

Remembrance Day – November 11, 2014

Today is Remembrance Day, a memorial day observed in Commonwealth and in many non-Commonwealth countries to recall the formal end of hostilities of World War I ... at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918.

The red remembrance poppy has become a familiar emblem of Remembrance Day due to the poem *In Flanders Fields*. These poppies bloomed across some of the worst battlefields of Flanders in World War I, and their brilliant red colour became a symbol for the blood spilled in the war. But it has also come to symbolize much more, and for some very different but just as momentous reasons.

For expatriate Estonians all over the world, September 2014 also marks the 70th anniversary of the departure from Estonia of large numbers of refugees from the advancing Russian armies, who were about to forcibly annex Estonia and the two other Baltic countries of Latvia and Lithuania, into the soviet fold.

At the end of September, Estonian roads and byways were filled with refugees, on foot, in farm wagons and overloaded trucks, trying to escape the advancing Russian army. What lay ahead, no one knew, but to stay meant almost sure exile to Siberia or death. The prevailing feeling was one of anguish ... the agony of deciding to stay or to leave, whether with loved ones or alone.

We have much to remember on this day and to look back on ... with conflicting feelings of thanks and trepidation. History seems to be repeating itself in the Ukraine and the smaller countries bordering the Baltic Sea have much to fear once again, with the specter of current Russian advances and imperialism.

The music heard this evening, will hopefully enable us to be touched by more pleasant thoughts, but we should never forget the history that brought us together, to this city, to Canada and elsewhere, where we can enjoy this recital in peace.

The performance included only Estonian composers, from both sides of the Atlantic. The music embraced stories told through solo art songs and cello specific compositions. The recital also included the world première of a very Avant-garde work by Mirjam Tally, *Lindude seltsis (In the Company of Birds)*, for solo cello.

The recital fittingly ended with Arvo Part's meditative *Spiegel im Spiegel*, after which no applause was requested.

KJR

The featured performers were:

NORMAN REINTAMM was born in Hamilton, Canada. He studied music at the University of Toronto and McMaster University, apprenticed with the Vancouver Chamber Choir under Jon Washburn and the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra under Boris Brott. His postgraduate studies were done at the Royal College of Music under Sir Norman del Mar, Sir David Willcocks, Christopher Adey and Sir Richard Popplewell (organ). Returning to Canada, he guest conducted with the London Symphony Orchestra, Symphony Nova Scotia, and the Windsor Symphony Orchestra and was the Conductor and Music Director for the Toronto Pops Orchestra at Massey Hall in Toronto and Conductor of the Lyra Borealis Chamber Orchestra. In 1989, Norman settled in Tallinn, Estonia and becoming a conductor at the Estonian National Opera and the "Vanemuine" State Theatre. While working in Estonia, he was also a coach and conductor at the Sibelius Academy Opera Department in Finland and the Head of Opera Studies at the Estonian Academy of Music. Upon leaving Estonia, Norman returned to Canada to work with the National Ballet of Canada and take the position of Conductor and Artistic Director of the Cathedral Bluffs Symphony Orchestra in Toronto.

Cellist **AARE TAMMESALU** is mainly a soloist and chamber musician, performing classical and contemporary music. In 1985, he graduated in cello performance from the Tallinn State Conservatory with Ivo Juul and prof. Toomas Velmet. He then went on to complete his Master's degree with prof. Peeter Paemurru at the Estonian Academy of Music.

From 1979-1984, Aare Tammesalu was a member of the Estonian Radio Chamber Orchestra. From 1991-1996 he played the Kotka City Orchestra in Finland and 1997-2007 with the Estonian National Opera orchestra.

Tammesalu is the founding member of the Tobias String Quartet. He has given recitals in Estonia, Latvia, Germany, Finland and the U.S.A. As a soloist he has performed with the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra, Estonian National Opera Symphony Orchestra, The 21st Century Orchestra, Kotka City Orchestra (Finland) and Pärnu City Orchestra.

Tammesalu has been the first to perform and introduce the works by Giovanni Bonato, Märt-Matis Lill, Eino Tamberg, Lepo Sumera, Toivo Tulev, Helena Tulse, Tõnu Kõrvits and Andres Uibo.

His recordings include chamber works by Estonian composers Artur Kapp, Kuldar Sink, Märt-Matis Lill, Age Hirv and Margo Kõlar and he was featured in the musical accompaniment in the Estonian silent feature film "Noored kotkad" ("Young Eagles", 1927, directed by Theodor Luts).

AVO KITTASK was born in Stockholm Sweden, and immigrated to Toronto, Canada with his parents, in 1949.

He completed his Bachelor of Music degree at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and then went to do his Diploma in Opera Performance at the University of Toronto.

For many years, Avo performed with the Canadian Opera Company and the Stratford Festival. He is also well-known in Toronto music circles and is the past President of the Estonian National Council in Canada.