

Excerpts from Essays in the 2010 New Music Festival Program Book

“Will any of the new works we hear this week be masterpieces? Will any of them be added to a new canon, join a new main stream? Mercifully, the questions are irrelevant; they’re not our problem. Our task is not to predict the habits of posterity but to respond to the here and now. Genuine composers will somehow make themselves understood. Their works are communiqués addressed from human beings to other human beings. However surprising or alien their language, their humanness is sure to touch, to move, to enrich the open-eared listener.”

-Steven Stucky (USA), Pulitzer Prize composer

Second Concerto for Orchestra (Canadian premiere) - Opening Night, Saturday, February 6

Three Little Variations for David - Monday, February 8

Concerto for Percussion and Winds (Canadian premiere) - Tuesday, February 9

Threnos (Canadian premiere) - Tuesday, February 9

Radical Light (Canadian premiere) – Friday, February 12

“Turning our ears to the “On” position and actively listening to sound – to the earth – is a remarkable thing. Earth sounds have been around far longer than any of us. Imagine listening to thunder a million years ago, or the sound of rain on the ground. It would have been the same back then as it is now. How remarkable is that?!”

-Derek Charke (CAN), composer

Falling from Cloudless Skies (World premiere) - Opening Night, Saturday, February 6

Cercle du Nord III - Thursday, February 11

13 Inuit Throat Song Games – Thursday, February 11

“Then came The Beatles and, five years later, Jimi Hendrix. They became lightning rods for the expression of the value of the individual, and of creativity, as a basic part of society, of celebrating diversity and difference rather than conformity and homogeneity. Their instrument of choice: the electric guitar.”

-Tim Brady (CAN), composer

My 20th Century - Monday, February 8

The Guess Who Symphony - Wednesday, February 10

Amplify, Multiply, Remix and Redefine (21-guitar performance and the WSO) - Friday, February 12

“I am privileged to be able to be a composer. Ultimately, though, I do this because I need to. Despite the difficulties and frustrations, I simply cannot imagine doing anything else. If even a few days go by during which I don’t write, I begin to feel uneasy around the edges.”

-Michael Matthews (CAN), composer

The Language of Water - Thursday, February 11

“I often say, ‘If you can be happy doing something else, then do that instead.’ The emotional cost of living a life in art is great, even success can be its own form of creative trauma. The best justification for pursuing this kind of career is that you can’t not do it. If not pursuing this path makes you unwell and unhappy, then you don’t actually have much choice.”

-John Psathas (NZ), composer

Saxon (North American premiere) - Tuesday, February 9

Abhisheka (North American premiere) - Thursday, February 11

View from Olympus (North American premiere) – Friday, February 12

“Let us rejoice in a society when our personal music devices don’t simply contain one narrow category of music, and let us aim to reflect that in concert programming of the highest integrity, providing people with new sounds, concepts, and content.”

-Luke Nickel (CAN), currently studying at the University of Manitoba’s Music Department

For months I dreamt of mechanical gardens – Thursday, February 11 (pre-concert)