

## ENTERTAINMENT

# 'Inroad' makes a pleasing piece

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*News Contributing Reviewer*

The fourth program in the June in Buffalo series was a well-planned mix of works by young composers. We heard a range of styles, grounded in various modernist traditions, and a variety of instrumental combinations that were rather traditional.

The most attractive piece was John Elmquist's polite and tasteful "Inroad," performed by Rachel Rudich, flutes; Jerry Simas, clarinet; and Kirk Brundage, vibraphone. It is a lovely piece to hear; even its dissonance is pleasing. Mostly you feel an avoidance of chromaticism. The piece benefited especially from the sound and intonation of Rudich and Simas. The contented feel of the piece comes mostly from its tasteful woodwind writing, which can get bright, but which is happy to be subtle, and to inhabit a middle ground of register. Near the close there is what sounds like an attempt at reaching out, when flute and clarinet mesh their repeating patterns while the vibraphone takes a wayward course.

There were lovely woodwind sounds in another piece — "Trine," by Jeffrey Stadelman, for two flutes and harp. The players were Rudich and Cheryl Gobbetti,

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#### June in Buffalo IV

Fourth concert of the University at Buffalo's annual music festival.

Tuesday evening in Baird Hall, UB North Campus.

flutes, and Beth Anne Breneman, harp. In the first of the three pieces, the flutes seem to be twins. Moreover, the texture of the writing for these paired flutes is close, so when the flutes played fast, exploding passages, you wondered how precisely the parts were performed, and if it mattered. The harp functions here as a drone and it signals modulation. The second piece, with a harp's heart-pulse, is peaceful, and the faster third piece using piccolo and alto flute is a sound-piece of color.

Michael Zajonc's Trio for clarinet and piano, performed by Simas and pianist Kathleen Supove is bold, agile, disjunct. In the last of three pieces, the more tonally settled of the group, there is a taxing clarinet cadenza, and (a witticism?) a piano figure that is reminiscent of a clarinet part from a Shostakovich symphony.

Probably the most heroic piece

was Helmut Burkhardt's Cello Sonata (we heard one movement). This music of neoclassic modernism has a romantic thrust, and it was healthily attacked by the players, Joshua Gordon, cello, and Robert Conway, piano.

Tomas Henriques's "Espiraís" (first movement only) for string quartet looks back to the Second Viennese School (as, to some extent, does the Zajonc Trio). It is initially bold and rude, before developing a searing, calm expressiveness. It did not seem, however, conclusive. The players were Karen Bentley and David Wolf, violins, Nardo Poy, viola, and Mark Stewart, cello.

The most up-to-date sounding piece was Eleanor Trawick's Three Movements for Two Pianos (played by Conway and Supove). It was the first movement that was up-to-date, with its minimal clop-clop-clops and its parallel fifths. The music sounded made for exotic percussion instruments and arranged for pianos. However, the pianos tangled pleasantly in the second movement, meshing harmonies and rhythmic violence.

Gustavo Leone's "Confluence" for trumpet and piano (played by David McChesney, trumpet, and Supove) is a puzzling piece, not exactly subtle, not exactly heroic.