During the past four years the University of Guelph has played a vital role in the establishment of a unique town-gown Arts Festival that is attracting national, and even international, attention. The Guelph Spring Festival, an annual two-week program of music, drama, and dance, is the newest, and in some ways the liveliest, festival of arts in the province. Unlike its rivals in Stratford and Niagara-on-the-Lake which focus principally on works of the past, Guelph puts strong emphasis on contemporary music and on original compositions. Since 1967 the Spring Festival has commissioned world premieres by Canadian composers and presented the North American premiere of "The Prodigal Son" an important church opera by Benjamin Britten.

The originator and sponsor of the Guelph Spring Festival is the Edward Johnson Music Foundation, an independent non-profit organization named after the famous Guelph tenor and former Manager of the Metropolitan Opera. The University’s contribution to the work of the Foundation has been made in a variety of ways. Dr. M. H. M. MacKinnon, Dean of Arts, is the President of the Foundation and Nicholas Goldschmidt, Director of Music for the University, is also Artistic Director of the Festival. The University has supported a number of Festival events including a successful Beethoven Exhibition which toured many Canadian campuses last year. This spring, the University will sponsor two more art exhibitions, "Dürer and His Contemporaries" and "Life Style of our Forefathers" to be on display here during May. In addition, the University is supporting the concert by the Orford String Quartet and Anton Kuerti on May 2. The Committee of College Presidents, the senior level of student government in the University, has agreed to support the Festival this year with a generous grant towards the costs of the National Arts Centre Orchestra concert on May 15. Students will be able to purchase tickets at a reduced price.

The University is thus actively involved as a partner in an enterprise which has won support from private patrons, business and industry, governments, and arts councils on the provincial and federal levels. Grants and subsidies from sources outside the city amount to approximately 38 per cent of the Festival’s budget. The City of Guelph, firms and industries which are members of the Guelph Chamber of Commerce, and local patrons of the Foundation contribute about 20 per cent, with the University and students donating another 4 per cent each. Thanks to such generous support the Foundation can present its program for approximately one third of its real cost. Thus local citizens, and with them faculty and students at the University, can enjoy an annual musical program which compares favourably with those of communities many times the size of Guelph.
THE BURNING FIERY FURNACE
second parable for church performance

music by BENJAMIN BRITTEN  text by WILLIAM PLOMER  sets and costumes by WILLIAM LORD

CHURCH OF OUR LADY — MAY 12, 13, 14, 8:30 p.m.

John Arah . . . . Nebuchadnezzar
Garnet Brooks . . . . Meshach
Cornelius Ophthof . . . . Astrologer
Avo KItask . . . . Abednego
Peter Milne . . . . Shadrach
Gary Relvas . . . . Herald

MARIO BERNARDI,
conductor, of the National Arts Centre Orchestra

ELMER ISELER,
conductor of the Festival Singers of Canada

ANDRE PREVOST,
composer

CHARLES WILSON,
composer

COMMISSIONS: From the beginning it has been a Festival policy to encourage Canadian music by commissioning original compositions. This year the Edward Johnson Music Foundation, under grants from the Canada Council, has commissioned works by two composers, Andre Prevost, and Charles Wilson.

DURER
An exhibition of engravings and woodcuts by Durer and his contemporaries will be on display in the McLaughlin Library at the University of Guelph during the Guelph Spring Festival. Organized by Mary Cazort Taylor, the exhibition will be on loan to the University from the National Gallery, May 8-27.

CANADIANA
A display of furniture and artifacts from the Canadiana Gallery of the Royal Ontario Museum will illustrate the life style of our forefathers in nineteenth century Ontario. The collection has been organized by Helen Ignatieff, Assistant Curator of the Gallery and will be on display from May 2-23, in the exhibition corridors of the Arts building, University of Guelph.
The Guelph Spring Festival was described by Nathan Cohen, leading Canadian theatre critic, in his last radio broadcast before his recent death, as "an annual spring occasion that proves that high-minded programming and careful budgeting can produce publicly welcome results."

High minded programming it certainly is. By defying rumours of public apathy and careful balancing known first quality music and new productions, featuring commissioned works, the Edward Johnson Music Foundation, which sponsors the festival has lined up two weeks of extraordinary performances for 1971.


A world premiere will open the Festival on May 1. The Festival Singers of Canada and the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir will present a new setting of Psalm 148 by Andre Prevost. Mr. Prevost, composer of "Terre des Hommes" the musical theme of Expo 67, was commissioned to write a new work for the festival by the Edward Johnson Music Foundation which every year invests in Canadian composers as well as performers. The two hundred voices will be augmented by a brass ensemble in what promised to be a jubilant entry into the festival.

The Orford String Quartet return to Guelph on May 2 where they are always these four gifted young musicians will present what promised to be a jubilant entry into the will be augmented by a brass ensemble in as well as performers. The two hundred voices will give a recital on May 8, an ensemble of nine virtuosi. Soprano Lois Marshall, contralto Maureen Forrester, tenor Richard Lewis and bass-bariton Norman Farrow combine their vocal talents with the instrumental expertise of Sam Baron, flute, Robert Bloom, oboe, Bernard Greenhouse, cello, Oscar Shumsky, violin, and Yehudi Wyner, piano. Founder and conductor of this exquisite ensemble is William Schiede, an authority on the music of Bach.

An "Intermedia" concert on May 10 will feature the world premiere of a new work by Dr. Charles Wilson. A poem by D. G. Jones titled "Phrases from Orpheus" has been scored for tenor soloist, chorus, modern dancers and narrator. The tenor soloist who portrays Orpheus will be Garnet Brooks.

Members of the Toronto Dance Theatre will respond creatively as they scale scaffolding above the chorus in this multi level presentation. Also featured on this exciting program will be Monteverdi ballet, Britten's "Voices for Today" and "Five Newfoundland Songs" by Harry Somers.

"The Burning Fiery Furnace," the second of Benjamin Britten's trio of musical parables for church performance, will be the featured opera of the Festival. The first all-Canadian performance of this opera, this production promises to achieve once more the artistic and critical success of the festival's presentation of Britten's "The Prodigal Son."

In this parable about the trial of faith, tenor Garnet Brooks who sang the title role in the earlier production will play Misael, the youngest and most impulsive of the captive Jews. Ananias, their clear-thinking leader, will be portrayed by Peter Milne, and Azarias, slower but wiser than the other two, by Avo Kittask. John Arab, who was a Tempter of fatal charm in "The Prodigal Son," will return to Guelph as Nebuchadnezzar. Gary Relyea will play the Herald and the Leader of the Courtiers, while the double role of the Abbot and the Astrologer will be performed by Cornelius Optihof.

Although the form of Britten's church operas was suggested by the Japanese No theatre, they have a convention of movement and presentation entirely their own. The ritualized action emerges, as the actors emerge, from the ranks of the chanting monks, and when the conflict is resolved the monks resume their habits and their role as worshippers, leaving the audience exhilarated yet at peace.

"The Burning Fiery Furnace" will be directed musically by Nicholas Goldschmidt, Artistic Director of the Festival. Dramatically, the performance will be guided and inspired by Lode Verstraete, poet, actor, playwright and Director of the Belgian National Theatre. The church selected for the presentation of this dramatic parable on May 12, 13, and 14, is the Church of Our Lady, Guelph's beautiful cathedral on the hill.

The National Arts Centre Orchestra, under Mario Bernardi, will bring the Guelph Spring Festival to a triumphant conclusion. Soloists for the occasion will be Erica Goodman, harp and Fred Mills and Robert Oades, trumpets. In keeping with the festival tradition of balancing the known and the new, the orchestra will perform Vivaldi, Beecroft, Mendelssohn, Somers and Haydn.

So the program is undeniably high-minded, aiming for excellence, for the creation of new works and the demonstration of the quality of Canadian performers. The careful budgeting is the concern of the Edward Johnson Music Foundation. Everyone else can just enjoy the...