FESTIVAL OF
AMERICAN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC
at Rice University
November 3-9, 1990
celebrating American Music Week

HOUSTON COMPOSERS' ALLIANCE

Tuesday, November 6, 1990
8:00 p.m. in Hamman Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY
PROGRAM

Circus Suite (1990) ........................................ Michael Horvit
for Horn and Piano
March
Lions and Tigers
Elephants
The Flying Trapeze
Clowns

Thomas Bacon, horn
Thomas Jaber, piano

Three Songs on Poems of Paul Boesch (1989) ........ Daniel Kramlich
Angels
Hour Glass
If I Should Die

Colleen Mallette, soprano
Daniel Kramlich, piano

L’isola di S. Michele (1990) ............................ David Ashley White
Nocturne for Oboe and Piano

Robin Hough, oboe
Robert Brewer, piano

INTERMISSION

Fantasy for Viola (1990) .............................. Ann Rivers Witherspoon

Rifat Qureshi, viola

Diaphanous (1989) ...................................... Daniel Adams
for Two Harps

Julia Sanders, harp
Mary Radspinner, harp

The Weary Man Sleeps (1986) ........................ Richard Lavenda

Lynn Griebling, soprano
Thomas Jaber, piano
Circus Suite is in five movements, each one describing a different aspect of "The Greatest Show on Earth". The first movement is a spirited and cheerful March. In Lions and Tigers, one hears the big cats slinking, roaring and pouncing to the cracks of the whip. The great, majestic Elephants come next making their stately progress across the arena, followed by the airy grace and sinuous beauty of The Flying Trapeze. Clowns, everyone's favorites, bring the suite to a whimsical puckish conclusion. Circus Suite was commissioned by and written for the editor of The Complete Hornist, who recorded it in January of 1990, and gave its first public performance in March, 1990.

—Note by Michael Horvit

Three Songs on Poems of Paul Boesch was completed early in 1989, and sets selections from the late Paul Boesch's book Much of Me in Each of These. The pieces exhibit some of the composer's experiments with expanded nontraditional tonality, particularly with respect to chord construction. The poems each present an evocative and romantic viewpoint regarding nature and human relationships, and each is quite "settable" in terms of musical text painting. If I Should Die, in particular, was written while Mr. Boesch was on active military duty in France during World War II.

—Note by Daniel Kramlich

L'isola di S. Michele was composed in early 1990 and was commissioned by Houston oboist Robin Hough. After performances at the University of Houston and the University of Texas at Arlington, Dr. Hough and pianist Larry Wiley presented the work at the International Double Reed Society Convention held at Louisiana State University in August. L'isola contains alternating fast and slow sections, with emphasis on the slower portions which create an overall elegiac mood. The center of the piece features a brief excerpt from Marcello's Oboe Concerto, Movement II. There is strong motivic connection between this quote and the rest of the work. The title of the composition is derived from Venice's cemetery island, the haunting images of which have indelibly left their impression upon the composer.

—Note by David Ashley White

Rifat Qureshi commissioned and premiered Fantasy for Viola last spring. The work owes much of its dramatic quality and virtuosic level to its performer because there was much collaboration between performer and composer on the piece in order to make it exceptionally idiomatic of its instrument.
In the work, a chordal section introduces the theme harmonically. A melodic statement of the theme then leads into its development using a crisp, precise rhythmic motive. A variation of the theme creates a rubato waltz style in the second section, ending with several cadenza-like passages. In the third section, the linear shape of the original theme is maintained while the rhythm is dissolved into free and rapid arpeggiations reaching a compelling climax. A brief coda ends this work restating the original theme in its most lyrical form. *Fantasy for Viola* is dedicated to Rifat Qureshi with gratitude for his constant promotion of contemporary music.

— Note by Ann Rivers Witherspoon

*Diaphanous* was composed for harpists Mary Radspinnner and Julia Sanders. It was premiered in Houston on a program presented by the San Jacinto Chapter of the American Harp Society on April 22, 1990. As the title suggests, the materials consist mostly of delicate, almost transparent gestures with pronounced timbral and registral contrasts. Juxtapositions of short repeated notes with sustained background sonorities alternate between the two parts within a limited gamut of vertical texture and rhythmic density. *Diaphanous* is dedicated to the memory of Morton Feldman.

— Note by Daniel Adams

In 1985, I was asked to write a piece for chamber ensemble and voice. In searching for a text, I came upon a set of poems by a friend, Steve Klepetar. He had written a large number of poems around the character of the Weary Man, his version of an Everyman for the 80's. I chose one, *The Weary Man Whispers*, and wrote a theater piece on it. The next year, I was asked to write another vocal piece, this time for soprano and piano, and chose four poems collectively titled *The Weary Man Sleeps*. Because the poems are rather reflective and introspective, so is the piece. Our "hero" has four dreams, ranging from almost happy to a nightmare. The soprano is the narrator, describing them objectively. The pianist is an equal partner in the characterization; both performers are called on to be alternatively dramatic and lyrical, frightening and comforting, rapidly changing moods to follow the wide range of the Weary Man's psychological states.

— Note by Richard Lavenda

The Houston Composers' Alliance is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to promote, through commissions and performances, the music of our city's composers.
THE WEARY MAN SLEEPS

1
In front of the t.v.
where insubstantial ghosts
flicker and play human parts,
speak the latest dark works.
He dreams of building
a house maybe, apron full
of nails, a belt of tools:
hammer, file and saw
carrying rough block to lay
foundation,
raising walls straight and smooth.
His large hands calloused brown
ache with work, his hair dirty
he sleeps haunted, to rasping sounds.

2
In the arms of a lover
who wants him
no longer, whose
burden he's become,
a giant nurslng, jaws
filled with teeth,
a rare thing, sleeping
shark, feeding
and feeding still.

3
At the wheel
radio hisses spotty white dots of
sound, he sleeps hands slack dreams
far from asphalt
or white lines
meadows
he soars like a dragonfly, awful
but benign
shooting over Queen Anne's
Lace and Devil's
Paintbrush,
buries himself in thick ferngrowth
shadow
sleepy driver
safe skimming between trucks,
like Chaplin
jitterbugging
on the edge of doom.

4
After the alarm
drunk with sleep
crushed between
blanket and sheet
the gray light impossible,
day not real:
"Nightingale, nightingale,
O, not the lark!"
Dreams pull like strong, white
beautiful arms
he falls loving in the soft
lap of sleep.

— Steve Klepetar
If I Should Die

If I should die, leaving words unsaid,
Tender words still in my heart,
Face not the future in morbid dread
Of silent years while we are apart.

Listen! The words are on each whispering breeze;
They shout out boldly from roaring seas;
Perhaps, sigh softly through rustling trees;
There is much of me in each of these.

If I should die, leaving deeds undone,
Goals just beyond my eager reach,
Weep not for tasks barely begun,
Lessons I learned but did not teach.

Look! Twilight horizons stretching afar;
An Autumn leaf; a beckoning star;
Daffodils dancing at a Spring bazaar;
These have I fashioned and left where you are.

If I should die, leaving thoughts unexpressed,
Lines I always had vowed to write,
Mourn not their loss nor be depressed
Wondering through the endless night.

There! They are written across the sky!
Scrawled in space by birds as they fly
Is an epitaph that will certify
That I am near ... though I should die.
Angels

Inevitably, Dawn startles the night,
Invading her privacy with curious light
While angels tint the morning's blushes.
Like acolytes in reverent rite
They color the sun to a blazing height
On a mobile of clouds. And Heaven hushes!
Then, setting sun and horizon unite
On a golden path. With great delight
They use the clouds to clean their brushes.

Hour Glass

A simple device by a kitchen stove,
Yet, in it the Sands of Time
Silently, steadily, swiftly wove
Their pattern of life, sublime.
Hours imprisoned in a glass!
Dream of the ages come true!
The poet, the banker, the King, the mass
Dictate what they want time to do.
Quickly! Reach with eager hand
To slow fast fleeting seconds.
Tilt the vial! You're in command,
It's eternal youth that beckons.
Afraid of the future's uncertain yields,
Your embryo in the womb of time?
Reverse the glass! 'Til the past reveals
Sheltered ports from life's harsh grind.
On some star-filled ecstatic night
When Heaven brings to earth sweet rapture,
Halt the hours! Stop time's mad flight,
Forevermore his Eden capture.
A simple device by a kitchen stove,
And in it the Sands of Time.
If only the fateful pattern they wove
Could be changed by an act of mine.
MICHAEL HORVIT studied composition at Yale, Harvard, and Boston Universities, and his teachers include Aaron Copland, Lukas Foss, Walter Piston, Quincy Porter, and Gardner Read. He is Head of Theory and Composition at the University of Houston School of Music. Co-author of three widely used theory texts, he has received awards from BMI, ASCAP, the Martha Baird Rockefeller Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts, and the Fridge Trust. His compositions range from solo instrumental and vocal works to large symphonic compositions and operas. He has received commissions from the Houston Symphony, the Houston Ballet, the National Symphony of Mexico, and the American Wind Symphony.

Active in many different areas of musical endeavor, DANIEL KRAMLICH has lived in Houston since 1981. Born in 1955, Mr. Kramlich has an undergraduate degree in piano performance from Lebanon Valley College, and did his postgraduate work in music theory at Indiana University, also studying composition with Thomas Beversdorf. His varied professional compositional activities include chamber works, a major work for chorus and orchestra, a film score, numerous commissioned sacred choral works, published arrangements of numerous sacred works, diverse orchestral and ensemble arrangements, as well as several commissioned improvisatory works for choreographer Joan Karff.

DAVID ASHLEY WHITE is a professor at the University of Houston School of Music. He composes for all genres, with emphasis on vocal and choral music. He is currently working on a song cycle for Alaskan mezzo-soprano Suzanne Sommerville.

ANN RIVERS WITHERSPOON received her Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Texas at Austin in 1970, having studied piano performance. Active as a pianist and teacher in Austin, she eventually moved to Houston and continued these interests. Her piano studies have continued since 1978 with William Chaisson, and in 1981 she received her Master of Music degree from the Shepherd School. Her formal composition studies have been with Anne K. Gebuhr at Houston Baptist University, Carlisle Floyd at the University of Houston, and Ellsworth Milburn, George Burt, and Daniel Börtz (of Sweden) at the Shepherd School. Ms. Witherspoon has received awards from the American Music Center and ASCAP.

DANIEL ADAMS is an Assistant Professor of Music at Texas Southern University. He has previously held positions at the University of Miami (1986-88), at Miami Dade Community College (1986-88), and at the Performing and Visual Arts Center of Dade County Public Schools (1983-87) where he also served as Composer-in-Residence for the theater program. He received his education at Louisiana State University, the University of Miami, and the University of Illinois, where he received his Doctor of Musical Arts degree. His composition teachers have included Salvatore Martirano, Ben Johnston, Morgan Powell, Dennis Kam, and Dinos Constantinides. Adams has received grants and awards from the American Symphony Orchestra League, the Percussive Arts Society, Meet the Composer, the Minnesota Composers Forum, Music Teachers National Organization, and more.

RICHARD LAVENDA’s music has been played by orchestras, choruses, chamber ensembles, and soloists nationwide. He has been commissioned and performed by, among others, the Houston Symphony, Pierrot Plus Ensemble, Earplay, Bricolage, Duo Vivo, and Duo Patterson. Upcoming performances will take place in Houston, San Francisco, Seattle, Minneapolis, Helsinki, and Prague. A native of New Jersey, Lavenda received his education at Dartmouth College, Rice University, and The University of Michigan, where he completed a doctorate in 1983. From 1983-87 he was Assistant Professor of Music at Texas Wesleyan College in Fort Worth. He joined the faculty of The Shepherd School of Music in 1987, and is currently Assistant Professor of Composition and Theory.