

Review for Kelowna Community Concerts Thurs Oct 27th

The Kelowna Community Concert Association heralded in their new season Thursday night at the Kelowna Community Theatre with a guest appearance from the internationally acclaimed brass ensemble, *True North Brass*. Comprised of five of Canada's most celebrated brass players including: Richard Sandals and Barton Woomert on trumpets, Joan Watson on French horn, Alistair Kay on trombone, and Scott Irvine on tuba, they treated the capacity audience to a memorable evening of music and entertainment.



They opened the evening with a brief Ceremonial Fanfare written by their very own composer, arranger, and Tubist extraordinaire, Scott Irvine. It was followed by a charming work by the little known Canadian composer Calixa Lavallee, who, despite having written our national anthem, actually spent most of his life in the USA and his piece *La Rose Nuptiale* definitely had a certain 'American' flair.

Trombonist Alistair Kay took the spotlight in the next work on the program, the Concert Etude by the Russian composer Alexander Goedicke. Originally written for the trumpet, Kay set out to showcase that the trombone could rival its smaller counterpart in both virtuosity and agility. The group moved on to *Two Sketches on French Canadian Airs* by the esteemed conductor/composer Sir Ernest MacMillan, pieces which beautifully captured the 'joie de vivre' of their Quebecois roots.

Meditations by Scott Irvine was a welcome diversion from the traditional brass quintet fare of much of the rest of the program, and along with incorporating the piano and various other percussion instruments, Irvine also showcased the more subtle and transparent qualities of the brass instruments in this hauntingly beautiful piece inspired by the *Huron Carol*. The *Canadian Folk Song Suite* by Morley Calvert rounded out the first half and highlighted the groups solid ensemble playing especially in the last movement based on the popular French tune *J'entends le Moulin*.

Following the intermission the group presented another work by Irvine entitled *The True North*. Loosely based on *O Canada*, from which the group derives their name, after a brief lesson in composition from Irvine, the audience was given a second chance to hear the work and apply their newly honed musical perception to this clever little piece. One of the highlights of the program was *Farinelli's Folly* by the late Canadian composer Malcolm Forsythe which took the *La Folia* made popular in the baroque era and gave it a thoroughly modern twist. Three more traditional folk songs followed and then the group broke out into jazz with the scintillating rhythms of Duke Ellington in *I'm Beginning to See the Light*. They ended with the Latin inspired piece *Carioca* originally written by Vincent Youmans and arranged by member of the group for their brilliant French hornist Joan Watson. After much enthusiastic applause they offered a virtuoso and humorous rendition of the *Clarinet Polka* to round off a splendid evening.

Sandra Wilmot is a Kelowna-based freelance musician, composer, educator, and violin instructor. She plays professionally with both the Okanagan and Kamloops Symphony orchestras and maintains a large studio of violin students both privately and at the Kelowna Community Music School.