

The Music Man

October 19, 2011

By Leonard Turnevicius

When the Burlington Concert Band cast about for someone to write a piece celebrating the city's new Performing Arts Centre, they didn't have to look any further than Ryan Meeboer.

After all, Meeboer had played tenor sax with them for a spell, and had already composed *The Centennial*, a work celebrating the band's centenary in 2008.

So, this past March, BCB music director Don Allan rang up Meeboer and had him meet with the band's executive. In short order, they hammered out the commissioned piece's parameters. Three months later, Meeboer's piece, *Illuminations*, was ready for the light of day.

Illuminations is a five minute, light listening toe-tapper made all the more bubbly thanks to its pop influenced harmonies. It's in a fast-slow-fast format, and the three sections, titled *Ablaze*, *Glistening*, and *The Radiance* respectively, are intended to cast a musical spotlight on the BPAC.

"The piece opens with the celebration. You know, like a royal fanfare," explained Meeboer from his Burlington home last week. "I tried to have the piece reflect some of the other elements of the BPAC itself. The slow section, *Glistening*, is supposed to reflect the beauty of the building itself, and the design. And then it ends fast, which is just to kind of tie everything together about the excitement of finally having the structure in the City of Burlington."

Given his band connections, Meeboer's assertion that he wasn't writing specifically for any of the band's players came as a surprise. That is, except when it came to flutist Lynda Eady.

"I knew she had great sound in her flute," said Meeboer of Eady, "so I tried to have a flute solo in there."

Meeboer, a Hamilton native and McMaster University grad, has been teaching music at Alexander's Public School



Ryan Meeboer. Young composer, Ryan Meeboer, who was commissioned to compose a concert piece to commemorate the opening of the new Burlington Arts Centre. He is seen here conducting the Burlington Concert Band during practice . Cathie Coward/The Hamilton Spectator Source: The Hamilton Spectator

in Burlington for the past two years. He doesn't write his music at the piano, but at the computer. Composing for him happens "whenever." Musical ideas usually pop into his head during everyday activities such as washing the dishes, walking with his children, or whistling in the shower.

Illuminations will be premièred just prior to intermission at the BCB's first-ever concert in the BPAC on Oct. 28. The première will be preceded by a small ceremony during which the title page and first page of the score will be presented for permanent display in the BPAC.

The BCB's bill has popular stamped all over it. After opening with the obligatory national anthem, Allan and company will launch into crowd pleasers such as That's Entertainment, Selections from Glee, Selections from Rodgers and Hart, plus that old chestnut, Autumn Leaves. After intermission, there'll be a Golden Age of Broadway medley, Leonard Cohen's Hallelujah which was used in Shrek, plus Meeboer's The Centennial, and to close, Bobby Herriot's The Don Allan March.

Leonard Turnevicius covers classical music for The Hamilton Spectator.

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Ryan Meeboer's Illuminations

With: Burlington Concert Band

Where: Burlington Performing Arts Centre, 440 Locust St., Burlington

When: Friday, Oct. 28 at 8 p.m.

Cost: \$15 (plus HST)

Call: 905-681-600

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