

# In Recital

**Brent Violini Pierce**

Candidate for the Master of Music degree  
in Composition.

**Saturday, April 9, 1994  
at 8:00 pm**

**Convocation Hall, Arts Building**



**Department of Music  
University of Alberta**

## Program

It Takes Three to Tango (1992)

Derek Tuba, **alto saxophone**  
Roger Admiral and Corey Hamm, piano

Nu Kom der Heiden  
Heiland (1992-94)\*

- I Fugue
- II "Nu kom der heiden Heiland"
- III Passacaglia
- IV "Nicht von mans blut noch  
von fleisch"
- V Canon Cancrizans
- VI "Pastorale
- VIII "Lob sey Gott dem Vater thon"

Richard Vander Woude, organ  
Michelle Crouch and Heidi Klann, soprano  
Joy-Anne Murphy and Jennifer Millman, alto  
Kenneth Chen and John Tessier, tenor  
László Nemes and Michael Coderre, bass  
Brent Violini Pierce, conductor

Investigation Into a Citizen  
Above Suspicion (1994)\*

The Hammerhead Consort:  
Trevor Brandenburg and Rajat Nigam, percussion  
Corey Hamm and Haley Simons McCann, piano  
Allan Gilliland, page-turner/conductor

## Intermission

String Quartet No. 1 (1993)\*

- I Adagio/Allegro
- II Free
- III Maestoso/Allegretto

The Garneau String Quartet:  
Adrian Dyck, first violin  
Moni Matthew, second violin  
Miriam Lewis, viola  
Kerri McGonigle, cello

Four Songs of Innocence (1994)\*

- I Pipes of Innocence
- II Cradle Song
- III The Lamb
- IV Spring

The Concordia College Choir  
Evelyn Pfeifer, conductor

\*indicates world premiere

Brent Violini Pierce has been generously supported by the Violet Archer Graduate Scholarship in Composition from 1992 to 1994.

*A reception will be held in the students lounge in the main floor of the Arts Building immediately after the concert and all are welcome to attend.*

## Program Notes

**It Takes Three to Tango.** This work is not a true tango, but is more of a reflection of Latin American music from a twentieth century North American perspective. The tonal material is derived from a traditional eight-tone Spanish scale. Many of the rhythms and melodic gestures might be considered typically "latin," but are presented in a different context. The pianos and the saxophone take turns leading as they interact in the "dance."

**Nu Kom der Heiden Heiland.** This is a neo-baroque work that makes use of the variation form, the cantata. The variation is on a chorale I originally composed for the work, in the style of Bach, but in a twentieth century context of extended tonality. It consists of four instrumental movements that are alternated with four choral verses. The instrumental movements and the chorale itself originally appeared as **Chorale and Four Variations for Pipe Organ**, which was programmed on the 1993 ECCS New Music Festival and released on the ECCS cassette, *ECCS live*. The cantata text was taken from a hymn by Luther that appeared in the *Babischen Gesangbuchs*, 1545. I have not included a translation of the text because the meaning of the text is secondary to its phonetic sound, rhyming scheme and meter. In fact, the entire musical work was written before I had chosen the specific text. Like Stravinsky in his choice and treatment of the Latin in his *Symphony of Psalms*, I wanted the *sound* of the German. This is in keeping with my overall intention of the work, which is to "legitimize" a very dense tonal language through the use of canonical gestures, forms and text (German being the language at the forefront of the musical canon).

**Investigation Into a Citizen Above Suspicion.** This is an aleatory work written for two pianists, two percussionists and a page turner/conductor. I created the score in a computer graphics program so that I would be forced to construct a new set of graphics different from that of traditional musical notation. The score consists of nine different pages, each page having its own basic musical "character." There is no upside-down or upside-right and the performers are instructed to use either left-to-right or right-to-left orthography. One other person is designated as the page-turner/conductor because he/she has the task of not only turning pages, but also of determining the overall form of the work. The page-turner/conductor has four copies of each of the nine pages, in random order. The work commences by the page-turner/conductor placing a sheet of music in front of one of the performers. The page-turner/conductor then decides the "counterpoint" of the work by dictating the duration allotted to each page by each performer. The page-turner/conductor may, as well as placing new pages in front of performer, invert a performer's page. Once the pages have all been distributed, the page-turner/conductor determines the ending by the order in which he/she removes the music from each performer. Each performer stops playing when the music has been removed.

**String Quartet No. 1.** This three-movement work for string quartet is an "ensemble" work with less emphasis on solo playing. The first movement experiments with groupings of two interspersed with three, juxtaposed with bowings which off-set the beat groupings. The second movement, in the form of a graphic score, is much more introspective and deals primarily with color. The final movement is a choreography of bowing and was first sketched out as bowings, rhythms and articulations, with no barlines or pitches. The tonal material is based on a tone row, although it is loosely applied.

**Four Songs of Innocence.** This work is a setting of poems by William Blake from his collection, *Songs of Innocence*, (1789) with the exception of "The Cradle Song," which is a variation of a poem found in *Songs of Innocence*. I have constructed this work as a true song cycle in that the first and last songs share common compositional material. "Pipes of Innocence" explores shifting meter between 5/8 and 6/8 and is written in the Lydian mode. "The Cradle Song" alternates back and forth between 10/8 and 5/4 as well as combining the two meters together. "The Lamb" is a hymn that explores rich harmonies. "Spring:" is a fanfare that is mostly in 3/8 and is written in the Lydian mode.

### Pipes of Innocence

Piping down the valleys wild,  
Piping songs of pleasant glee.  
On a cloud I saw a child,  
And he laughing said to me:

"Pipe a song about a Lamb!"  
So Piped with merry cheer.  
"Piper, pipe that song again;  
So I piped, he wept to hear,

"Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe;  
Sing thy songs of happy cheer:"  
So I sung the same again,  
While he wept with joy to hear.

"Piper, sit thee down and write  
In a book, that all may read."  
So he vanish'd from my sight,  
And I pluck'd a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,  
And I stain'd the water clear,  
And I wrote my happy songs  
Every child may joy to hear.

### Cradle Song

SLEEP, sleep, beauty bright,  
Dreaming in the joys of night;  
Sleep, sleep; in thy sleep  
Little sorrows sit and weep.

Sweet babe, in thy face  
Soft desires I can trace,  
Secret joys and secret smiles,  
Little pretty infant wiles.

As thy softest limbs I feel,  
Smiles as of the morning steal  
O'er thy cheek, and o'er thy breast  
Where thy little heart doth rest.

O the cunning wiles that creep  
In thy little heart asleep!  
When thy little heart doth wake,  
Then the dreadful night shall break.

### The Lamb

Little Lamb, who made thee?  
Dost thou know who made thee?  
Gave thee life & bid thee feed,  
By the stream & o'er the mead;  
Gave thee clothing of delight  
Softest clothing, wooly bright;  
Gave thee such a tender voice,  
Making all the vales rejoice?  
Little Lamb, who made thee?  
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,  
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee:  
He is called by thy name,  
For he calls himself a Lamb.  
He is meek & he is mild;  
He became a little child.  
I a child & thou a lamb.  
We are called by his name.  
Little Lamb, God bless thee!  
Little Lamb, God bless thee!

### Spring

Sound the Flute!  
Now it's mute.  
Birds delight  
Day and Night;  
Nightingale  
In the dale,  
Lark in Sky  
Merrily, Merrily, to welcome in the Year.

Little Boy,  
Full of joy;  
Little Girl,  
Sweet and small;  
Cock does crow,  
So do you;  
Merry voice,  
Infant noise.  
Merrily, Merrily, to welcome in the Year.