

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 pastorate 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.