
ENTERTAINMENT



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'Quinquagenarium' fanfare to open 50th anniversary concert

By The News-Gazette

URBANA — Rudolf Haken jokes that he might be accused of nepotism once people hear his fanfare for the Champaign-Urbana Symphony.

The new piece, which will open the orchestra's concert Friday evening, is for full orchestra and the Continuum Fingerboard, an electronic instrument invented by his older brother, Lippold.

Rudolf Haken also wrote into the piece their sister Armgard Haken singing in a monotone, "Happy Birthday CUSO." The greeting was programmed into the instrument and will be played at different pitches and sounds throughout the piece.

"As it happens, Feb. 19 will be my sister's birthday," Rudolf Haken said of the concert date.

Armgard Haken plays violin in the orchestra, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. That milestone led conductor Steve Larsen and the orchestra to commission from composers fanfares to open this season's concerts.

Rudolf Haken titled his "Quinquagenarium," which is Latin for 50th anniversary. The fanfare celebrates the orchestra's birthday and includes references to things that happened five decades ago.

It opens with the Continuum Fingerboard improvising on the sound of a baby crying to symbolize the birth of the orchestra. It goes on to quote music played at the ensemble's first concert, including Beethoven's Emperor Concerto for piano.

"The fanfare has a lot of obscure references that tie into that first season in 1960," Haken said.

One is the sound of an anvil to symbolize the end of the Dwight Eisenhower era. In German, Eisenhower means iron worker.

Another is to Bernie Goodman, the first conductor of the orchestra. "A lot of people got his name confused with Benny Goodman, so I used a little jazz clarinet for that," Rudolf Haken said.

Haken, also professor of vio-

If you go

What: Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra's 50th anniversary season concert with the theme of "To Stir The World."

The program: World premiere of Rudolf Haken's fanfare, "Quinquagenarium," for full orchestra and Continuum Fingerboard; Antonio Salieri's 26 Variations on "La Follia di Spagna"; Felix Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E minor, op. 64, with guest artist Gernot Winischhofer, a Vienna-born, Moscow-trained violinist; and Antonin Dvorak's Symphony No. 7 in D minor, op. 70.

When: 7:30 p.m. Friday.

Where: Foellinger Great Hall, Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, 500 S. Goodwin Ave., U.

Tickets: \$31 for adults, \$28 for senior citizens and \$5 for students.

For information: Call 333-6280.

la at the University of Illinois, enjoyed creating "Quinquagenarium" because he grew up attending C-U Symphony concerts.

"When I was 11 years old, I conducted them," he said.

He also was the group's principal violist when he first joined the UI School of Music faculty. He now is a viola soloist, performing with orchestras worldwide.

On the other hand, Lippold Haken is a lecturer in the UI's Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering who never liked performing.

"I built this instrument, but if I play it for people, they listen to me and walk away and say, 'Oh, that's what it does,'" he said.

For that reason, he will not play his instrument at the concert Friday evening. His old friend, Mark Smart, who also teaches in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, will play it.

"Mark has a lot more performance skills than I do," Lippold Haken said. "Mark Smart has

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played it for years.”

Smart also witnessed the development of the Continuum Fingerboard. Lippold began working on it in the '80s and began selling it just 10 years ago.

Among the 200 musicians who have acquired one are Terry Lawless, keyboardist for U2; John Paul Jones, bass guitarist and keyboardist with Led Zeppelin; and Jordan Rudess, keyboard wizard with the progressive metal band Dream Theater.

Two major movie composers

also bought one. John Williams used it as part of his orchestral score for “Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull,” for the first time making the instrument part of an orchestra rather than one that would mimic other instruments.

On the other side of the globe, Williams' counterpart, A.R. Rahman, bought a Continuum and used it for an India unity video. Rahman composes for Bollywood movies; his impressive resume includes “Slumdog Millionaire.”

Like the violin, the Continuum Fingerboard is fretless,

has a continuous pitch and can produce vibrato sounds. Unlike most electronic instruments, it does not make a musician's job easier because it takes skill and practice to learn to play it, according to its inventor.

With the Continuum, players are able to generate different sounds, pitches and volume by sliding their fingers horizontally or vertically across the sponge-like surface, or by applying pressure.

To play it, the musician has to connect the Continuum Fingerboard to a synthesizer or electronic music system such as the Kyma, invented by Symbolic Sound Corp. in Champaign.