

SSM
86.9.16
ALA



presents the

ALARD QUARTET

*Tuesday, September 16, 1986
8:00 p.m., 60th Floor, Transco Tower
2800 Post Oak Boulevard*

RICE UNIVERSITY

the
Shepherd
School
of Music



PROGRAM

String Quartet No. 3 (1986)*
Largamente
Molto Allegro

Richard Willis
(b. 1929)

*String Quartet No. 8** (1986) (World Premiere)*
(in one movement)

Ezra Laderman
(b. 1924)

INTERMISSION

String Quartet No. 2, Op. 36 (1946)
Allegro calmo senza rigore
Vivace
Chacony

Benjamin Britten
(1913-1976)

**Commissioned by Friends of the Alard Quartet*

***Commissioned by the Alard Quartet through a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts*

This event is made possible in part by the Foundation for Modern Music.

Photographing and sound recording are prohibited. We further request that audible paging devices not be used during the performance. Paging arrangements may be made with the ushers.

BIOGRAPHIES

RICHARD WILLIS was born in Mobile, Alabama in 1929. He attended the University of Alabama, (B.Mus.) and the Eastman School of Music (Ph.D.). After heading the music theory/composition department at Shorter College in Rome, Georgia for ten years, he moved to the School of Music of Baylor University where he is currently Professor of Music and composer-in-residence.

Dr. Willis' list of compositions include two symphonies and a variety of other orchestral works; two string quartets; ten works for band or wind ensemble; pieces for various solo instruments with piano; chamber works for winds and percussion; many choral works, large and small; and music for dance and drama.

In 1956 Dr. Willis received the "Prix de Rome", a coveted award which took him to Italy for a year of residence at the American Academy in Rome. Other awards received by him include the Joseph Bearn Prize (for Symphony No. 1), the Howard Hanson Prize (for Symphony No. 2), the Volkwein-ASBDA Award (for Partita for band), the publication award from the Society for the Publication of American Music, and others.

Orchestral performances have been by the Atlanta Symphony, Dallas Symphony, Houston Symphony, Oklahoma City Symphony, Orchestra Sinfonica dell'RAI (Rome), Orchestra Sinfonica of Bogota, National Gallery Orchestra, and others.

Chamber works have been performed by the Stanley Quartet, the Alard Quartet, the Woodwind Arts Quintet, the Clarion Quintet, and many others.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, *EZRA LADERMAN* received degrees from Brooklyn College (B.A.) and Columbia (M.A.), studying composition privately with Stefan Wolpe and at Columbia with Paul Henry Lang, Otto Leuning and Douglas Moore. A serious composer from the time he was in high school, Mr. Laderman completed a "Leipzig Symphony" during his service in the U.S. Army, and has since written eight string quartets, six symphonies and numerous orchestral works (concertos for violin, piano, viola, string quartet, and double wind), cantatas, an oratorio, a mass, piano sonatas, song cycles and many chamber works for various combinations of instruments. His diverse accomplishments include scores for "The Eleanor Roosevelt Story" and "Black Fox". Galileo, an oratorio written together with Joe Darion and commissioned/telecast nationally by CBS-TV; Magic Prison, a work for two narrators and orchestra written in collaboration with Archibald McLeish and performed by the New York Philharmonic under Andre Kostelanetz; the Mass for Cain, broadcast on CBS-TV and written with Joe Darion; and the Concerto for Orchestra, commissioned by the Minnesota Orchestra and recorded by the Baltimore Symphony under Sergiu Comissiona.

Compositions in progress include a Double String Quartet commissioned by the Library of Congress Coolidge Foundation and a 'Cello Concerto for Mstislav Rostropovich. He recently completed a Flute Concerto which Jean-Pierre Rampal will premiere with the Detroit Symphony, and his Sixth Symphony was premiered last year by the Houston Symphony. The Dallas Symphony will premiere his Seventh Symphony at the inaugural concert of its new I.M. Pei Concert Hall.

Ezra Laderman has just been named President of the National Music Council. Former positions include being Resident Composer at the American Academy in Rome for the 1982-1983 academic year, Director of the Music Program for the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, D.C. (1979-1982), Composer-in-Residence and Professor of Music at the State University of New York at Binghamton (1971-1982), Resident Composer of the Bennington Composers Conference, and President of the American Music Center.

BENJAMIN BRITTEN was born in 1913 at Lowenstoft, Suffolk, England. As a child his musical ability was phenomenal; he began composing music at five and at eight completed his first songs. He later studied at the Royal Academy where his principal teachers were John Ireland in composition and Arthur Benjamin in piano. Britten lived in the United States from 1939 to 1942, at which time he returned to offer his services to the English Government. He was occupied throughout the war with writing music for documentary films and organizing concerts.

Britten is regarded as England's foremost composer in this century. His operas including *Billy Budd*, *Peter Grimes* and *The Rape of Lucretia* are standard repertoire internationally as are a great number of his numerous chamber and orchestral works.

The *ALARD QUARTET* is one of a distinguished line of quartets to emerge from the Juilliard School of Music. It was formed in 1954 under the guidance of Hans Letz and the following year was the recipient of the Young Artist Award of the National Federation of Music Clubs, the only chamber group to be so honored.

The Quartet has concertized throughout North and South America, Europe, and the Pacific. It has performed in many of the famous concert halls and festivals of the world, from the Brahmsaal in Vienna and the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam to Auckland's Town Hall and Mexico City's Palace de Bellas Artes. The Alard Quartet has been a regular participant on the American Music Festival of the National Gallery in Washington, D.C., and the AKI Festival of Contemporary Music at the Cleveland Museum.

In 1984 the Alard celebrated the twenty-fifth year its four present members have played together. Its repertoire spans 400 years of literature and contains many unusual and seldom heard works; its introduction of new works has made a lasting contribution to the repertoire of the string quartet.

The Alard Quartet has been quartet-in-residence since 1962 at the Pennsylvania State University.

The Quartet has recorded for Golden Crest, Leonarda, Orion and CRI.

PROGRAM NOTES

String Quartet No. 3 by Richard Willis was commissioned by the Alard Quartet as part of their 30th anniversary celebration. It was premiered by them at Pennsylvania State University in March 1986. The work is in two large movements or panels, each symmetrically subdivided into contrasting sections. Some sections are characterized by long flowing lines and a loose rhythmic feel; others are rhythmically very intense. Thematic and harmonic material is largely derived from a collection of basic motivic ideas.

String Quartet No. 8 by Ezra Laderman is the concluding work of a trilogy including String Quartets No. 6 and 7, written in 1979 and 1983. The eighth quartet is a single movement work consisting of a metamorphosis from an initial state of repose and despair to a climactic ebullient ending. The change takes place gradually with an intended sense of purpose evolving by degrees.

Seven notes (A, B^b, A, C, B, E^b, D) played in unison gently announce the opening. They serve as the pool for all that follows. Seven variations explore different feelings towards loss. The next seven variations explore the feelings that lead to renewal. Reaching a midpoint, four commentaries in each of the strings turn the emotional corner of the work, and the final series of variations and the concluding "Prestissimo" gladden and affirm.

The work is in every sense a music drama without words. It is written for and dedicated "with affection" to the Alard Quartet.