FESTIVAL OF
AMERICAN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC
at Rice University
November 2-8, 1992
celebrating American Music Week

SHEPHERD SCHOOL
PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE
Richard Brown, Director

Friday, November 6, 1992
8:00 p.m., Stude Concert Hall
PROGRAM

Options (1991)  
Joel Stein

Amores (1943)  
John Cage
   I. Solo (prepared piano)
   II. Trio (nine pompons, pod rattle)
   III. Trio (seven wood blocks, not Chinese)
   IV. Solo (prepared piano)

Selections from The Nutcracker Suite  
Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky  
arr. Erich Loftis
   Chinese Dance
   Dance of the Reed Flutes
   Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy
   Trepak

Mitos Brasileiros (Brazilian Myths) (1988)  
Ney Rosauro
   Curupira
   Iara
   Saci Pereré
   Uirapuru
   Mula Sem Cabeça

INTERMISSION

Tetrachtyptédès (ΤΕΤΡΑΧΤΥΠΤΕΔΕΣ) (1990)  
Richard Reigh
   Skins
   Wood
   Metal
   Perpetuum Mobile

Gerardo Edelstein, conductor

Octet in E-flat Major, Op. 20  
Felix Mendelssohn
   Scherzo - Allegro leggierissimo

Cat Spanking (1979) (Premiere)  
Christopher Coleman
   (A Fantasy for Percussion) (Winner of the 1992 Percussive Arts Society Composition Contest)
SHEPHERD SCHOOL PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

Douglas Cardwell
Nathan Davis
Catherine Lee
Erich Loftis
Andrea Moore

Joanna Nelson
Frank Ronneburg
Stephen Steel
Joel Stein
T. K. Conrad (piano)

PROGRAM NOTES

Options

Options was commissioned by Richard Brown for the Shepherd School Percussion Ensemble in the winter of 1990-91. The piece was premiered in April of 1991 and has enjoyed two other performances. It is composed of four distinct sections. Sections 1, 2, and 4 employ a common motive made up of a note-set arranged in a 1+2+3+4 pattern, while the third section focuses on a gradual layering of timbres on top of an ostinato piano interlude. The work explores a vast range of sounds by calling for over thirty different instruments to be played.

Mitos Brasileiros

Curupira is one of the most popular and fantastic inhabitants of the Brazilian jungle, represented by a dwarf with red hair and inverted feet, having his toes face behind him. He is the devil of the jungle and often makes people and objects disappear while in the forest. Having inverted feet, he leaves false footprints causing people to become lost in the jungle and succumb to unexpected fears. He is the protector of the trees and animals and is said to sometimes make agreements with the hunters, punishing them with death if they do not keep their promises. Definitely not a good guy, he appears on stage in the middle of the movement making a mess and causing chaos and confusion among the performers.

Iara is a kind of Brazilian mermaid. Said to be a blond girl, half woman and half fish, she sings to attract unsuspecting men. Once they are under her spell, they die trying to follow her into the deep water. Within the movement, she tries once and fails, but upon a second effort, is successful in luring her victim to the bottom of the dark lake.

Saci Perere is a very funny guy that enjoys making fun and jokes with everything. Normally he is good, but he can also be quite a troublemaker. He resembles a black dwarf with a long funnel-shaped red cap and a large pipe in his mouth. He is very intelligent and amuses himself by playing jokes on humans and animals in the forest. He likes to frighten hunters, steal food and other items
from campers, put out their fires, and create havoc for everyone that hears his menacing whistle. The main theme is a funny samba in 5/4, where the vibes and the cuica establish a dialogue.

Uirapuru is the wonder of the forest and the protector of the birds. When it sings, all birds, animals, and humans are magically attracted by the beauty of its melody. Occasionally it will assume the form of a beautiful bird, causing many of the birds to follow behind wherever it goes. The theme used was transcribed in 1850 by Dr. R. Spruce, an English researcher, while in the Amazonian jungle.

Mula Sem Cabeça is the best described as a headless horse-woman, which is the form that the priest’s lover takes during a full moon on Friday night. She transforms herself into a heavy horse-like creature that gallops frantically through the camps, frightening everyone in the neighborhood. In spite of not having a head, she is said by those who have seen her to throw flames from her mouth and nostrils. The sound of her gallop and her cry is so loud that it can be heard for miles around. To put the evil magic to rest, the priest must swear at the creature seven times before he begins mass. The seven “shouts” of the priest can be heard during the movement.

Tetrachyptédes . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Richard Reigh

The name of this piece is a Greek word which, loosely translated, means four beat-makers. The number four is significant at various levels in the piece: four players, four movements, four note cells, etc. Each of the first three movements is orchestrated for one type of percussion instrument, with one instrument that doesn’t belong. The first movement is for drums plus cymbals. The second is for wood instruments plus bass drum. The third is for metal instruments plus timpani. The last movement uses all families of percussion, featuring the odd-men-out from the first three movements.

Cat Spanking . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Christopher Coleman

While visiting my parents’ house, I saw our cat leap upon the dining room table. This behaviour (on the cat’s part, not mine) was promptly and vigorously rewarded with a spanking from my mother. Curiously, the rhythm of the spanking was one meter of 7/8 (whap-whap-whap whap-whap whap-whap) which instantaneously brought to mind the main melody of the work. The subtitle refers only to the free form of the piece (a rather loose theme and variations in a fast-slow-fast tempo scheme) and not to some pathological hatred of cats on my part. Personally, I like cats, although they must not, of course, be allowed on the dining room table.

— Notes by the respective composers