

Musicians to perform new compositions in ArtsCenter concert

By STEPHANIE DEAN
Staff Writer

Composers' Forum, a program of the ArtsCenter, presents a concert of new music by five local composers this evening in the ArtsCenter's new Earl Wynn Theater. Works by Roger Hannay, Peter Klausmeyer, Linda Pristera, Paul Whetstone, and Pamela St. John will be performed.

One of the compositions on the program is Roger Hannay's "The Nightingale and the Rose." According to Hannay, "The Nightingale and the Rose" is one of the fairy tales Oscar Wilde used to tell his children, and he later wrote it down in a more organized form. Hannay describes his musical version as "a mini-opera — a small, musical dramatic work where all players participate by speaking and singing. Each musician plays different roles during the course of the story."

Four people will work together to perform Hannay's piece: soprano Carolyn Helton, flutist Anna Wilson, guitarist William Stewart, and double bassist James Baird. "The Nightingale and the Rose," Hannay says, "really can be interpreted on multiple levels. It is a metaphor for the perception of reality between art and life." He expects that immediately following the performance the audience will probably be amused, and afterwards he hopes the production will be thought-provoking.

Paul Whetstone will perform his "English Playground Suite" on piano. It is actually four playground songs — "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star," "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," "Old MacDonald," and "Pop Goes The Weasel." "I've reorganized the four melodies into a larger neo-classical structure and used various ways to create an extended form with the melodies as a base," explains Whetstone. He thinks children would enjoy this work, though it was composed for a large range in audience. Through "English Playground Suite," Whetstone is "trying to evoke a sense of childhood remembrance and a sense of mystery of what it was like to be in that childhood state."

Linda Pristera will also perform her own compositions. These include the jazz instrumental "Farfella" (meaning "butterfly" in Italian) and "After The Storm Goes Away" and "I Think I Can See The Sun," two passionate ballads. Pristera believes her style "is somewhere between jazz and acoustic folk rock." Her inspirations for these songs were her friends. "I Think I Can See The Sun" is a song really written for a lot of friends who were real wonderful people, and it was my tribute to them, thanking them for who they are. "After The Storm Goes Away" is for healing, to be a comforting, nurturing kind of song. Many people can relate to that," she said.

Through her works, Pristera hopes the audience "will feel very warm, like I touched something deep inside of them. That's what I try to do with my music — talk about feelings. I hope people will feel close to me when they're done hearing them and feel my songs will have some relevance to what's happening in their life."

Peter Klausmeyer's works include "Two Songs on Poems by Voznesensky" and "Three Songs on Poems by Dorothy Parker." Voznesensky is

one of Russia's leading contemporary poets. He was exiled by Krushchev in 1963, and his works were banned in the Soviet Union for years afterwards. The two poems set by Klausmeyer are brief statements on what being a poet means for Voznesensky. "I like his imagination and would like to meet him someday," Klausmeyer says.

Dorothy Parker is a 20th-century American poet that Klausmeyer feels is much underappreciated. "Her poetry is witty, personal and sometimes tinged by bitter sarcasm," he says. "She's witty and has a sardonic quality that I like." "Three Songs on Poems by Dorothy Parker" is actually for prepared piano — where the piano is altered by putting things inside of it. "In this piece I use aluminum bars on the strings, which makes a kind of tinkle, and pieces of wood in the lowest register that makes a snare drum sound," he explains. Klausmeyer hopes the audience "will be open and all I can ask is that they listen. If they don't like it, say so. I like an honest reaction."

Pamela St. John will be performing "Hope" and "Impromptu for Alice." "Hope" is a diary tone poem for piano and voice which features St. John on piano and Linda Pristera singing the voice line. St. John explains it as "something I wrote 15 years ago and put to music. It is sort of an autobiography. It describes a period I was going through at the time."

"Impromptu For Alice" is a duet for piano strings (the actual plucking of piano strings) and keyboard. The string part will be performed by Alice Yeaman, who inspired the piece. St. John feels that her works "are a way of connecting with other people, which means that feedback is very important."

All five composers have extensive backgrounds in music. Roger Hannay has been a resident composer at the University since 1966; Paul Whetstone received a Bachelor of Music Education degree from UNC and has taught piano and toured nationally with Touch Mime Theatre; Linda Pristera, who has been composing since age 14, also has a Bachelor of Music Education degree from UNC and specializes in teaching popular as well as classical voice lessons; Peter Klausmeyer holds a doctorate in composition from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, and his works have been performed on both sides of the Atlantic; and Pamela St. John, who founded the Composers' Forum, has a Bachelor's degree in piano performance from Indiana University.

A wine and cheese reception, sponsored by Red Baron Restaurant, will follow the performance, with the composers on hand to greet the audience.

The Composers' Forum Concert will begin tonight at 8 p.m. at the ArtsCenter. Call 942-2041 for ticket information.

Horseback riding: a new kind of therapy

By JIM MOCK
Staff Writer

"Ready, buckaroo?" Meg Wittman asks 5-year-old Bryan Berger.

"Yeah, buckaroo!" replies Bryan from his wheelchair as he prepares to mount his horse, Chester. "I sure wish Chester were a bucking horse. Bucking horses are awesome!"

Riding instructor Wittman and student Berger are part of Wednesday night horseback riding lessons given at the N.C. Therapeutic Riding Center, located at the Klopfer boarding stable near Chapel Hill. The program serves 18 handicapped children and adults, and it is designed to supplement their standard physical therapy.

Dot Kohlbach, who started the program 10 years ago in Durham, led Berger and two other handicapped children into the riding facility for a final safety check and preliminary exercises before the 45-minute lesson.

"We take safety very seriously," Kohlbach said. Three walking volunteers are assigned to balance and guide each rider.

During the lesson, Kohlbach led Berger and other students through maneuvers that included walking the horse over and around poles, standing in the stirrups, arm exercises and leading the horse to trot.

"I like trotting the best because I like to go fast," Berger said.

Kohlbach ended the riding session with a game of Simon Says.

Wittman is a physical therapist in the Burn Center at N.C. Memorial Hospital. She has been a member of the all-volunteer staff at the handicapped riding center for the past four years, and she believes in the therapeutic benefits of horseback riding.

"For kids who don't walk normally, the walk of the horse mimics human gait," she said. "So by riding, they get all the pelvic motion they wouldn't get otherwise."

"If (the riders) are very tight and cannot relax, the slow rhythmic motion of the horse helps them relax, so when they get off the horse they do their activities in a more normal fashion," Wittman said. "For kids that are loose, the bouncing helps them perk up and



DTH/Gretchen Hock

Amy Capp helps five-year-old Bryan Berger onto a horse at the therapeutic riding center

get control of their muscles."

Wittman said that riding also increases the muscle strength of handicapped people. Some paraplegic children have developed muscles on the insides of their legs from riding horses.

According to Wittman, horseback riding offers many psychological benefits to handicapped people, including increased self-esteem, interaction with others and decreased anxiety.

"Autistic children sometimes move the verbal commands used while riding into their daily lives, which can be a real breakthrough," said Wittman.

"I learned about handicapped riding in my native Scotland,"

Kohlbach said. "When I got over here, I couldn't find therapeutic riding organizations to volunteer with, so I started this one with a friend."

"When we started, we didn't have horses, insurance, riding helmets or anything. Since we got non-profit status, we're at a point where people can donate and get tax breaks. That's how we started getting horses."

The program now owns eight horses as well as riding helmets and mounting ramps to make lessons safer and easier. A six-week session, which consists of six 45-minute lessons, costs each rider \$35. This does not cover the cost of rider insurance, which is \$27.50

per rider per year and is paid by the program.

"This is a real bargain when compared to regular horseback lessons, which cost each rider about \$20 per hour," Kohlbach said.

All handicapped persons are eligible upon referral from a physician, but there is currently a waiting list for the program.

The United Way gave the program \$7,000 for its 1988 summer program. With the money, the program will be able to include as many as 140 students.

Students interested in volunteering or participating in the handicapped riding program can contact Dot Kohlbach for more information.

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