

New Music series nearly indispensable

By **WILLIAM LITTLER**
Star music critic

As organizer Norma Beechcroft made her way out of Walter Hall after the last of this season's New Music Concerts, she broke into a broad smile: "We didn't dream, when we began this, that we'd still be going seven years later."

Now it would be difficult to think of a Toronto music season without the New Music Concerts. They constitute one of the city's most valuable series, with a standard of performance and programming that makes them very nearly indispensable.

What is more, the concerts are well attended by an encouragingly young audience. Walter Hall was nearly full Saturday night for the pro-

gram of Weinzweig, Laufer, Lutoslawski and Ligeti.

The premiere of John Weinzweig's Refrains was the opener, a tour de force for that remarkable young bassist, Joel Quarrington.

The other Canadian piece of the program, also being premiered, was Edward Laufer's Concertino, a densely and rather drily pointillistic work whose second and final movement was especially interesting for its variation structure, and for the way Laufer, a colleague of Weinzweig's in the University of Toronto music faculty, broke the larger group of eight players into smaller instrumental combinations.

One of Canada's foremost duo piano teams, Garth Beckett and Boyd McDon-

ald, played one of the most conservative works ever to make its tonal way into New Music Concert: Wito Lutoslawski's Variations On A Theme By Paganini. Beckett and McDonald had a marvellous time with it.

Gyorgy Ligeti's Moment gave them much less to smile about. Actually three pieces, it collectively exploring the tonal and rhythmic possibilities of pairing two pianos.

In the first of them the two players struck chords, a very deliberate alternation, gradually melding into one texture. In the second they worked with repeated figures and gradual change in the manner of Terry Riley and Steve Reich. In the third the materials of the first were spun out into flowing phrases.