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Sunday,  
September 20, 1987  
Convocation Hall

8:00 p.m.

The Department of Music  
presents

## ENCOUNTERS I

The First of a Series of  
Four Concerts

### Artistic Directors:

Malcolm Forsyth  
Leonard Ratzlaff

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### Program:

**Introduction et allegro**  
(1905) with accompaniment  
for harp, string quartet,  
flute & clarinet.  
**Maurice Ravel**  
(1875-1937)

Nora Bumanis, harp  
Shelley Younge, flute  
Dennis Prime, clarinet  
Norman Nelson, violin  
Patricia Armstrong, violin  
Michael Bowie, viola  
Tanya Prochazka, violoncello

**Sarabanda e toccata (1945)**  
for solo harp  
**Nina Rota**  
(1911-1979)

Nora Bumanis, harp

**Tre Toccate per**  
**pianoforte (1987)**  
for solo piano  
Malcolm Forsyth  
(b. 1936)

I. Squilli e scherzi  
II. Miraggio  
III. Chopi

Helmut Brauss, piano

World Premiere

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INTERMISSION

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Piano Quartet No.2  
Op.26, in A major  
(1861-62)  
Johannes Brahms  
(1833-97)

Allegro non troppo  
Poco adagio  
Scherzo e trio  
Finale: Allegro

Helmut Brauss, piano  
Norman Nelson, violin  
Michael Bowie, viola  
Tanya Prochazka, violoncello

Technical production by Garth Hobden

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PROGRAMME NOTES

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### INTRODUCTION AND ALLEGRO

Maurice Ravel

Ravel's Introduction and Allegro was completed "in a week of frantic work and three sleepless nights," (the composer's words to a friend) on a commission from the publishing firm of Erard. Written in 1905, it received its first performance at a concert of the Cercle Musical de Paris the following year. The Introduction and Allegro falls between two large-scale chamber masterpieces - the String Quartet in F (1903) and the Piano Trio of 1914 - and the fact that Ravel made no mention of the work in his Autobiographical Sketch may indicate that, in retrospect, he did not attach much significance to it.

It is nevertheless a charming and virtuosic miniature work, scored for harp, flute, clarinet and string quartet. Structurally orthodox in design, it follows the classical model of presenting two contrasting themes in the slow Introduction (winds and strings), with an embellished version of the second theme (solo harp) leading to the Allegro. Here the second theme is extensively varied, and several impressive climaxes are achieved through its interplay with other motives. A brilliant harp cadenza featuring these motives emphasizes the leading role which the harp plays in the work.

(Leonard Ratzlaff)

### SARABANDE AND TOCCATA

Nino Rota

Although Nino Rota's name is not well known to Canadian audiences, his music has certainly been heard by most at some time or other, through the medium of film. The composer of over 80 film scores for the celebrated Italian director Federico Fellini, as well as scores for Franco Zeffereilli (*Romeo and Juliet*) and Francis Coppola (*The Godfather*), Rota firmly established himself as a creator of great craftsmanship and invention. In his youth he was a personal friend of Stravinsky and well acquainted with the new musical developments of the time, but Rota chose to retain traditional forms and melodic-harmonic language in his own work. In addition to his film scores he achieved success in Italy with several operas, solo sonatas as well as a concerto for harp and orchestra.

The *Sarabande* and *Toccata* for solo harp (1945) illustrates well his desire for direct, spontaneous expression. The work's title reveals its two-movement structure. The *Sarabande* features a dignified triple-meter dance in G minor, which, alternating with sections of arpeggiated figures in fluid counterpoint, steadily builds in intensity before subsiding to a calm close. The *Toccata*, in C major, is energetic and fanciful, also in triple meter, with an engaging short motive that reappears in various keys with constantly rippling accompaniment, punctuated by full arpeggiated chords which are a trademark of the traditional toccata form.

(Leonard Ratzlaff)

## TRE TOCCATE PER PIANOFORTE

Malcolm Forsyth (1987)

Commissioned by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the work was written specifically for the pianist, Helmut Brauss to perform at the opening concert of the "Encounters" series at the University of Alberta. The composer completed the entire piece while living in Rome, between February and April, 1987, although some sketches for the first and second movements had existed since July, 1986.

The third movement is, however, the "kingpin" in the overall form, in which the first two act as a perspective-giving force, extrapolating differing moods and types of keyboard touch, and in which the principles of unity and growth produce a single, uninterrupted work of about twenty minutes' duration.

The first toccata of the three is the shortest and presents a lively discourse in the form of four extremely brilliant fanfares marked, "like trumpets" interspersed with three mocking scherzi marked respectively, "like little bells", "like harmonics" and "like bassoons".

A subtle transition raises the curtain on the second toccata, *Mirage*, marked "Lonely, but a little disturbed". Here images of delicate colour are played softly in juxtaposing patterns, with long held sounds being allowed to fade to silence. Rich middle-register chords, frequently with the two thumbs intertwined, play with the silences between motives. A static flageolet in the high register pinpoints the minor ninth, the interval which stands out as the motto-interval of the entire work. A "thumb-melody" is engendered, giving way to pastel washes of arpeggios. But form and direction are not absent, for a development ensues, disturbed this time by a *martellato* (hammered) minor ninth idea, *fortississimo*, which, like some strange bird trapped in space, begins to exert itself with anguished cries. With these five images, or "touches", the movement forms itself, finally insinuating a delicate transition into the third and longest of the *Three Toccatas*.

The *Bachopi*, or people of the *Chopi* tribe, live in Mozambique, and are famous for their xylophone and marimba orchestras, some of which may contain as many as fifteen or twenty players, on instruments ranging from small to very large; the latter using, as resonators, forty-four gallon oil drums. Theirs is one of the few "orchestrated" musics of Africa.

This third movement is marked, appropriately, "like many xylophones" and is in a sense a piece which the composer has been writing abstractly for many years and only now finds itself materialising. The problem of performing many rhythms simultaneously is large enough when in an ensemble each player handles only one, but for one performer to perform as many as four is, not surprisingly, enormous. Even the notation of such a texture becomes a fascinating challenge, though this pales before the difficulties presented to the player. Here small rhythmic cells are allowed to repeat many times, gathering sonority and power, or else changing harmonic and melodic colour, to produce a mosaic of many layers, much like the image of the ripples of many pebbles tossed into a pond, criss-crossing, gathering momentum, and then disappearing. Rondo-like, one of the scherzi of the first Toccata reappears twice amidst all this tumult.

(Malcolm Forsyth)

## PIANO QUARTET IN A MAJOR

Johannes Brahms

Written at the age of twenty-eight, this fine example of Brahms's earliest maturity was in the process of composition in the summer of 1861. At that time, as was the composer's custom, some movements of the Quartet were sent to Clara Schumann for comment, and in the Fall of the same year the first three movements went to Joseph Joachim for his critical but encouraging perusal. The work was completed early in 1862 and received several private performances by Brahms, Joachim and colleagues in Hanover: as the composer reported, "we have been playing my quartets (Opp. 25 and 26) a great deal here". It was not until Brahms's first visit to Vienna in the Fall of 1862 that the work was first heard in public. Following the performance on November 29 the composer wrote to his parents "I was very happy yesterday, my concert went quite excellently, much better than I had hoped." The Piano Quartet "had been sympathetically received." But not by all present. Eduard Hanslick, later to become a great supporter of Brahms, reviewed the concert: "the quartet by no means pleased us" and created an "unfavourable impression". Specifically, "the subjects have not enough significance. The composer chooses themes rather with a view to their capacity for contrapuntal treatment than on account of their intrinsic merit, and those of the quartet sound dry and flat." The same performance produced some interesting comments from another critic on Brahms as pianist: "we have to bestow high praise not only on the enormous technical aquirement, but also on a performance instinct with musical genius ... [Although] he has not the unfailing certainty nor the outward brilliance of the virtuoso, he reaches and fascinates his audience by other means." And these two critiques give us an approach to the work: a tour de force for the pianist and, most decidedly contra Hanslick, a richness of thematic material, beautifully suited to the stringed instruments, that conveys, overall, great opulance, warmth and brilliance.

(Michael Bowie)

This program is being recorded by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and will be broadcast on "Arts National", Tuesday, October 13 at 8:00 p.m. (CBC Stereo, 90.9 FM).

Producer: Constance Braun

Recording Engineers: Bob Ulmer

Eric Wagers

### Encounters II

The second program of the Encounters series will take place on Saturday, November 14, at 8:00 p.m. in Convocation Hall, including works by Poulenc, Cooper and Kraft, and featuring George Crumb's exotic vocal work, "Ancient Voices of Children".

### Donations

If you have enjoyed this evening's program and wish to contribute to the continuation of the ENCOUNTERS series, donation forms are available from the Department of Music General Office at 432-3263. All contributions may qualify for a matching grant from the Provincial Government and income tax receipts will be issued by the University for all donations over \$10.00.

### Arts Building Renovations

Some inconveniences have arisen caused by the renovations of the Old Arts Building. Until further notice, wheelchair access and washroom facilities are unavailable in the Arts Building. Washrooms can be found in the Business Building located a short distance north east of the hall and also in Rutherford Library, just south east of the Arts Building.

**Note:** The Arts Building is a construction area and is off limits to all concert goers. Please confine activities to Convocation Hall and the main foyer. Persons trespassing in the Arts Building will be forcibly evicted.