

Western professor's work at National Arts Centre

Pinchas Zukerman will conduct the National Arts Centre Orchestra in a performance of Peter Paul Koprowski's *Sinfonia concertante* April 17-18. The work was commissioned some years ago by the orchestra, but this will be the first performance under Zukerman's baton.

"He has conducted other works of mine," said Koprowski, a composition professor at the Don Wright Faculty of Music. "He is familiar with my work and has some creative ideas for it. He is a great musician. He is the type of conductor, that despite his stature, will consult with the composer, and I like that."

Sinfonia concertante is part of a program that includes Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 25 in C major played by Angela Cheng, and Schubert's Symphony No. 5. Zukerman, Cheng and Koprowski will also host a post-concert discussion.

"All of my music is in some measure a reflection of my life," said Koprowski. "I am more prepared these days to talk about the extra-musical ideas that affect the work. It's not programmatic, but it's a strong statement

against Neo-Nazism and Fascism. I grew up in post-war Poland with strong echoes of marching Nazis. Then I was embroiled in a different rhythm of the Communist Regime. The work has to do with what's beneath the surface and the surface."

Sinfonia concertante is in four movements: impromptu, burlesque a la mazurka, aria and finale.

"It begins with an almost pastoral aspect—it's very happy, sweet and pretty. Then it starts cracking from beneath the surface to echo Nazism and the police state. I also found notions of the same thing in Canada. It concerns me personally. This symphony is an expression of it."

The burlesque is a satire, but also includes striptease elements. The aria is like a song about what could be, while the finale presents a level of anxiety through the insertion of a Roman Catholic processional hymn.

"Everything becomes a big collision," said Koprowski. "Nothing survives of what was there and it ends with a big question mark."

Koprowski said the work is really a concerto for orchestra

with a string quintet seated in front of the ensemble and the winds in a line behind with the brass at the back.

Koprowski said he has reached a point in his life that he wants to aid the audience with an understanding of his compositions.

"It's my response to the notion the world will be destroyed, a notion we were taught as children. I am writing more works connected to my childhood."

National Arts Centre audiences are familiar with Koprowski's works. The premiere of *Sinfonia concertante* was given under the baton of Franz-Paul Decker. His *Epitaph* was performed with Kazuyoshi Akiyama in 1982, and again by Zukerman in 2000, who later included it on Canadian and European tours. *Sweet Baroque*, *Capriccio*, *Intermezzo*, *Sinfonia Mystica*, *Symphony of Nordic Tales* and *Ancestral Voices* have all been performed at the NAC.

Ancestral Voices will be performed next season by Orchestra London. *Tapestries of Love*, Koprowski's latest work, was recorded by the Kingston Symphony Orchestra on their recently released CD.