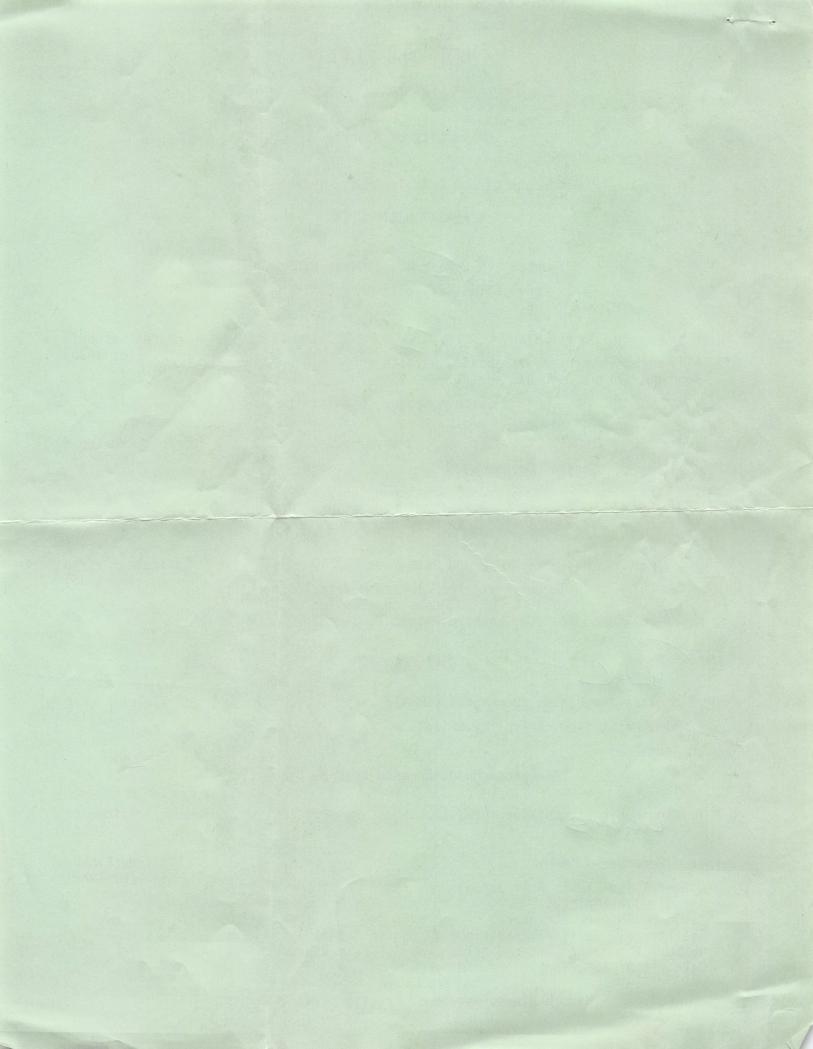# NEW MUSIC

## at the

## University of Alberta

A concert of new Canadian Music in honour of

## CANADA MUSIC WEEK

Thursday, November 22, 1984 at 8:00 p.m.
Convocation Hall, Old Arts Building

Suite No. 2, Op. 30 for Piano . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Manus Sasonkin
    Allemande, Passepied, Sarabande, Gavotte en    *EATONS STIENWAY*    (b. 1930)
    Rondeau, Forlane and Badinerie

    Joachim Segger, pianist

*piano to side →*

Songs For Lyra (1984). . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . John Armstrong
    Night Song,   Song of Darkness,                  (b. 1952 )
    Love Song
           John Armstrong, guitar
           Steve Creighton, flute
           Elsie Hepburn, soprano

Music for Mouths, Marimba, Mbira and Roto-Toms (1973). . . . . . . . Malcolm Forsyth
    The University of Alberta Madrigal Singers      (b. 1936)
        Brian Jones, percussion
        Leonard Ratzlaff, director

*TEAC →*            INTERMISSION           *MARIMBA*

Four Vignettes for Piano, four hands (1984). . . . . . . . . . . . . . Violet Archer
    A Whim, Meditation, Frivolity, Finale     *NEW YORK STIENWAY* (b. 1913)
(World Premiere)

    Alexandra Munn, Ernesto Lejano, pianists

U A 1, Electronic Composition (1984) . . . . . *NOTHING* . . . . George Arasimowicz
*LIGHTS*                                  (b. 1954)

Zakhor: Remember (1983). . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Alfred Fisher
    Chosen Twice (Text: A.I. Jacob)       *STAND FOR*      (b. 1942)
    The Gazelle (Talmud)             *SINGER*
    Psalm 30 (Hebrew Scripture)
    The Eternal Question (Traditional, sung in Yiddish)
    Roxbury Fountains [after Charles Ives]  (Text: Henry Edwards)
    Zakhor ( A. I. Jacob)

        Harold Wiens, baritone, Ernesto Lejano, pianist

## PROGRAMME NOTES

### SECOND SUITE FOR KEYBOARD                                      Manus Sasonkin

The Second Suite for harpsichord or pianoforte was composed in three discrete versions, all of them using the same musical materials.  The complete version begins with an austere Prelude which is balanced, at the very conclusion of the work, by a comparably austere Fuga.  The intervening six dance movements constitute a second version in their own right.  The outer movements, by themselves, comprise the third version. Tonight's performance will be of the second version.

Each of the dances which forms the second version derives from an established Baroque prototype, although none of them is guided by Baroque sensibilities.  Each is dominated by a tonal centre, but the tonality of any of the dances is suggested (rather than  defined), and none of the tonalities is restricted - even at its first hearing - to major, to minor, or (even) to modal forms of any tonal centre.

The opening Allemande (A, Adagio, 2/4) flows with graceful insistence.  The ensuing Passepied (C, Allegretto, 3/8) is more animated in character, but  the middle portion is in a sustained style which anticipates the following Sarabande (A, Lento e sostenuto, 3/2), the most intense and introspective of all of of the dances.  The Gavotte en Rondeau (E, Grazioso, Alla breve) consists of a folk-like refrain which is repeated (with simple variations) twice, each repetition being separated by a guileless couplet.  The Forlane (C, Vivace, 6/4) is vigorous, energetic, and (texturally) the most flexible movement in the set; whilst the concluding Badinerie (A, Presto, 2/4) retains the vigour and the energy of the Fourlane, speeding them up and (at the same time) softening them to a whispered conclusion.

### SONGS FOR LYRA                                               John Armstrong

Songs for Lyra was commissioned by the London-based trio Lyra (Constance Newland, soprano, Fiona Wilkinson, flute, and Ray Sealey, guitar), with funds from the Ontario Arts Council.

The three songs, on texts by the composer, use  the images of stars, moon and sun to focus on particular aspects of human experience.

The first, Night Song, deals with the fundamental paradox of creativity, that it requires immense technical resourses to be used with an almost childlike naïveté. Musically, this apparent contradiction is expressed in the fusion of two different harmonic languages, one chromatic, and one diatonic.

Song of Darkness is an expression of irrational fear, couched in the imagery of the moon.  The musical language is almost entirely chromatic. Rhythmic divisions, at all levels, are normally assymetrical, in groups of 5 and 7.

The resolution of the musical and psychological tension of songs I and II, comes in Song III.  Love Song  is a neo-romantic movement which draws it's language from that of the late nineteenth century, specifically from Mahler and Debussy.  Wagner's Prelude to Tristan and Isolde is paraphrased both directly and indirectly ( via Mahler's second song from Kindertotenlieder).

SONGS FOR LYRA  (cont.)

### I

Pinpoints
in the night sky.
hard
bright
soft
weak
dull
strong
lovely and glittering,
a frail and majestic patchwork.

Dark strands weave
between the lines,
intricate and
innocent,
by chance
contrived,
the art of a
god/child!

### II

I need the moon tonight,
a full white moon.

The day has been sunless,
(My only hope)
my thoughts clouded,
(is the moon)
my vision a fog
(so clear and bright!)

Can you see it?
Can you see the moon!?

### III

Brightly shining,
soft golden tresses fall
featherlight.

Cool green breezes
gently caress,
gusting quietly,
careful not to disturb
the sleeping lovers embrace.

Long grasses shroud their smiles,
sighing peacefully in the
slow, deliberate breathing
of the earth.

The sun in springtime

MUSIC FOR MOUTHS, MARIMBA, MBIRA AND ROTO-TOMS                    Malcolm Forsyth

Malcolm Forsyth, professor of composition, theory and orchestral music at the
University of Alberta, provided the following notes about "Music for Mouths, Marimba,
Mbira and Roto-toms" :

This work was commissioned by the Da Camera Singers of Edmonton.  It was
written in 1973, shortly after the composer's return to Canada from his native
South Africa, and is inspired by the sounds of the Zulu language, replete with
its implosive clicks, unique to the Bantu languages of Southeastern Africa.

## MUSIC FOR MOUTHS, MARIMBA, MBIRA and ROTO-TOMS   (cont.)

The first song, "Iculenye", is a simple design of four pitches against a recurrent middle C.  The choir imitates the tremolo of the marimba, using onomatopoeic syllables.  An improvised marimba cadenza is accompanied by "percussion" in the voices.

"Iculabili" presents a layering of four different dominant seventh chords over the marimba's tremolo GBDF, which sustains throughout, until the final chord on the mbira (african thumb piano).

"Iculathathu" is the third song, and it exploits the percussive syllables of the choir to the fullest extent.  Cross rhythms abound, with the percussionist moving back and forth between marimba and roto-toms (a set of four instantly retunable tomtoms). the sound of the anklet rattles used in Zulu dances is simulated by the voices as a "ksh-ksh" sound.  Clicks and pops from the voices accompany the more melodic and harmonic marimba.  A fugato in the choir is based on speech syllables, and finally the voices settle on the unifying chord E A B♭ E♭, while the mbira improvises a closing solo.

## FOUR VIGNETTES FOR PIANO, FOUR HANDS                     Violet Archer

Four Vignettes for Piano, Four Hands was commissioned by the Alberta Registered Music Teachers Association, Edmonton Branch, in honour of its 50th Anniversary. The work was composed in January of 1984.

It is a light work and is in four movements. The first and the third are whimsical and capricious.  The second one is meditative and songful and the fourth movement is festive and bright.

## U A 1 (1984)                                        George Arasimowicz

UA1 is a composition for electronic tape performance.  It was recorded in the electronic music studio of the University of Alberta. All sound sources are digitally synthesized.  A characteristic of the piece is the apposition of "solo" and percussive "group" textures and the interplay between resulting instrumental voices.

## ZAKHOR: REMEMBER                                       Alfred Fisher

Zakhor means remember in Hebrew.  The word implies more than the act of recollection...it is a command to remember...When history is sacred, remembering is not an idle indulgence.

The songs deal with a cycle of memories that link the historical, the mythic, the sacred, and the personal back to one another.  The interpenetration of these catagories within a Jewish cosmology is paralleled musically in the overall structure and the basic materials and their treatment within the cycle.

Chosen Twice refers to a famous "war" photograph.  A boy of about six has been rounded-up in the Warsaw ghetto.  He wears a peaked cap, short pants, and a yellow star.  He has large, frightened eyes, and is surrounded by soldiers with rifles. His hands are raised in surrender.

ZAKHOR: REMEMBER  (cont.)

The Gazelle refers to a Talmudic homily in which the Israelites are seen
as the gazelle amongst the world's wild creatures.  The gazelle, the homily tells
us, is the best-loved of God's creatures because it "loves God's Peace."

Psalm 130, the De Profundis, is one of the most powerful statements in the
Hebrew Scriptures.  The soul in waiting, and the hope of Israel, of which the
Psalm speaks, provides an idealistic medium of depth sufficient to contain and
integrate the searing tragedy of the first, the naivete of the second, and the
full scope of the songs that follow.

The Psalm provides, as do the texts that precede, an answer to deeply serious
questions.  The Eternal Question, which follows, is a reworking of an old folktune
(sung in Yiddish) that proffers an answer as well.  I think that its "answer" has
to be taken seriously.  Essentially, the text reads:

>"The world keeps asking the same question...
>tra-di-tra-di-ra-di-rom,
>One may answer this question with
>tra-di-tra-ra-di-rom,
>or, alternatively, one may answer,
>tra-di-ra-di-rom,
>The world, however, continues asking the
>same old question...
>Tra-di-tra-di-ra-ra-di-rom."

Roxbury Fountains (in the style of Charles Ives), paints a scene of the "other
New England."....not the old barns and green hills, but hot city streets and children
delighting in the spray of water hydrants.

Zakhor....more scenes from Roxbury past....Hashem...("The Name"-given to the
un-nameable God is addressed:

>Do You remember, Hashem,---the old
>house of prayer....the old men....
>that language....the children....
>Lord - remember! ..........remember -

All the poets were "on scene."