rick Gorenko, these artists are not using their paintings as a medium for social commentary. They are rather, focused on the medium itself and explore in several directions its possibilities in a strictly methodological sense. As technical exercises, looking at a few of these paintings is about as interesting as listening to someone practice scales on the piano (the black triangles and ink blots, for example). However, for the most part these works are intriguing and even captivating when regarded individually. Collectively, they are interesting as a cross section of regional art with traceable influences.

Natalie Folster