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## Laurier to host memorial concert for W.J. Pitcher

A fund-raising concert for a scholarship honoring longtime Kitchener-Waterloo Record music critic Jim Pitcher (1912-90) will be presented at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo on Sept. 28. It will begin at 8 p.m. in the John Aird Centre.

Two opera singers, members of the WLU faculty of music, the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, and the Canadian Chamber Ensemble are donating their services out of respect for Pitcher who supported and encouraged them early in their careers.

Participants are: opera singers Irena Welhasch and Theodore Baerg, and instrumental musicians Thomas Kay, flute; Raffi Armenian and Leslie De'Ath, piano; Victor Sawa, clarinet; Eduard Minevich, violin; and James Mason, oboe.

Pitcher had interviewed almost everyone on the program at one time or another, says Maureen Sawa, daughter of the late critic and one of the concert organizers. "He was a valuable resource for them -- especially for Raffi Armenian (K-W Symphony conductor) -- when they were first getting started."

The performers have chosen favorites of Pitcher's and their own for the program, which includes works by Bach, Rossini, Gluck, Brahms, Milhaud, Piston, Gounod, Schubert, and Kreisler.

Regarded as a kindly critic who was, nevertheless, astute in his judgments, Pitcher was the music critic for The Record from 1942 to 1978. He travelled the world to review productions but his real dedication centred on encouraging and supporting local and young talent, whether as individual performers or as members of schools, bands, musical societies, glee clubs or other groups.

The scholarship being established at WLU will be awarded to a first-year keyboard student. "The scholarship will extend to new generations of young music students the kind of opportunities that circumstances did not offer my father," Sawa explains.

Pitcher was a gifted pianist who became a church organist at the age of 14 and aspired to a career as a concert pianist.

"Jim loved to play the piano," notes Pitcher's wife, journalist Rosemary Pitcher. "He never let a day go by without playing some of his favorites."

The concert will kick off the fund-raising for the scholarship. Contributions received that night, plus individual and corporate donations already received or pledged, will allow the first award to be presented next fall.

Admission to the concert will be by donation rather than by ticket. Donation boxes and other information will be available in the recital hall foyer. A reception will follow the concert.

Concert organizers include representatives of WLU, St. Paul's College, and the Seagram Museum; and musicians involved in the program.

## PROGRAM

### W.J. PITCHER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP CONCERT

Friday, 28 September 1990  
WLU Aird Centre, 8 p.m.

Gluck: Dance of the Blessed Spirit, From *Orfeo et Euridice*  
Thomas Kay, flute; Leslie De'Ath, piano

Bach: Sonata in E major, for flute and piano, BWV 1035  
*Siciliano; Allegro assai*  
Thomas Kay, flute; Leslie De'Ath, piano

Rossini: *Largo al factotum*, from *Il barbiere di Siviglia*  
Theodore Baerg, baritone; Leslie De'Ath, piano

Brahms: Two Duets, from Op. 28  
*Es rauschet das Wasser; Der Jäger and sein Liebchen*  
Irena Welhasch, soprano; Theodore Baerg, baritone;  
Leslie De'Ath, piano

Milhaud: Suite for clarinet, violin and piano  
*Ouverture; Divertissement; Jeu; Introduction et Final*  
Victor Sawa, clarinet; Eduard Minevich, violin;  
Leslie De'Ath, piano

Piston: Suite for oboe and piano  
*Prelude; Sarabande; Minuetto; Nocturne; Gigue*  
James Mason, oboe; Leslie De'Ath, piano

Gounod: *Avant de quitter ces lieux* from *Faust*  
Theodore Baerg, baritone; Leslie De'Ath, piano

Schubert: *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen*, Op. 129  
Irene Welhasch, soprano; Victor Sawa, clarinet;  
Raffi Armenian, piano

Kreisler: *Schon Rosmarin* (Fair Rosemary);  
*Liebeslied* (Sorrow of love); *Liebesfreud* (Joy of love)  
Eduard Minevich, violin; Leslie De'Ath, piano

Admission by donation.  
Your generosity is appreciated.

*Program subject to change.*

## W.J. PITCHER (1912 - 1990)

For 47 years, W.J. Pitcher was a well-known figure concert halls in Kitchener-Waterloo, Toronto and southern Ontario. He was music critic for the *Kitchener-Waterloo Record* from 1942 to 1978, and after retiring, was a broadcaster and the music editor for CFCA-FM for the remaining years of his life.

An active member of the International Association of Music Critics and a tireless reporter, Pitcher travelled the world to review productions at the Vienna State Opera, the Paris Opera, La Scala, the Metropolitan, Lincoln Centre and Carnegie Hall. He heard the greatest artists of the day. However, he dedicated himself primarily to encouraging and supporting young musicians, and his exhaustive coverage of local artists is legendary. A kindly critic, he was nevertheless astute in his judgements and never failed to identify genuine talent.

Mr. Pitcher studied piano at an early age in his home town of Ayr, Ontario, where he was appointed organist of Christ Anglican Church at age 14. He later studied piano with Mona Bates of Toronto and aspired to a career as a concert pianist. Though circumstances prevented that career from being realized, Pitcher did teach piano throughout his life. (One of his early pupils recalls that all of Pitcher's students did extraordinarily well at exam time!)

W.J. Pitcher made an undeniably significant contribution to the musical life of the Kitchener-Waterloo area. Not only individual artists, but schools, local bands, musical societies, festivals, glee clubs and other groups benefited from his dedication and commitment. He was especially interested in the development of the music program at Wilfrid Laurier University, and reviewed all of the opera and concerts produced by the WLU Faculty of Music in its early years.

The W.J. Pitcher Music Scholarship is being established at the University in his memory to provide financial assistance to new generations of young talent. The Scholarship will be awarded annually to a keyboard student of merit who is entering the first year of the WLU music program.

CONCERT PROGRAM ON REVERSE.