

Nicholas Arthur

KILBURN

MEMORIAL CONCERT SERIES

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Presenting

Joseph Swensen, violinist

with

Yuri Funahashi, pianist

Friday, November 2, 1990 at 8:00 pm

Convocation Hall, Arts Building

University of Alberta

Fratres by Arvo Pärt

Arvo Pärt was born in Estonia, a western region of the U.S.S.R., in 1935. Most of his composition experience is a result of his association with the Music Division of Estonian Radio for whom he was a recording director from 1958. While in their employ, Pärt wrote over fifty film scores. In 1967, Pärt resigned his post and devoted himself exclusively to composition. He immigrated to West Berlin in 1982.

Pärt does not confine himself to any particular style. He began composing in a neo-baroque style and has, at times, embraced free dissonance, minimalism, polytonality, pointillism, and strict serialism. *Fratres* is a part of a series of works which ended a period of compositional silence from 1974-76. During these years, Pärt studied the choral musics of Franco-Flemish composers from the Fourteenth through Sixteenth Centuries which included the works of Machaut, Obrecht, Ockeghem, and Josquin. From the influence of the sonorous, subtle works of the early masters, Pärt let blossom his penchant for poignant horizontal ideas: this music is composed of drones and melodies.

In 1977, Pärt composed his first version of *Fratre* for "three voices above a pedal point for seven Early or Modern Instruments." In 1980, he composed *Fratres*, variations on a theme originally from *Fratre*, for violin and piano, as a commission from the Salzburg Festival. This work is dedicated to Gidon and Elena Kremer who gave the premiere performance at the Salzburg Festival in 1980. There also exists an additional *Fratres* for the twelve cellists of the Berlin Philharmonic.

Fratres begins with a prelude for solo violin which features virtuosic arpeggios. When the piano enters, it marks the initial statement of the theme supported by an open fifth pedal point in the violin. Although the work is structured around additive rhythms, the compositional techniques never dictate the sound. *Fratres* is an exquisite and beautiful piece. Pärt utilized multiple stops, pizzicato and harmonics on the violin, always striving to maintain a resonant, pure sonority. Perhaps the most ethereal moment comes near the end of the work when the violin engages artificial harmonics in an extremely high register.

Dr Carolyn Bremer

Fiddler's Galaxy by Kenneth Frazelle

Fiddler's Galaxy takes its name from the Appalachian town of Galax, Virginia, where the oldest fiddlers convention in the United States is held, and where a unique style of fiddle playing has existed since the early Nineteenth Century. I have borrowed bowings, phrasing, and particular versions of tunes from the Galax area for this composition.

The piece is in two sections. The first, "Old Time Conventions", is slow; melodic lines rise and fall like mountain ridges as they reach into the past for fragments of the old music. "Breakdowns", the second section, is fast; it is a series of dances that becomes a contest between the performers. "Breakdowns" are distinctive Appalachian fiddle tunes derived from the reels and hornpipes the settlers brought from the British Isles.

I spend much of my time in the Blue Ridge Mountains near Galax, where I enjoy the old-time music I have incorporated into this musical fantasy. *Fiddler's Galaxy* was composed in the summer of 1989.

Kenneth Frazelle

Programme:

Fratres for Violin and Piano (1980)

Arvo Pärt
(b. 1935)

Sonata in G minor for Violin and Piano (1916-17)

Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)

Allegro vivo

Intermède: Fantasque et léger

Finale: Très Animé

Fiddler's Galaxy (1989)

Kenneth Frazelle
(b. 1955)

I. Old Time Conventions

II. Breakdowns

INTERMISSION

Sonata in A Major (1886)

César Franck
(1822-1890)

Allegretto ben moderato

Allegro

Recitativo - fantasia

Allegretto poco mosso

Joseph Swensen

Joseph Swensen is rapidly becoming one of the most important musicians of his generation. Since his highly acclaimed New York debut in 1983, his orchestral engagements have included most major ensembles in Canada and the United States. In Europe he has performed with orchestras in England, Finland, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, Italy, Norway, Holland and Austria. Some of the noted conductors he has collaborated with are Rudolf Barshai, Paavo Berglund, Charles Dutoit, Mariss Jansons, Zdenek Macal, André Previn, Leonard Slatkin, Edo de Waart, Hugh Wolff, and David Zinman. Mr Swensen has also made two major tours of the Far East.

A highly visible recitalist, Joseph Swensen appears on many prestigious music series in the U.S. and Europe. A devoted performer of chamber music he has participated in many festivals and has performed with Isaac Stern on the latter's sixtieth birthday concert at Carnegie Hall.

Joseph Swensen is an exclusive BMG/RCA Red Seal recording artist and his debut record with the Royal Philharmonic conducted by André Previn was released in 1988. He has recorded the first two volumes of the complete Schubert works for violin and piano with pianist Jeffrey Kahane.

Born into a musical family, he began studying piano at age three and violin at age five. He first attended the Juilliard School on a scholarship at age seven as a pianist. Three years later he entered Juilliard as a violinist and studied with the renowned pedagogue Dorothy DeLay for twelve years. His other teachers include Robert Mann and Felix Galimir (*violin*), Christopher Sager and Thomas Schumacher (*piano*), Vincent Persichetti and David Diamond (*composition*), and Otto-Werner Mueller, Jorge Mester, Murray Sidlin and Lawrence Foster (*conducting*). Isaac Stern has been an important mentor and a significant source of inspiration over the years.

Nicholas Arthur Kilburn Memorial Concert Series

This series of annual concerts was organized in memory of Nicholas Arthur Kilburn (1875-1931), a former member of the University of Alberta Board of Governors, by his sons the late Nicholas Weldon and Peter (BA, University of Alberta, 1929).