

NEW MUSIC CONCERTS

presents the music of the Russian microtonalist Ivan Wyschnegradsky (1893-1979) in a concert featuring the Ensemble d'Ondes Martenot de Montréal under the direction of Jean Laurendeau.

Also on the program are new works by Bruce Mather and Serge Provost.

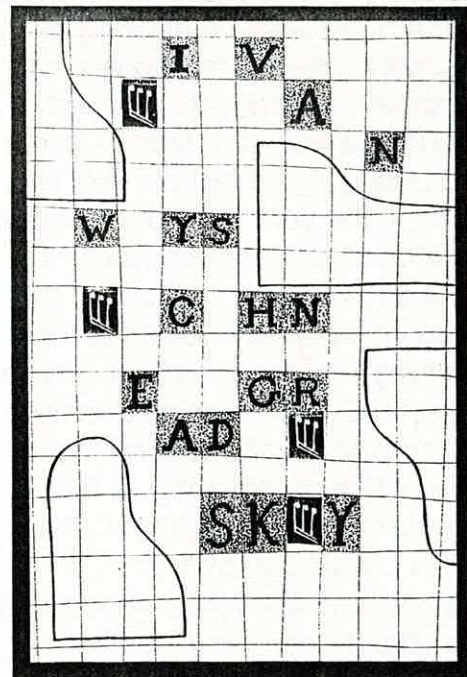
"On discovering in 1989 the 'Quatrième Fragment Symphonique' and 'Composition en Quarts de Ton' I conceived the idea of a Wyschnegradsky Centennial concert centered around his works for Ondes Martenot." Bruce Mather

Ivan Wyschnegradsky was born in St Petersburg, Russia on May 14, 1893 and after having studied law he turned to composition under the guidance of Sokolov, the Russian composer and teacher.

Sokolov introduced him to the works of Scriabin, which resulted in the oratorio *La Journée de l'existence* (1916-1917) to his

own text dealing with the development of "cosmic consciousness", a concept that was to shape his future as a composer.

In the twenties he attempted to construct a quarter tone piano and in spite of collaborations with Richard Stein, Moellendorff, Mager and Haba, this ambitious project remained unrealized. Later in 1936 he decided to use differently tuned instruments for his micro-tonal compositions, for example two pianos for quarter tones or three pianos for sixth tones, and he revised earlier compositions for ensembles of this kind. However, aside from the two successful concerts in Paris in 1937 and 1945 there were few performances and no publications. It is only relatively recently that the musical world has begun to recognize the importance of both his compositions and of his theoretical writing on microtonal music.



Since 1977 five recordings of his music have been produced, two by McGill University Records, works for two and three pianos, one by the Wyschnegradsky Association of Paris, the "24 Préludes, Opus 22" in Japan and his complete string quartets by the Arditti Quartet.

"It is interesting to observe that in the evolution of twentieth century music, there has been a universal adoption of rhythmic complexities, of new instrumental effects, of all imaginable ensemble combinations, of all textural possibilities. However, the element of pitch has not progressed beyond the 12 chromatic semi-tones."

Bruce Mather

The Ondes Martenot, invented in the twenties by Maurice Martenot, was a precursor to the synthesizer and used by persons as diverse as Darius Milhaud, Jacques Brel and Olivier Messiaen. This instrument figures prominently in the music that was programmed for this concert and appears in all of the compositions except that of *Cosmos Op 29*, for four pianos, which was first performed in the Salle Chopin in Paris on November 10th, 1945. The pianists involved in that performance were all students of Olivier Messiaen, a friend and admirer of Wyschnegradsky. *Quatrième Fragment Symphonique* is a work that Bruce Mather discovered during his sabbatical year in Paris, France, in the year 1989. Upon finding a part for Ondes Martenot and parts for pianos I, II, III and IV he reconstructed the score by pasting up photocopies of the originals. During this time in Paris Mr. Mather also discovered *Composition en quarts de ton* (for 4 Ondes Martenot) among the manuscripts of Wyschnegradsky at the home of the composer's son Dimitri. The two other selected works by Ivan Wyschnegradsky will be *Transparences I Op 36* and *Transparences II Op 47* both for Ondes Martenot and two pianos.

Born in Toronto in 1939, **Bruce Mather** studied there with Oskar Morawetz (composition), Alberto Guerrero and Alexander Uninsky (piano) continuing his studies in Paris with Darius Milhaud and Olivier Messiaen. Since 1966 he has taught composition and

harmony at McGill University. In addition to being a composer and teacher, Mather is a remarkable pianist and has performed many premières of contemporary works, both as a soloist and as a duo-pianist with his wife, Pierette LePage.

Encouraged by the enthusiasm of his old friend Jean Laurendeau, director of the Ensemble d'Ondes Martenot de Montreal, Mr. Mather decided to write *Yquem*, a work for the complete instrumentation of the concert, four Ondes Martenot and four pianos.

"I decided to continue with my wine series," states Mather, a wine connoisseur, "with a tribute to Chateau Yquem, the greatest and most expensive white wine in the world."

A new work by **Serge Provost**, *Ein Horn*, for soprano, four ondes Martenot and two pianos will feature Montréal soprano Pauline Vaillancourt. Mr. Provost studied with Gilles Tremblay at the Conservatoire de Montréal from 1970-1979 and then went on to study analysis and composition with Claude Ballif at the Paris Conservatoire. He has written works on commission for Louise Besette and The Ensemble d'Ondes Martenot de Montréal amongst others. Mr. Provost presently works as a chronicler for the radio program "Musiques Actuelles" at Radio Canada.

Ivan Wyschnegradsky Centennial Concert Sunday, January 24, 1993 Walter Hall, 4 PM*

**Please note that the concert time will be 4:00 PM*

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