

Visiting Artist
Milton Schlosser, piano

Monday, March 15, 2004 at 8:00 pm



Arts Building
University of Alberta

Program



Department of Music
University of Alberta

Program

The People United Will Never Be Defeated! (1975) Frederic Rzewski
(b. 1938)

Program Notes

Over the past few months, Chileans have been marking the 30th anniversary of their "9/11" event, the overthrow of the democratically-elected government of Salvador Allende on September 11, 1973, and the subsequent deaths of 3200 citizens (400 more than at the World Trade Center). In 1975, American composer Frederic Rzewski based one of his compositions on a song sung by Chileans protesting this coup. The work, entitled *The People United Will Never Be Defeated!* demonstrates how social events inspire and shape musical compositions. Like so many of Rzewski's works, this piece could be described as a socio-political text; Rzewski's social conscience interacts and combines with Western European compositional techniques, his interest in "popular" and "folk" idioms, and his keyboard virtuosity to create an eclectic style which has been described by pianist David Burge as "human realism."

Rzewski's life, much like his compositions, reveals the interaction between art and politics. When I visited him in Brussels in 1999, Rzewski told me the fascinating story of what piano lessons with Charles Mackey in Springfield, Massachusetts were like. Growing up in the United States during the Cold War, Rzewski learned about important musical concepts through the Marxist Mackey's political analogies, including how phrase shapings and dynamics needed to be as precise in their effects as "strategic bombing" during the Korean War. His later studies with the likes of Roger Sessions, Walter Piston, and Milton Babbitt while pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees from Harvard and Princeton and his associations with classical and jazz experimentalists such as in the group Musica Elettronica Viva (MEV) confirmed his interest in a wide range of musical styles as well as political movements.

The People United is Rzewski's first important work for piano. A compendium of twentieth-century compositional techniques, it enlists with its hour-long time frame such different styles as minimalism, serialism, jazz, pop, and folk music along with the tradition of improvising which has been neglected in "classical" music. Together, these styles help to create an epic musical journey. The song on which the theme and 36 variations are based—"¡El Pueblo Unido Jamás Será Vencido!"—was written by Sergio Ortega and associated with the coalition group *Unidad Popular*. The latter, formed in 1969 and affiliated with Allende's government, was both political and cultural in scope, drawing on indigenous musical traditions. After the U.S.-sponsored coup, members of the group and the Chilean government went into exile in Italy, which is where Rzewski met some of them and became familiar with the melody. The song became well-known throughout Europe and was associated particularly with workers' struggles. Today, it is heard at protests throughout the world, including in Canada.

Interestingly, Rzewski relies on a specific structural plan to help unify this hour-long work which is characterized by a multiplicity of musical styles. After stating the Ortega tune and then transforming it into a larger thematic entity, Rzewski presents 36 variations which are grouped into six sections of six variations each. The final variation in each section summarizes the musical ideas of the previous five. The last section then summarizes all sections which have preceded it; for instance, variation 31

refers to musical ideas which were presented by the first variation of each section (variations 1, 7, 13, 20, and 27). Variation 36 then summarizes the musical ideas of variations 31-35. Following variation 36, Rzewski provides the performer with an opportunity to improvise before the theme is presented for a final time in stirring, dramatic fashion.

Milton Schlosser

A review of the compact disc *Landsmål: The Lyrical Dialect of Edvard Grieg* hails Milton Schlosser as an artist who "proves himself to be as sympathetic an accompanist as he is a stylish and feeling soloist" (*The Vancouver Sun*). Professor of Music at Augustana University College (soon to be the Augustana Faculty of the University of Alberta), Schlosser is known for his activities as performer, academic, teacher, and administrator.

As pianist, he performs in live and broadcast performances as solo and chamber recitalist, as vocal and choral accompanist, and in concerts as soloist with orchestra. He holds Master and Doctor of Music degrees in piano performance from the University of Alberta where he won numerous awards while studying with Robert Stangeland and Stéphane Lemelin. Other instructors have included Marjorie Rolston McAllister, G.E. (Ted) Lincoln, Hans Graf (Mozarteum, Salzburg, Austria), Claude Frank (Banff Centre), and Madeline Bruser (New York). A versatile musician, Schlosser is known also as an organist and composer, having studied under the tutelage of Gerhard Krapf.

His interest in the piano music of American composer Frederic Rzewski has resulted in his being invited to present papers and recitals at conferences of the Canadian University Music Society and the International Feminist Theory and Music Society. In 1999, he was awarded a scholarship from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts to help prepare for recording two of Rzewski's compositions by visiting the composer in Brussels, Belgium. The recording, *Frederic Rzewski's De Profundis and North American Ballads*, has been received with critical acclaim ("Schlosser gives impressive performances," *The National Post*). He has released two other CD recordings: *Landsmål: The Lyrical Dialect of Edvard Grieg* (with cellist Tanya Prochazka and soprano Kathleen Corcoran) and, new in 2004, *Bohemian Woods* (with cellist Tanya Prochazka).

Schlosser has been cited at both community and university levels for excellence in teaching. He is a recipient of *The Augustana Teaching Award*, an honour recognizing long-term excellence in teaching and commitment to the improvement of university instruction. In addition, he has been a winner of the *Betty Ostenrud Award* in recognition for outstanding service to the Augustana community. From the Alberta Government, Schlosser has received a Wilfrid R. May Scholarship for Career Development in recognition of exceptional achievement. He is a popular music festival adjudicator, piano examiner, and workshop clinician. He has served as Chair of Fine Arts and currently serves as Artistic Director of the Augustana Conservatory of Music.

Amnesty International

The performer wishes to highlight the important work of Amnesty International and to provide information on how to assist this organization in its global movement to defend human rights. If you are interested, please feel free to take one of the pamphlets at the door. The website of Amnesty International (Canada) is found at <http://www.amnesty.ca/>.

Upcoming Events

March

16 Tuesday, 5:00 pm

Piano Masterclass
with **Milton Schlosser**

Free admission

For information, please call 492-8113

16 Tuesday, 8:00 pm

New Music Series

Visiting Artists **Land's End Ensemble**

Carter *Pieces for Timpani*

Murphy *Four degrees of Freedom*

Zappa *The Black*

Stokes *Quartet*

Adams *Road Movies*

Zorn *Cat O'Nine Tails*

21 Sunday, 8:00 pm

Music at Convocation Hall

Guillaume Tardif, violin

Jacques Després, piano

Works by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart,

Ludwig van Beethoven, Henri

Wieniawsky and Alexina Louie

Admission: \$10/student/senior, \$15/adult

22 Monday, 8:00 pm

Master of Music Recital

Junelle Rayne, saxophone

Free admission

23 Tuesday, 8:00 pm

University of Alberta

Indian Music Ensemble

Wasantic Paranjape, Director

and **University of Alberta**

West African Music Ensemble

Robert Kpogo, Director

24 Wednesday, 8:00 pm

World Music Concert

featuring **Le Fuzz**

For more information, please call the

Centre for Ethnomusicology at 492-8211

27 Saturday, 7:00 pm

University of Alberta

Symphonic Wind Ensemble

with **Northern Alberta Honor Band**

William H Street, Director

Free admission

28 Saturday, 2:00 pm

Master of Music Lecture Recital

Shelagh Scott, piano

Studio 27

Free admission

28 Sunday, 8:00 pm

University Symphony Orchestra

with **University of Alberta**

Madrigal Singers

and **University of Alberta**

Concert Choir

Tanya Prochazka, Conductor

featuring

Johannes Brahms *Schicksalslied*, Op 54

for choir and orchestra (1868)

Ludwig van Beethoven *Piano Concerto*

No 4 in G Major, Op 58 (1808)

Soloist **Bianca Baciu**

Edward Elgar *Enigma Variations*,

Op 36 (1898)

Anton Bruckner *Psalm 150* (1892)

Winspear Centre for Music

Admission: \$10/student/senior, \$15/adult

For ticket information, please contact the

Winspear Centre at 428-1414

Please donate to Campus Food Bank

Unless otherwise indicated

Admission: \$10/adult, \$5/student/senior

Convocation Hall, Arts Building, University of Alberta

Please note: All concerts and events are subject to change without notice. Please call 492-0601 to confirm concerts (after office hours a recorded message will inform you of any changes to our schedule).

