



presents music of
William Albright, George Burt, Samuel Jones,
Kirke Mechem, and Darius Milhaud

Guest Artist:
Gary Louie, saxophone

Sunday, January 29, 1995
8:30 p.m.
Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY

the
Shepherd
School
of Music

PROGRAM

Four Haiku (1961)
(Poetry by John Stone)

Samuel Jones
(b. 1935)

Joyce Farwell, mezzo-soprano
Thomas Jaber, piano

Boundaries (1994) (Premiere)

George Burt
(b. 1929)

Csaba Erdélyi, viola
Jeanne Kierman, piano

Rustles of Spring, 1994

William Albright
(b. 1944)

- I. Vernal Equinox
- II. The Wedding Dance (after Brueghel)
- III. Solar Eclipse (in memoriam FSA)

Lisa Waters, flute
Gary Louie, alto saxophone
Curt Thompson, violin
Benjamin Wolff, cello
Rodney Waters, piano
Larry Rachleff, conductor

INTERMISSION

***Goodbye, Farewell, and Adieu* (1979)
(*Three Songs of Parting*)**

Kirke Mechem
(b. 1925)

- I. *Since There's No Help* (*Michael Drayton*)
- II. *Parting, Without a Sequel* (*John Crowe Ransom*)
- III. *Let It Be Forgotten* (*Sara Teasdale*)

Joyce Farwell, mezzo-soprano
Jeanne Kierman, piano

***La Création du monde* (1923)**

Darius Milhaud
(1892-1974)

Kathleen Winkler, violin I
Courtney LeBauer, violin II
Kevin Dvorak, cello
Timothy Pitts, double bass
John Thorne, flute I
Lisa Waters, flute II
Robert Atherholt, oboe
Karen Pierson, bassoon
Thomas LeGrand, clarinet I
Nicholas Murphy, clarinet II
William Ver Meulen, horn
Armando Ghitalla, trumpet I
Mark Austin, trumpet II
David Waters, trombone
Richard Brown, percussion
Nathan Davis, timpani
Gary Louie, saxophone
Jeanne Kierman, piano
Michael Hammond, conductor

PROGRAM NOTES

Boundaries George Burt

When Csaba Erdélyi commissioned me to write a piece for him I was eager to do so. I knew he would give it a first-rate performance and I knew he would go over every detail in the viola part — even the subtlest microscopic semichroma — in search of the most effective sound and articulation, things that only a violist of his calibre would know. This he did, and I'm grateful. I sometimes wonder how many new works remain flawed when such careful attention is not given them at an early stage.

The piece can be interpreted as a conversation between two players — nothing new in that — but in this case, it is a conversation that stays within boundaries as implied by one of the instrumental parts: once an idea is presented, both instruments stick more or less to the point. When, to a certain extent, that is worked out, one of the instruments changes the subject and both comment on the new issue or issues until arriving at an understanding. It's a Zen thing. A short return of opening material at the very end brings us full circle.

— Note by the composer

Rustles of Spring, 1994 William Albright

The commissioning of this work was made possible by a grant from the Meet The Composer/Reader's Digest Commissioning Program, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund.

The composition was written for saxophonists John Sampen and Gary Louie in collaboration with the MidAmerican Center for Contemporary Music (Bowling Green State University), the California E.A.R. Unit and the Contemporary Ensemble (Rice University).

Rustles of Spring, 1994, was inspired by several events of the season that passed while I was composing: spring's beginning, an eclipse, a wedding, and a death. Although begun with all the glorious anticipation one feels as winter cracks into the time of the rebirth, the work soon took on an ambiguous quality. This might be related to the fact that the piece, composed as it was at the end of a cycle of three commissions for saxophone, has a slight fin-de-siècle, exhausted quality; more likely, however is the fact that occurrences during these months kept leading me away from any initial exultation.

"Vernal Equinox" reflects enthusiasm and anticipation in its quick flitting from one idea to another: dances, sighs, longings, eagernesses . . . the fragmented nature of it all is stitched together with a peaceful hymn, the residue of winter. Eventually the piece settles into a bluesy, swing era recollection. "The Wedding Dance" was inspired by one of the prized

paintings in the Detroit Institute, the 1565 masterpiece of the same name by the Flemish artist Brueghel. This portrait of a peasant bacchanal in the spring is loaded with witty and salacious detail. But there is a tragic quality behind all the revelry, and the violin in my tribute represents both the gaiety and the unease of the "last judgement" damnation lurking just below the surface.

"Solar Eclipse" was originally inspired by the much bally-hooed event of May 10 — the midday eclipse witnessed by much of the U.S. Most remarkable to me was the other-worldly appearance of the strange "winter light" from a high spring sun. The unsettling paradox eventually became a metaphor for the events of July 9, a day that saw the joyous events of my wedding at twelve noon contradicted by the unexpected death of my father two hours later. I was very close to my Dad, and he was my biggest fan. July 9 for me was definitely spring's end. (The tonal levels of three movements, by the way, ended up, by chance, as D-A-D).

The title "Rustles of Spring" will strike a chord with musicians of a certain generation who grew up playing piano pieces such as collections like **Fifty-nine Piano Solos You Like to Play**. The piece **Rustles of Spring** (by Christian Sinding) is the perfect chestnut from the parlor piano character-piece repertoire: sentimental melody in the left hand accompanied by swirling filigree in the right. Bring it back.

More substantial is the influence of the early work of George Crumb called, similarly, **Echoes of Autumn, 1965**, a piece for nearly the same combination of instruments and of which I gave one of the first performances. George's music has always been a great inspiration to me, and **Rustles of Spring, 1994**, is dedicated to him.

— Note by the composer

La Création du monde Darius Milhaud

Darius Milhaud's **La Création du monde** was composed in 1923 for a ballet based on an African creation story with a scenario by Blaise Cendrars and set and costume designs by Fernand Léger. Like his contemporaries Stravinsky and Ravel, who also composed landmark ballets inspired by "prehistoric" legends, Milhaud was profoundly affected by his first exposures to American jazz in the years immediately after World War I. During a trip to New York he visited Harlem and heard the early jazz known today as "New Orleans" jazz, before it gained the sophistication of the "swing era" and its accompanying widespread popularity. Milhaud recounts the experience in this passage from his autobiography, **Notes Without Music**:

We were the only white folk there ... The music I heard was absolutely different from anything I had ever heard before and was a revelation to me ... Its effect was so overwhelming that I could not tear myself away. From then on, I frequented other Negro theaters and dance halls ... As I never missed the opportunity of visiting Harlem, I per-

sueded my friends to accompany me, as well as (Alfredo) Casella and (Willem) Mengelberg, who were in New York at the time. When I went back to France, I never wearied of playing over and over, on a little portable phonograph shaped like a camera, the Black Swan records I had purchased in a little shop in Harlem. More than ever, I was resolved to use jazz for a chamber work...

*The result was **La Création du monde** for an eighteen-piece chamber orchestra including alto saxophone. The work opens with a pastoral, slow introduction, with gentle harmonies more reminiscent of the work of Milhaud's impressionistic precursors than of the more raucous strains of Harlem jazz. But soon the drums enter, and the double bass states a jazz-inspired fugue subject which is passed around between solo brass and woodwinds using strict imitative techniques which recall the fugues of Bach. As the newly created "life" on stage grows more animated, so too does the music, building up to a frenetic climax and flaunting its jazzy melodies and harmonies, its insistent percussion and its nimble syncopations. The work ends quietly, with a coda that recalls the serenity and the musical textures of the introduction. The first man and woman are left alone on stage to greet the first springtime.*

— Note by Terry Mittram

BIOGRAPHY

At eighteen GARY LOUIE made his concert debut with the National Symphony Orchestra. Today, critics compare him to Richard Stoltzman and Heinz Holliger for championing the saxophone as they did the clarinet and oboe respectively. A winner of top prizes and awards throughout his career, Mr. Louie received a National Endowment for the Arts Solo Recitalist Grant last year. He has been selected by the United States Information Service for their Arts America program and will tour in Europe under their auspices next season. In 1986 he won the coveted Pro Musicis Sponsorship Award.

*Highlights this season include solo recital performances at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Cleveland Museum of Art, and a performance of Darius Milhaud's **La Création du monde** with the Manhattan Chamber Orchestra (Richard Alden Clark, director) in Carnegie Hall.*

An avid supporter and interpreter of modern music, Mr. Louie is actively involved in commissioning and performing new works for the saxophone. This year he joined a consortium to commission John Harbison to write a new sonata and is currently involved in a commission for a quintet for saxophone and string quartet by John Anthony Lennon.

Mr. Louie is a graduate of the University of Michigan where he studied with Don Sinta. He currently teaches at the Peabody Conservatory of Music.