

The Review

New source of stimuli at Faculty premiere

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Funny things take place in the nooks and crannies of U of T. Things such as inconspicuous little world premieres at the Faculty of Music's free midday concerts. Such was the case last Thursday, when Professor Lothar Klein personally presented five new works of his own to a lunchtime audience.

Klein described the subject matter of *Buskers*, *Psalm*, *Landscape with Piper*, *Ecologue* and *virtuoso Music* as "the character of individual instruments themselves, timbrally, technically and acoustically." These instruments, contrabass, contrabassoon, trumpet, English horn, clarinet, French horn and percussion have traditionally been, he feels, given short shrift as solo instruments. Klein takes as his battle cry, "today all instruments are created equal."

The concert's showcase pieces was *Virtuoso Music*, which featured clarinetist, Peter Stoll and timpanist Blair Mackay. Stoll handled the work's considerable technical difficulties with expertise, and without ever losing his good, clear tone. Stoll and Mackay are engaging players, who

absorb themselves with energy in the music at hand.

The shape of *Virtuoso Music* is well-conceived. The two performers seemed to have grasped this shape, hence a large part of their success: they sounded as if they knew with confidence where the piece was headed.

Overall, in his five latest works, Klein displays considerable flair for percussive writing, be it in the form of contrabassist Jessica Monk's satisfyingly reverberatory pizzicato, or the very capable playing off all three percussionists, Gabe Taryan, Steve Wassmandoft, and Blair Mackay. Soloists Eric Gray, Norm Engel, Julia Snelson, Suzanne Gagne and Kathy Robertsopn gave solid performances, although with some fluctuations.

One could reproach these works in general that they lacked, at least in their playing, a certain sense of direction which even the conscious incidentality of a composer such as Cage provides. Then again, Klein himself defines these latest products as, "musical smaller change, stylistic meanderings, escape tones." Small change or no, it is to everyone's benefit that people such as Klein go to the effort of providing the university community with new sources of stimuli.