

Citizen of the World



ASO to feature neo-Romantic symphony by

By **RON EMERY**

Special to the Times Union

The composer Peter Paul Koprowski likens the composition process to seeing through a frosted window.

"I do a blueprint first of my music," said the composer. "It's for me like seeing through a frosted pane of glass: You can only see a vague outline, a suggested image; gradually, the ice melts and I see more clearly. Details become clearer, until all is there in vivid detail."

In this way, the 53-year-old composer gives himself away as a product of two chilly climates. Born in Poland, Koprowski has become one of Canada's most popular composers since emigrating there in 1971. He won the coveted National Music Award in 1997, and recently heard his music played by Pinchas Zuckerman on a European tour with the National Arts Centre Orchestra.

In Canada, "I rediscovered myself," said Koprowski from his home near Ottawa. He was almost out the door, headed for another concert featuring his work. On Saturday, he'll be in Troy when the Albany Symphony Orchestra presents the world premiere of Koprowski's neo-Romantic, four-movement, big-orchestra Cello Concerto at Troy Savings Bank Music Hall.

His first symphony was highly modernistic; over the course of the

ISN'T IT ROMANTIC?

THE ALBANY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

What: Anton Bruckner's Symphony No. 7 and the world premiere of Peter Paul Koprowski's Cello Concerto

When: 8 p.m. Saturday

Where: Troy Savings Bank Music Hall, State and Second streets, Troy

Tickets: \$16-\$35

Info: 273-0038

next four, he gradually returned to tonality in a kind of late-Romantic style. Koprowski's work has become as identified with Canadian culture in the same way that Aaron Copland's work has become synonymous with American culture.

Born in the Polish city of Lodz in 1947, Koprowski graduated in half the required time from the Krakow Academy of Music; with the same sort of speed, he became known as one of a leading Polish composer. After periods in England and in France with the acclaimed composer and educator Nadia Boulanger, he moved to Canada in '71 and took his doctorate at the University of Toronto. He decided to stay, and is now a fierce Canadian patriot.

"I don't want to talk of my personal life at all," Koprowski said, "only to say my two greatest inspirations are my adopted coun-

try of Canada and my daughter, Rachel—who serves as my musical inspiration. ... There is still an element of longing for my old life in Poland, but now in Canada I feel I am a citizen of the world."

David Alan Miller, now in his ninth year as head of the ASO, has conducted two works by the composer: one with the ASO in a concert at Tanglewood's Ozawa Hall, and one when he was guest conductor recently of the Arts Centre Orchestra in Canada. For Saturday's show, Miller has also invited Maya Beiser, one of the hottest New York City cellists, to contribute to the premiere.

Also on the bill is Miller's first stab at conducting a big Anton Bruckner symphony: the composer's arch-Romantic Symphony No. 7. Miller has been doing a great deal of research into the piece, including consulting with William Carragan, professor of physics at Hudson Valley Community College and an international Bruckner scholar. (He is the son of American composer Martha Carragan, founder of Troy Friends of Chamber Music.) There is controversy even today over the final form of the symphonies, and Carragan is working with the Bruckner Society on a scholarly editing of those scores.

"The old recording of (Herbert) van Karajan's leading the Vienna Philharmonic in the Bruckner Seventh was, and still is, a favorite



WORKS BY Peter Paul Koprowski, left, and Anton Bruckner, far left, are on the bill Saturday when the Albany Symphony Orchestra plays at Troy Savings Bank Music Hall.

Polish-born Canadian composer

of mine," Miller said. "But I certainly don't want to copy his interpretation, even if I could. I want to learn all that's new in scholarship before I tackle it."

Although Bruckner (1824-1896) drew inspiration from his deeply felt religious beliefs, his music remains steeped in controversy. It is played widely in Austria and Germany, but not so much outside those two countries. Fans love his music and are fiercely loyal to the man who ended the long

march from Beethoven and Schumann to Strauss and Bruckner.

Detractors believe Bruckner's reputation is overblown, and argue that his religious fervor lends his music a bloated emotionalism.

Bruckner fans, however, will be looking forward to hearing the Seventh Symphony directed by Miller in the Troy Music Hall, which could be said to have been built to demonstrate the genius of the composer.