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July 9, 2010

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## MUSIC

Winnipeg Free Press - PRINT EDITION

### Intimate program covers big range Chamber pieces look back on the 20th century

By: [Holly Harris](#)  
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Welcome to the 20th (and 21st) century! The Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra New Music Festival's latest program, *My 20th Century*, spun its patrons through an intimate chamber music program that ranged from sublime contemplation to so-cool-it-hurts homage paid to four iconic 20th century figures.

Valentin Silvestrov's *Nostalgia* is a haunting piano solo that gives more satisfaction in its few short minutes than an entire evening of larger-scale music. NMF distinguished guest pianist Jenny Lin's overlapping pedalling seamlessly blended its hovering melody over a broken choral accompaniment with utmost sensitivity. Lin's artistry allowed this gorgeous piece to breathe and indeed, it became a living work that had every listener on the edge of his or her seat.

#### ConcertReview

**WSO New Music Festival**  
Centennial Concert Hall  
Monday, February 8  
Attendance: 668  
3- 1/2 stars out of five

It's a wonder we haven't heard WSO composer-in-residence Vincent Ho's 2006 chamber work *Four Paintings by Leestemaker* until now. Inspired by Dutch-American painter Luc Leestemaker's (in attendance) abstract landscape paintings, Ho creates his own sonic tapestry for the series of images projected onto a large onstage screen. The four short movements -- each introduced briefly by the artist -- are distinctly different but still wholly Ho. The gifted young composer (who surely must be forming his own fan club by now) continues to reveal his keen ear for dramatic gesture

and always tasteful orchestration, performed by a top-notch ensemble: WSO String Quintet (Gwen Hoebig, violin; Karl Stobbe, violin; Daniel Scholz, viola; Yuri Hooker, cello; Meredith Johnson, bass) as well as Lin.

The program also included Randy Hostetler's simply titled *8 (1986)* for piano and billiard ball. Lin is a powerhouse player who playfully pounded the keys with fingers, fists, wrists and practically everything else in between. Her tossing a black eight ball in the air with her left hand while playing with her right was rhythmically grounded by a steadily ticking metronome -- a feat of co-ordination in itself.

One of the festival's four distinguished guest composers Tim Brady hit the stage after intermission. His theatre/music/video work -- and program namesake -- *My 20th Century* is a multi-media extravaganza with the guitarist/composer situated squarely amid an arsenal of percussion instruments. The four-movement work pays tribute to John Lennon, Charlie Christian, Rosa Luxemburg and Dmitri Shostakovich with clever visual effects including kaleidoscopic videography as well as bang-on comic timing by actor David Cronkite, who also doubled on sampler.

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*Three Little Variations for David*, by another of the festival's guest composers Steven Stucky, is a winsome piano confection based on *Happy Birthday* that showed this composer's skilful hand throughout its three very short but charming movements.

The NMF festival returns to the land of ice and snow tonight with *Arctic Dreams*, 7:30 pm at the Centennial Concert Hall.

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At five days, has the Winnipeg Folk Festival become too long?

- Yes, it should be cut back to three days
- No, it should last an entire week
- I'm not a hippy so I don't care

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## Winnipeg Folk Festival

With Emmylou Harris, Levon Helm, John Hiatt, Jimmy Cliff, Arrested Development and more. Five-day adult passes \$176.50, with camping \$209.50 at Ticketmaster and Folk Festival Music Store. ...

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