

**Sunday, June 1**

**Gary Mortenson, ITG Publications Editor**

After two days of meetings, those of us that came early to the conference were more than ready to be done with talking and get to the reason we all converged on Banff. It was time to hear the results of so much effort to bring the 33<sup>rd</sup> ITG Conference to Banff, a place of natural majesty and beauty.

The **Opening Gala**, titled “**A Night of Jazz and Virtuosity**” commenced with welcomes from Mary Hofstetter - President at CEO of the Banff Centre, Barry Shiffman - Director of Music at the Centre, William Pfund - ITG President, and Jens Lindeman - Host for the 2008 Conference. Each speaker took a different approach to addressing the audience. Hofstetter gave us a brief history of the 75-year history of the Centre, Shiffman commented on how excited he was to be the Centre’s new Music Director, Pfund talked about ITG’s role in his life and urged the membership to “have the best week of your musical life,” and Lindemann gave us a brief lecture in trumpet history culminating with the comment that “no other instrument has influenced so many aspects of music over the last 300 years and gotten so little credit for it!” We were off to an interesting start!

The opening gala featured six soloists that brought something unique and interesting to the stage in this incredible mixing of styles and genres.

**Guy Few** delighted us with his light, precise, highly ornamented interpretation of Baldassare’s *Sonata No. 1* from the late Baroque. His control during the more florid passages in the outer movements was flawless. Few returned to the stage later in the program to perform *Three for Two* by Boyd McDonald (with Alain Trudel on trombone). Few and Trudel displayed amazing dexterity, precision, and artistry. Witty, fun, and demanding at the same time, this superbly written contemporary piece was much appreciated by the audience.

**Manon Lafrance** delighted us with two pieces that featured elegant phrasing and impeccable style in the *Concerto in E-flat* by Neruda, and then wonderful control, technique, and dynamic contrast on Alvin Lowrey’s string arrangement of George Enescu’s *Legend* (this excellent arrangement is well worth seeking out from Lowrey). ITG can only hope to hear much more of Ms. Lafrance in the years ahead.

Changing gears, **Jens Lindemann** came to perform two movements from Allen Vizzutti’s *Rising Sun* (second and third). The flow and beauty of the second movement was contrasted sharply by the technical nature of the third that featured lightning quick tempos and double tonguing. Lindemann’s antics during the cadenzas in the final movement brought some light-hearted fun to the program.

*Blue Latitudes* by **Dave Douglas** featured the composer on trumpet and a very fine mixed chamber ensemble conducted by Alain Trudel. The extra-musical effects, complex rhythmic interactions, musical dialogues created across the various sonorities present in the orchestration, and the “coloring outside the box” by the composer appealed to the intellect and challenged the audience to listen with their full attention to appreciate the piece’s many facets.

Changing gears again, **Ingrid Jensen** delighted the audience with two contrasting pieces. *My Sunshine Connection*, by Bob Florence (who passed away just before the conference), was written for and performed at Jensen’s wedding and featured an extended solo at the beginning and interplay between soloist and pianist (Brad Turner). *At Sea*, composed by Jensen in 2004, featured whale-like extra musical sounds from Jensen and wonderfully interesting dialogue between all of the musicians. Jensen is an exceptional musician with a lot to say in very thoughtful ways.

The evening concluded with *Roadie* performed by the jazz/fusion group Metalwood featuring **Brad Turner** on trumpet. The driving bass lines and crisp drumming served as the perfect vehicle for the melodic and rhythmic interactions of Mike Murley on saxophone and Turner on trumpet and as the perfect advertisement for the late night session given by Metalwood downstairs in The Club that immediately followed.

The six featured soloists and the many musicians who collaborated with them on stage made this a memorable opening concert. Special thanks should be given to the technical crew that transitioned the stage from one complicated setup to the next all through the evening.