



# Gary KULESHA

## *Concerto for piano trio and strings*

Gary Kulesha, C.M., first professional compositions date from the age of 15, and several of his early works continue to be in the repertoire of several ensembles. His String Trio, written when he was 16 years old, is one of his most performed works. His Divertimento for Brass Quintet (No. 1) was written when he was 17, and continues to be performed and recorded extensively. His Sonata for Horn, Tuba, and Piano, written when he was 22, is currently featured on three commercial recordings. As a young composer, he established a relationship with the Canadian Brass, and worked as a composer and arranger for them. The Canadian Brass continue to perform his work from this time in their many current appearances.

In 1987, after having been Principal Conductor for several years, he became the Artistic Director of The Composers' Orchestra, a position he held until 2004, when he ceded in favour of a directorate of three young composers. In 1988, Gary Kulesha became the first Composer in Residence in Canada through the Canada Council's newly created programme. He was appointed Composer in Residence at the Kitchener Waterloo Symphony Orchestra, a position he held for 4 years. Upon leaving the KWSO, Gary became the Composer in Residence at the Canadian Opera Company, a position he held until for 3 years. His opera "Red Emma" was premiered by the COC in the late fall of 1995.

In September of 1995, Gary Kulesha became the Toronto Symphony Orchestra's Composer Advisor, a position he held until 2024. Gary's work with the TSO has been extensive and exhaustive. In addition to conducting, he has advised Jukka Pekka Saraste, Sir Andrew Davis and Peter Oundjian on both Canadian and contemporary repertoire, and is continuing in this role with Gustavo Gimeno. He successfully created significantly more access to the TSO for Canadian composers immediately after assuming the job. An examination of the list of composers featured during his tenure reveals an open-minded representation of aesthetics of all types, and a significant broadening of the number of Canadian composers performed. He successfully lobbied the orchestra to use unused services to read Canadian orchestral music, both by established and emerging composers. The reading sessions have been opened to the public. He was the founding architect of the Massey Hall New Music Festival, the first important attempt to bring all Toronto new music groups into collaboration. He was the founding co-architect of the TSO's New Creations Festival, the most successful new music festival in the history of Canadian music (even if only judged on the basis of actual number of tickets sold.) Gary created and managed the Composer Affiliate programme, and 10 emerging composers have taken part. After being mentored by Gary, all these composers have gone on to distinguished careers.

In 1996, he created the Young Composers' Workshop at the Festival of the Sound in Parry Sound. Over the next decade, he supervised and conducted workshops and performances of the music of three young composers per year. In 2000, he won the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra Prize for the best Canadian Orchestral Composition of the 1990s. In 2000, Gary was appointed to the full-time faculty of the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto. His former students now occupy several significant positions in the arts and education world, from the Beijing Central Conservatory, to the Pacific Music Festival in Sapporo, Japan, to universities in Europe and the U.S. In 2002, he was named by Pinchas Zukerman as one of three Awards Composers at the National Arts Centre Orchestra.

The **Concerto for Piano trio and string orchestra** is commissioned by the Kindred Spirits Orchestra (Kristian Alexander, Music Director) and The Gryphon Trio, with the financial assistance of the Shevchenko Foundation and the SOCAN Foundation. This work is a hybrid between a full concerto and a *concerto grosso*. The members of the Piano Trio are indisputably the soloists, but the principal and assistant principal players of the orchestra are also featured in crucial solo roles. The members of the trio also frequently move into the orchestral texture. The piano has a special role, alternating between soloist, accompanist for the solo violin and solo cello, and continuo for the entire ensemble. There are five movements. The first movement is an intensely rhythmic, march-like movement featuring an athletic main theme and a driving, almost jazz-like secondary idea. The second movement is a lament. It is very sparse, and features important interactions between the soloists and the principal players. The third movement is a very traditional *scherzo* that gets interrupted and "goes off the rails" before recovering and pressing on to the conclusion. The fourth movement is very atmospheric and dream-like. There is an extended piano solo in the middle of the movement. The finale is once again extremely rhythmic and intense.