



Martin Fischer-Dieskau is the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony's new principal conductor.

Conductor makes grand entrance with 'new' Wagner

By HARRY CURRIE
RECORD STAFF

On Friday and Saturday, the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony will proudly present its new principal conductor, Martin Fischer-Dieskau, in his only appearance in the Spaenaur Masterpiece Series this season.

The program will feature concertmaster Stephen Sitarski in Beethoven's profoundly beautiful violin concerto, composer-in-residence Peter Hatch's *Réveiller*, which was selected as one of the three finalists at the Winnipeg New Music Festival Composers' Competition, plus five orchestral selections from Wagner's magnificent Ring Cycle.

"Wagner is not being played that often in Kitchener, I understand," said Fischer-Dieskau, "so this was my idea. It was not decided which Wagner to do, and though I would like to do some of the big, impressive works it would mean hiring many extra players for the huge orchestra they demand.

"But there are wonderful reductions by Humperdinck of some of these scores, and they fit perfectly to the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. They are not arrangements, they are honest reductions, making them playable by a smaller orchestra. Humperdinck worked with Wagner in Bayreuth, and he knew perfectly what the master intended."

Fischer-Dieskau has organized these five pieces into a logical sequence and shortened the Humperdinck versions back to Wagner's original lengths.

"It's almost like hearing a five-movement symphony, for the pieces are played without interruption," he said. "It's never been done before, so I hope it works. Like the 'new' Gershwin musical, this is the 'new' Wagner symphony."

Sitarski is excited about playing the Beethoven.

"The Beethoven violin concerto presents for me a certain purity of violin writing," he said. "Every note must be beautiful and have true meaning, and the violinist must find a balance between the elegant but formal framework of the classical style and the looser, richer freedom of the newer romantic period. This work epitomizes humanity's struggle to discover meaning in its existence."

Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony executive director Michael Duschenes is pleased to have Hatch's composition in the concert.

"I made the trip to Winnipeg to hear the Winnipeg Symphony perform *Réveiller*, Peter's new work," he said. "The Winnipeg New Music Festival is one of the most highly regarded contemporary music festivals anywhere. It's with great pride we have included *Réveiller* in this program."

This concert marks Fischer-Dieskau's first official appearance in a full concert as the principal conductor.

In demand around the world as a guest conductor, his presence in Canada has created an awareness, and he has been invited to conduct the Montreal Symphony Orchestra in 2003.