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## Frysk Fanfare Orkest



I had never heard a Fanfare Orchestra until this concert. When the band entered the stage, I couldn't imagine enjoying a timbre of saxophones, flugelhorns, trumpets, horns, trombones, tenor tubas, bass tubas and percussion for the next hour and a half. However, I was pleasantly surprised to find this a pleasing sound, albeit loud, with its 60 players in a small acoustic. The Frysk Fanfare Orkest is an excellent ensemble, with unrelenting virtuosity and breadth of sound.

Bernard van Beurden's *Finale Estampie* (1992) gave this concert a riveting start, with a precise performance that snapped the 15th century to 2009. The world premier of Van Beurden's *Kontrasten* (2008) offered a terrific contrast (pardon the pun) to the brilliance of the opening work. The contemplative opening statement gives way to dramatic bursts of sonorous chords, offering a rich harmonic texture that sets a mood of introspection to contrast with the energetic second movement. The punctuated rhythmic drive and virtuosic melody is juxtaposed with chordal and complementary percussion effects to set the stage for the following imaginative interludes by the percussion. There is a balance of unity and contrast, as the composer continues to cast a perpetual rhythmic drive that never gets boring, due to the asymmetric rhythmic and thematic material and imaginative use of percussion.

We were treated to another world premier with Marco Pütz's *Four Earth Songs* (2008). The maturation of Pütz's compositional technique was evident with this stunning work for Soprano and Fanfare Orchestra. The four-movement work interprets a collection of poems by Graeme King about the devastating effects of humanity on our Earth. Our attention was immediately fixed with the opening *fff* chord that diminishes to *ppp* almost immediately, to open the work with "Tears of Nature." The sound of the orchestra makes way for the soprano (Janny Zomer) as the incredible music is crafted to add drama to the poetry, without ever getting in the way of the soloist. Pütz's use of pitch material for dramatic effect, inventive melody, and harmonic stability is always supporting the pristine architecture of the movement. "Grrrevolution" is a witty contrast to the dramatic first movement, while maintaining the serious nature of the message. "Stand Up" has a more "showy" sound, but still maintains the drama that has been present throughout the work. The final movement "Tomorrow" reveals the idea of devastation with its ominous harmonies set against a chorale that seems to represent hope in its purest sense. The music of *Four Earth Songs* is by far stronger than the poetry that inspired it and Marco Pütz has firmly found a place as an incredibly important composer for the wind band.

Marco Pütz's *Die Judenbuche* (2006) is a moving work that has something for everybody in its depiction of the 1842 novella by Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, "The Jews Beech," which deals with crime and the pre- and post-history of the remote village of Westphalian, before the upheavals of the French Revolution in Europe. The music of the opening movement features singing and muted brass to create a magical texture and colour. One does not need the program to be taken on the journey that recollects the characters and plot development of the story. It is fun, well-crafted music that falls short of kitsch. The fugato at the end demands virtuosity by the musicians and ties up a work that takes us through "show" tunes, polka, austerity, rich texture, light and bold themes, drama, and humour.

The concert featured a third world premier with "Persistence," by Leon Vliex. The big opening of this work immediately gives way to an unexpected plaintive melody, presented in a chamber music setting. The beautiful, restless theme is then interrupted by a dense tutti fanfare that recalls "Raiders of the Lost Ark." The next succession of thematic material was presented like checking off a list: Rhapsodic version of the melody; opening melody with different timbral sonorities; bold Wagnerian march a-la "Tannhäuser"; recapitulation;