

New Music Concerts presents  
**The Music of Jörg Widmann**

presented with Goethe-Institut Toronto

Sunday October 16, 2005 • The Music Gallery

NM


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**Sunday October 16, 2005**  
**The Music Gallery**  
7:15 Intro | 8:00 Concert

## New Music Concerts presents **The Music of Jörg Widmann**

presented with Goethe-Institut Toronto



Guest Clarinetist and Composer: **Jörg Widmann**

**David Hetherington**, cello • **David Swan**, piano • **Accordes**:  
Fujiko Imajishi | Carol Lynn Fujino | Steven Dann | David Hetherington

*Programme:*

**JÖRG WIDMANN** (Germany 1973) *Fieberphantasie* (1999)\* [15']  
for piano, string quartet and clarinet

**JÖRG WIDMANN** *Nachtstück* (1998)\* [10']  
for clarinet, cello and piano

**JÖRG WIDMANN** *Fünf Bruchstücke* (1997)\* [10']  
for clarinet and piano

—Intermission—

**ALBAN BERG** (Austria 1885–1936) *Vier Stücke* Op. 5 (1913) [10']  
for clarinet and piano

1. Maßig 2. Sehr Langsam 3. Sehr Rasch 4. Langsam

**JÖRG WIDMANN** *Jagdquartett* (2003)\* [15']  
for string quartet

\* *Canadian premiere*

Tonight's concert is being recorded for future broadcast on  
**Two New Hours** on **CBC Radio Two**,  
Canada's national new music show, with host Larry Lake.

**94.1**  
CBC radio *Two*

# New Music Concerts

Robert Aitken, c.m., Artistic Director

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**Jörg Widmann** was born in Munich on 19 June 1973. He studied clarinet at the Hochschule für Musik in Munich with Gerd Strake and at the Juilliard School of Music in New York with Charles Neidich. As a performer he won first prizes at the Carl-Maria-von-Weber-Wettbewerb in Munich and at the Wettbewerb deutscher Musikhochschulen in Berlin. In 1996 he received the Kulturförderpreis der Landeshauptstadt München, in 1997 the Bayerischer Staatspreis für junge Künstler and in 2001 the Louis Spohr Medaille der Stadt Seesen. In summer 2001 Jörg Widmann was appointed professor of clarinet at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg as a successor of Dieter Klöcker.

Jörg Widmann

Widmann performed with famous international and national orchestras. At the "musica viva" festival in 1999 he gave the world premiere of *Musik für Klarinette und Orchester 'Über die Linie II'* by Wolfgang Rihm, which was written especially for him. He is one of the founders of the Ensemble TrioLog, which aims to promote the music of the 20th and 21st century. Since 1993 he has held master classes at the Royal Academy of Music in London and he has lectured at the conservatory in Odessa and at the Academy of Music in Lisbon among others.

At the age of eleven, Widmann received his first lessons in composition with Kay Westermann and continued with Hans Werner Henze, Wilfried Hiller and Wolfgang Rihm. In 1999 he received the Belmont-Preis für zeitgenössische Musik of the Forberg-Schneider-Stiftung for his achievements in composition. In 2002 Jörg Widmann received on 16 June the Schneider-Schott-Musikpreis and on 15 August the Paul-Hindemith-Preis. In 2003 Jörg Widmann received one of the renowned prizes from the Ernst von Siemens Stiftung and the honorary award of the Munich Opern-Festspiele.

In his *Fieberphantasie* (“Fever Fantasy”), Widmann revels in coaxing a highly unusual spectrum of sounds from the comparatively conventional combination of string quartet with piano and clarinet or bass clarinet. These sounds are created through numerous playing techniques, which are as clearly elucidated as the ground-rules of classical instrumental technique. For long stretches, the work is a “realization score,” with instructions for the players, but without specified pitches for the notes. The work demands sophisticated listening, which it encourages with its complex texture woven from various combinations. An ascending pizzicato motive opens the movement, and is repeated almost soundlessly; a pallid sonic plane emerges from the motive, with the note C hovering above. Another note is distinguished by its flageolet sound and coarsened by tremolos. Propelled by intermittent vibrato, the notes F and E are separated from the texture and come to fulfill a structural function over the course of the movement. The piano’s constant rhythmic figures harden into sweeping virtuoso gestures both sonically and physically, yet at the end of the movement, these will reveal their origin.

Up to this point, motivic development continually intensifies, stopping for a moment before resuming the dash toward something new. The clarinet plays a sudden, distinctive scale passage, which eventually plummets three octaves from the highest tessitura into the lowest before fading to a barely audible tremolo. Musical figures rush by, reduced to colorless noises. And then notes arise again from the flow, coalescing into something recognizable, a quotation from Robert Schumann’s First Violin Sonata. Here, Widmann’s compositional methods open up new perspectives for interpretation: are they terrifying images from some Schumannesque inner world, spirits slumbering beneath the sonic surface of his music, coming to life in the *Fieberphantasie*? Perhaps Jörg Widmann’s *Fieberphantasie* plays a game with the hidden essence of all music, having, in the end, basically reduced the “inner order” that governs the works of Schoenberg and Webern to sound and motion.

—*Johanna Andrea Wolter*  
Translation by John Mangum

The atmospheric music of *Nachtstück* (“Night Piece”) for clarinet, cello and piano (1998) — the title may recall the Romantic tradition in general or Robert Schumann’s corresponding piano compositions — emerges from a constant attention to the modulation of its sound. Its effects include sounds produced in different ways that nevertheless sound similar; sound materializing from the void by which the clarinet and cello slip into the sound layers of the piano; or the carefully worked out muting of the piano strings to create special damper effects. In addition, skillfully woven ostinato pitch configurations are impressed into the work’s progression. The beginning is based on a kind of superimposition of two ostinato lines in the clarinet and the cello that returns at the end — though there it is overpowered by a piano line played fortissimo, until the abrupt break of the piano and a general pause concludes a final “inaudibly introduced” closing sound.

In the *Fünf Bruchstücke* (“Five Fragments”) for clarinet and piano noise is just as important as sound. The expressive force of this music, reminiscent of the Romantic tradition of fantasy or character pieces, emerges through the insertion of precisely calculated noise and sound elements and their blending. With fine shading and flowing passages that demand minute differentiations in extreme registers on the part of the performer, Widmann forms a current of sound that is entirely subordinated to gestural moment and traced out along the flow of human breath. Rhythmic elements play a role in this only to the extent that they serve a purpose as timbre or gestural expression. In this sense it is very significant that the originating sound space is more than the sum of composed sounds; Widmann deliberately uses melodic forms and specific performance indications to capture moods that can go beyond the music to trigger widely varied associations.

Alban Berg’s *Four Pieces for Clarinet and Piano* are dedicated to his mentor Arnold Schoenberg. These pieces, along with the *Altenberg Lieder* Op. 4, are the solitary examples of Berg’s essays in the concentrated, aphoristic style first proposed in

Schoenberg's *Six Little Piano Pieces* of 1911. Berg presented his score to him during a June 1913 visit to Berlin to attend the first rehearsals of Schoenberg's ground-breaking expressionist monodrama *Pierrot Lunaire*. Sadly, this inspiring time with his radical master was marred by his cruel parting words. As recounted by Berg's first biographer Willi Reich, "Schoenberg pointed out to him in no uncertain terms various weaknesses that he had found in the current work of his one-time pupil". Berg's loyal submission brought forth his imposing Op. 6 *Three Pieces for Orchestra*. It was left to his classmate Anton Webern to cultivate the musical microcosm and to express, as their teacher put it, "a novel in a single sigh". T.W. Adorno wrote of the Op. 5 pieces, "everything is development... there are none of the tonal references usually incorporated by Berg. Formally they are unstructured and expand on the [non-repetitive nature] of the last Op. 2 song. Even sequences are no longer tolerated".

— Daniel Foley

JÖRG WIDMANN

*Jagdquartett* (String Quartet No. 3, 2003)

The *Hunt Quartet*, which Jörg Widmann wrote as his third string quartet in 2003, following the *Choral Quartet*, also begins with a visible gesture. After a short signal cry from the performers, the piece starts by quoting Robert Schumann's *Papillons* Op. 2, and for its full duration retains this gesture, these starting sounds. The degrees of recognizability do change continuously, to be sure, in the furious, racing organism of the score. The contours change into forms on another level, yet now and then the beginning material returns clearly to the fore, initiated anew by a cry from the performers, and is then digested or mutated as a rhythmic study into a field of harmonic experimentation. On rare occasions, there are moments of pauses as though the musicians were testing the atmosphere, as though they were sensing the weather, so as ultimately to continue playing the quartet across the fields and forests of notes. A hunt after joyful performance, a chase, the whip cracking, after the thing to be shot, the sound, its performer, perhaps the composer himself? — A last shout, *morendo*, *dal niente*... — The victim is not the audience, at any rate.

— Stefan Fricke

Translation by Ben Letzler

*Accordes* evolved out of a string quintet that was formed in 1975 to perform a composition by John Beckwith, commissioned by the Toronto Symphony Women's Committee. Frequently heard on CBC radio, they have performed on the Roy Thomson Hall Chamber Music Series and constitute the core string players of the New Music Concerts Ensemble. Always searching for new repertoire, *Accordes* has commissioned works, as well as regularly premiering new compositions on the New Music Concerts series. This concentration on contemporary music has allowed them to give the Canadian, and sometimes world premieres, of works by such composers as Elliott Carter, Ben Johnson, Peter Paul Koprowski, Brian Cherney, Peter Michael Hamel, Ann Southam and Hope Lee. They have recorded extensively for the Canadian Music Centre label, Centrediscs, including discs devoted to the music of Harry Freedman (*Spirit Song*), Harry Somers (*Somers String Quartets*) and Alexina Louie (*Dénouement*). Their recoding of NMC co-founder Norma Beecroft's *Amplified String Quartet with Tape* was nominated for a Juno award in 2004.

A member of the Toronto Symphony since 1970, David Hetherington is the orchestra's Assistant Principal Cellist. He coaches the cello section of the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra and is Music Director of the Inter-Provincial Music Camp. As soloist, he has performed with the TSO, the Niagara Symphony, at the Elora Festival and frequently with New Music Concerts. Hetherington has toured Canada, the United States and Europe as a chamber musician. In addition to his activities with *Accordes* he is a founding member of the Amici Chamber Ensemble, which presents an annual series of concerts at Glenn Gould Studio and has made eight recordings for Summit Records, Naxos and CBC. Hetherington also made the premiere recording of Talivaldis Kenins' prize-winning cello sonata for Centrediscs. He plays a 1695 cello made by Giovanni Grancino of Milan.

A native of Saskatoon, David Swan gained national exposure at the age of sixteen as winner of the first Eckhardt-Gramatté Competition for the Performance of Canadian Music. After completing doctoral studies at the University of Indiana, he settled in Toronto, where he has freelanced continuously since 1986. His varied activities include ensemble and solo performances, accompaniment, recording and teaching, and he retains a special interest in 20th century repertoire. He served for many years as organist of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Toronto, and appears regularly with New Music Concerts.



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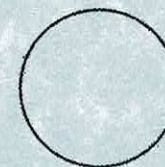
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*Giacinto Scelsi*

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*Programme:*

**Sean Pepperall** (Canada 1961) – \* *Cosmographie* (1996)

**Giacinto Scelsi** (Italy 1905-1988) – *Sonata No. 4* (1941)

**Silvio Palmieri** (Canada 1957)

\* *Prelude VIII: Il giorno della mia morte* (1998)

**Serge Arcuri** (Canada 1954) – \* *Fragments* (1997)

**Giacinto Scelsi** – *Suite No. 9 "T'ai"* (1953)

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