



*presents a program of works
by Paul Cooper, André Jolivet,
Richard Lavenda, Joseph Schwantner,
Jaakko Warén, and Alec Wilder*

Thursday, November 2, 1995

8:00 p.m.

Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY

the
Shepherd
School
of Music

PROGRAM

Intrinsics (*Sonata for Piano*) (1993)

Jaakko Warén
(b. 1970)

John Noel, piano

Velocities (*Moto Perpetuo*) (1990)

Joseph Schwantner
(b. 1943)

Nathan Davis, marimba

Octet (1995) (*Premiere*)

Richard Lavenda
(b. 1955)

Dynamo

Web

Glow

Lisa Waters, flute Zachary Carrettin, violin
Jennifer Teisinger, oboe Jonah Sirota, viola
Damian Montaño, bassoon Lisa McCormick, cello
Zhang Zhang, violin David Murray, double bass
Kieren MacMillan, conductor

INTERMISSION

Suite en Concert (*Second Flute Concerto*) (1965)

André Jolivet
(1905-1974)

Modéré - Frémissant

Stabile

Hardiment

Calme - Véloce - Apaisé

Walfrid Kujala, guest flutist
Matthew Gold, percussion
Michael Sharkey, percussion
Elizabeth Muncaster, percussion
Meredith Nelson, percussion
Richard Brown, conductor

Frescoes (1954)

Paul Cooper

*For William Walker on the
Occasion of his Fiftieth Birthday*

(b. 1926)

- I. Study in sixths: Calm and reflective*
- II. Study in fifths: With quiet energy*
- III. Study in fourths: Quietly dramatic*
- IV. Study in thirds: Fast and aggressive*
- V. Study in octaves: Very calm and deeply reflective*

Jennifer Ruland, piano

Octets (1939-40)

Alec Wilder

The Children Met the Train

(1907-1980)

Seldom the Sun

It's Silk -- Feel It!

Such A Tender Night

The Amorous Poltergeist

Jack, This is My Husband

Julie Duncan, flute/alto flute/piccolo

Jennifer Teisinger, oboe/English horn

Nicholas Murphy, clarinet I

Xin-Yang Zhou, clarinet II

Benjamin Freimuth, bass clarinet

Bohuslav Rattay, bassoon

Shawn Myers, harpsichord

Joel Reist, double bass

Erich Loftis, drums

PROGRAM NOTES

Intrinsics Jaakko Warén

Intrinsics, Sonata for Piano, is comprised of three principal sections which, in a distant manner, incorporate traditional Sonata form. These sections consist of various subsections, each employing a different compositional approach.

The overall structural energy is generated from the continuous manipulation of static material. This ranges from strict, predetermined serial processes towards more free composition.

Intrinsics was premiered by pianist John Noel in September 1994 at the Sibelius-Academy in Helsinki, Finland. Following this performance, Mr. Noel gave its New York premiere in January 1995 at the Juilliard School. *Intrinsics* receives its Texas premiere on this evening's performance.

— Note by the composer

Velocities Joseph Schwantner

Velocities, Moto Perpetuo for solo marimba, commissioned by the Percussive Arts Society with a National Endowment for the Arts Consortium Commissioning Grant, was completed in August 1990. *Velocities* was written for marimbist Leigh Howard Stevens and the other members of the consortium, William Moersch and Gordon Stout.

The work, cast in a single arch-like movement, projects a continuously changing texture of rapidly articulated pitches that unfold in a framework of shifting meters. The linear, harmonic, and gestural elements presented throughout the work are derived from a series of four, five, six, and seven-note pitch sets (E G-sharp C E-flat), D-flat F A-flat C-sharp E), A-flat D B-flat B C-sharp G) and (F-flat E-flat A-flat D-flat C B-flat G-flat).

The first major division marked, "Relentlessly with energy and intensity," opens with a series of aggressive articulations of a repeating harmonic idea followed by flowing wave-like ostinato figures presented in seven-eight meter. The second principal division of the work continues with ever-persistent sixteenth notes. The primary rhythmic ideas in this section emphasize gestures that are framed in triple meter. The last major section reengages the primary musical elements presented and developed earlier and leads to a forceful and spirited conclusion. *Velocities* is dedicated to Leigh Howard Stevens in appreciation of his formidable musical virtuosity and interest in my work.

— Note by the composer

Octet Richard Lavenda

For the last several years, virtually all of my instrumental music has been in one movement. I probably had some good reason for that, and when I began my Octet I assumed that it would follow a similar form. After writing three or four minutes of music, however, circumstances required that I put the piece away for several months. When I came back to it, I realized that my original

theme could be the source of three different movements, each having a distinct, clear character because each would use the theme in a very different way. I also decided that the slow movement, which traditionally comes between two or more faster movements, should be at the end. The result is that the piece moves from a beginning that has a machine-like, almost rigid precision, through a middle that initially is less aggressive but ends up with great energy and drive, to a conclusion that is calm and serene.

— Note by the composer

Suite en Concert **André Jolivet**

The Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians tells us that Jolivet was “drawn as much to the visual arts, to literature and to drama as music.” It has also been said that Jolivet was a man “in love with sound — in love with it for its own inherent beauty, or for what it evokes, or because a particular sound fits a particular feeling or thing.” The sounds, their drama, the spirituality, the beauty and the essence of Jolivet’s musical canvas are conveyed in the **Suite en Concert** for flute and percussion.

A profoundly spiritual man, Jolivet describes his feelings about the flute and the percussion family. Of the flute he says it is “the essential musical instrument, because its life is man’s breath — that emanation of the profounder levels of his being; thus the visceral as well as the cosmic aspects are present in the sounds of the instrument.” He describes the percussion, “whose vibrations awaken the echoes of a primitive, mysterious world — nucleus and nebulae of a universe still at the stage of gestation, and whose resonances are at the roots of rhythm and extend themselves in poetic circles of light and networks of subtle sonorities.”

This work involves a vast variety of percussion instruments from the smallest to the largest, and is more about spectrums of sound than about rhythm. The scene of the first movement is set with an eerie hissing soundscape interspersed with gentle knocks and chirps from woodblocks and bongos. A poignantly expressive solo flute then rides above. The music slowly transforms, Jolivet marks the score *Frémissant* meaning “quivering.” The flute expression becomes more nervous, with the addition of raspy flutter tonguing and large grace note leaps. The percussion texture continues to enlarge as the movement develops. From the climax the instrumentation thins again, eventually leaving the flute to play the final measure alone.

The dark mystery of the *Tam Tam* preempts the entry of the alto flute in the second movement. The percussion hue is purple, blue, and grey supporting the breathy but melancholy sonorous color of the alto flute.

In the third movement, Jolivet’s use of the drums creates a hard-edged and violent atmosphere. This movement is more rhythmic and strikingly contrasting to the previous two. The movement contains a brief interlude from the percussion which is full of rhythm and vigor.

The calm solo flute voice returns in the fourth movement. We hear the flute in all of its distinct registers, with a solo line of ingeniously creative contrast. We feel a sense of return in this movement to the sound we met at the onset of the work. Eventually the movement is marked *morendo* and it dies away to nothing.

— Note by Nicholas Murphy

Octets Alec Wilder

The American composer and arranger Alec Wilder commenced his musical studies at the Eastman School of Music. His time there was brief, however, and it was at the Algonquin Hotel in New York City that he really made his name as a composer. Gunther Schuller, Loonis McGlohan, and Robert Levy, close acquaintances and friends of Wilder, described "that enclave of American literati and artistic intelligentsia [as Wilder's] — permanent home." Wilder composed in many styles and genres and his music can be best described as "a unique blend of American musical traditions — among them jazz and the American popular song — and basic 'classical' European forms and techniques."

Wilder shared close friendships with classical musicians, jazz musicians, and popular singers. The wide ranging styles that these acquaintances enjoyed influenced the diverse character of Wilder's music. One of the most interesting and significant collaborations of Wilder was with Frank Sinatra and Mitch Miller in recording the octets you will hear tonight. Those recordings were the first to expose Wilder's music to the public.

The instrumentation of the Wilder Octets sparks an immediate interest from the listener. The unusual use of the harpsichord, double bass, and drum set combined with oboe/English horn, flute, clarinet, bass clarinet, and bassoon, suggests a unique world of sound.

The eccentric titles of the Octets, which sound more like they belong in Tin Pan Alley than on the concert hall stage, conjure vague images of the pieces to which they correspond. "Such a Tender Night" with gentle syncopated harmonic accompaniment underneath a sonorous English horn melody is one example. "Seldom the Sun" features a Benny Goodman clarinet line and singing oboe solo. The bizarre title, "The Amorous Poltergeist," labels a piece that begins with a raunchy solo for bass clarinet, bassoon, and harpsichord. "The Children Met the Train" and "It's Silk, Feel It" convey some of the big band sounds associated with George Gershwin, drawing on popular American instrumental idioms of the 1930s.

The Schuller, McGlohan, and Levy biography tells us that "Many times his music wasn't jazz enough for the 'jazzers' or highbrow and 'classical' enough for the establishment. Wilder's music was so unique in it's originality that it didn't fit in any of the pre-ordained musical slots and stylistic pigeon holes."

— Note by Nicholas Murphy

UPCOMING SYZYGY CONCERT

Sunday, December 3, 8:00 p.m. PROGRAM: John Harbison
San Antonio (1994) (Premiere) (Kenneth Radnofsky, alto saxophone (guest); Brian Connelly, piano); other works by Harbison; and more.
Duncan Recital Hall. Free Admission.