



*featuring the*

*HIRSCH-PINKAS PIANO DUO*

*Sally Pinkas and Evan Hirsch*

*performing works by J.S. Bach*

*and guest composer*

*GEORGE ROCHBERG*

*Wednesday, November 1, 2000*

*8:00 p.m.*

*Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall*

*Celebrating 25 years*

THE SHEPHERD SCHOOL OF MUSIC RICE UNIVERSITY

1975-2000

## PROGRAM

***Prelude and Fugue in  
C Minor, BWV 546***

*Johann Sebastian Bach  
(1685-1750)  
arr. Evan Hirsch*

***Circles of Fire (for two pianos) (1996-97) \*      George Rochberg***

1. *Solemn Refrain (I)* (b. 1918)
2. *Chiaroscuro (I)*
3. *Canonic Variations*
4. *Gioco del Fuoco*
5. *Solemn Refrain (II)*
6. *Gargoyles*
7. *Nebulae*
8. *Solemn Refrain (III)*
9. *Sognando*
10. *The Infinite Ricercar*
11. *Solemn Refrain (IV)*
12. *Caprichos*
13. *Fuga a Sèi Voci*
14. *Chiaroscuro (II)*
15. *Solemn Refrain (V)*

\* *Circles of Fire* was co-commissioned for the Hirsch-Pinkas Piano Duo by the Hopkins Center at Dartmouth College, the Gammage Auditorium Series at Arizona State University Public Events, the George Bishop Lane Artist Series at the University of Vermont, the Duke University Department of Music's series, Encounters With the Music of Our Time (with support from the Duke University Institute of the Arts), and the Penn Contemporary Music at the University of Pennsylvania Department of Music (with support from the Musical Fund Society of Philadelphia).

## PROGRAM NOTES

*There is a fire in the brain, in the mind, which comes from the universal fire that makes solar systems and galaxies, asteroid belts and comets, huge orbiting spirals, circles, loops that bend back on themselves in giant symmetries and stream out across millions of miles in giant asymmetries.*

*What we humans call music is the perfect expression of this utterly fantastic image. Music issues from the mental fire that drives our passions and produces our tensions. It shapes these into the polar opposites of symmetry and asymmetry. This fire in the mind translates into a living imagination which, as William Butler Yeats says, "divides us from mortality by the immortality of beauty... Passions, because most living, are most holy..."*

*What is beautiful knows no temporal boundaries, recognizes no cultural moment as more special than any other. In much the same spirit we can now think of the past as present, tonal music having no more special rights than atonal music — so long as both attain the condition of the beautiful.*

*It is the beautiful that is immortal, not ourselves. This epoch ending now is circling back on itself musically, building a new and different tension out of the tonal/atonal polarity whose energies will eventually release themselves in new streams of the unpredictable and the beautiful — so long as the fire in the mind does not rage out of control or burn out. This pattern of circling back imaginatively, storing up all the energy possible in order to release it in some future time when conditions are ripe again and the pressure of expressive need is great enough again, this is the symmetry our passions take on to make of our internal fire what we need to translate our mortality into the immortality of the beautiful. There's no reason beyond that — no utility, no social or political or psychological purpose. Making the world a better place is not a project for the artist. His project is to express the fire in the mind, to make, as Robert Browning said, beautiful things that "have lain burningly on the Divine Hand."*

— George Rochberg

*If fire is an image burning through George Rochberg's recent music, it is the expression of an aesthetic belief kindled during the ice age of mid-twentieth century serialism. In his wide outpouring of symphonies, chamber music, and vocal and instrumental works, Rochberg, now in his eighties, has embodied music's half-century search for renewed immediacy, warmth, and human centrality.*

*In 1985, when Rochberg was presented the Gold Medal of Achievement of the Brandeis University Creative Arts Award, the citation read in part: "We celebrate George Rochberg for his craft, poetry, and determination to melt the ice in contemporary music... His work reunites us with our musical heritage and provides a spiritual impetus to continue." Rochberg's wholehearted re-embrace of traditional tonality not only warmed up the musical climate considerably, but also opened the way to greater freedom and latitude in the way composers could express themselves.*

In his work for two pianos, **Circles of Fire**, Rochberg tests the players' ability to articulate his vision of music as the primal source of the intensities of heat and light. The Hirsch-Pinkas Piano Duo, for whom **Circles of Fire** was commissioned, premiered the seventy-minute-long work in North Carolina in the spring of 1998, and have so far given its Israeli, Russian, and Nigerian premieres. As part of Rochberg's eightieth year celebration, another new work, **Eden: Out of Time and Out of Space**, a chamber concerto commissioned for guitarist Eliot Fisk, was premiered by Fisk and Chamber Music Northwest in Portland, Oregon, in July 1998 and was given its East Coast premiere by Fisk with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center in New York City in November 1998. Rochberg's perennial fascination with the piano, whether as a solo instrument or as ensemble partner, continues in his recent reworking of an earlier large-scale solo piano work, **Sonata Seria**, and a new work, **Three Elegaic Pieces**.

In the measured succession of his works, Rochberg has constantly sought to reaffirm his deep love of tradition. Considered by many to be the leader of musical post-modernism, Rochberg himself is hardly comfortable with labels, pigeon-holes, or pegs. To quote a recent interview: "I don't think it matters anymore what style or language a piece of music is composed in. Nor whether it is atonal or tonal or a mixture of the two. What matters is that however it is made, it comes out music with high craft, that performers love to play it, and that listeners can warm their ears, not to mention their hearts, with it. It is not likely post-modernism includes all that."

## PERFORMER BIOGRAPHIES

Since its 1992 debut, the HIRSCH-PINKAS PIANO DUO has presented one- and two-piano recitals to enthusiastic audiences throughout the U.S. Sally Pinkas and Evan Hirsch, each an active soloist, bring to their collaborations virtuosity, enthusiasm, and striking warmth (they are married). Dedicated to an exploration of twentieth-century music, their repertoire includes rarely-heard works such as Messiaen's **Visions de l'amen**, Milhaud's **La création du monde**, and Copland's **Billy the Kid**. Equally at ease with the standard repertoire, the Duo's offerings range from Byrd to Mozart, Brahms, and Rachmaninoff, and include works especially arranged by Hirsch.

In 1998 the Duo premiered George Rochberg's **Circles of Fire**, commissioned for and dedicated to Pinkas and Hirsch. Premiere performances of the work in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Arizona were followed by concerts in Cincinnati and in the Kfar Blum Chamber Music Festival in Israel, where the Hirsch-Pinkas Duo was in residence during the summer of 1998. The work was featured in their Russian tour in January 1999, and a recording is soon to be released on the Gasparo label (GSCD-343).

Following an acclaimed 1995 European debut at the *Officina Musicale dell'Altopiano* in Abruzzo, Italy, Pinkas and Hirsch returned to Abruzzo for the second time in the summer of 1999 and premiered a new work, *Quarries*, written for them by Daniel Pinkham. Later that year the Hirsch-Pinkas Duo made its African debut in Lagos, Nigeria, and presented recitals at the Rubin Academy in Tel Aviv and at Eckerd College in Florida. The 2000-2001 season includes appearances in St. Louis, Boston, and Houston, and the recording of a disc featuring solo and duo piano works by Daniel Pinkham to be released on the Arsis label.

SALLY PINKAS is Associate Professor of Music at Dartmouth College, an Artist-in-Residence at the college's Hopkins Center, and an Artist-Teacher at the Longy School of Music in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She holds performance degrees from Indiana University and the New England Conservatory of Music, and a Ph.D. in Composition and Theory from Brandeis University. Since her 1983 London debut, she has concertized widely in the U.S., Europe, and Israel, both as soloist and as part of the Hirsch-Pinkas Duo.

Pinkas' discography includes works by Debussy, Schulhoff, and Christian Wolff on the Centaur, Northeastern, and Mode labels. Most recently, two discs featuring the solo piano works of George Rochberg were released on the Gasparo label (GSCD-340/2).

EVAN HIRSCH, an active recitalist and chamber player throughout the northeastern U.S., holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the State University of New York (SUNY) at Purchase and a Master of Music degree from the New England Conservatory. In addition to teaching piano and chamber music at Brandeis University, he has been on the Adult Education faculty at the New England Conservatory, and in the spring of 1999 was a Visiting Professor at Dartmouth College. A dedicated champion of new music, he has performed with numerous contemporary ensembles and has recorded for New Albion and Gasparo Records.

In recent years, Evan Hirsch has traveled widely as half of the Hirsch-Pinkas Piano Duo. Upcoming plans include recording recent solo works by George Rochberg.

UPCOMING SYZYGY CONCERT

*Wednesday, December 6, 8:00 p.m.  
Duncan Recital Hall, Free admission*

PROGRAM

*Richard Lavenda - Quintet for Clarinet and Strings*

*Anthony Brandt - Creeley Songs*

*Joseph Dubiel - Clarinet Quartet*

*Shih-Hui Chen - Fu II*

*Performers include Karol Bennett, soprano (guest);*

*Brian Connelly, piano; Norman Fischer, cello;*

*Jeanne Kierman, piano; Kenneth Goldsmith, violin;*

*Karen Ritscher, viola; Leone Buyse, flute;*

*Wu Man, pipa (guest); David Peck, clarinet;*

*and Michael Webster, clarinet*



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