



*presents a concert of works by
guest composer*

DAVID COLSON

and by

KARIM AL-ZAND

WILLIAM BOLCOM

ANTHONY BRANDT

RICHARD LAVENDA

Thursday, December 2, 2004

8:00 p.m.

Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY

the
Shepherd
School
of Music

PROGRAM

Second Sonata for Violin and Piano (1978)

William Bolcom

Summer Dreams

(b. 1938)

Brutal-fast

Adagio

In Memory of Joe Venuti

Sergiu Luca, violin

Susan Archibald, piano

Mandala (2004; Premiere)

David Colson

(b. 1957)

Elizabeth Landon, flute

Nicholas Masterson, oboe

Louis DeMartino, clarinet

Adam Trussell, bassoon

Jonas VanDyke, horn

The Dragon and the Undying (2004)

Anthony Brandt

(Poetry by Siegfried Sassoon)

(b. 1964)

The Dragon and the Undying

Slumber Song

Karol Bennett, soprano (guest)

Ensō String Quartet

Maureen Nelson, violin Robert Brophy, viola

Tereza Stanislav, violin Richard Belcher, cello

INTERMISSION

Leila (2001)

Karim Al-Zand

(b. 1970)

Stephen King, baritone

Beau Benson, guitar (guest)

Ensō String Quartet

Michael Webster, conductor

Chiaroscuro (2004; Premiere)

Richard Lavenda

(b. 1955)

Leone Buyse, alto flute

Paul Ellison, double bass

David Colson, vibraphone (guest)

Benjamin Kamins, bassoon

PROGRAM NOTES

Second Sonata for Violin and Piano William Bolcom

William Bolcom's *Second Sonata for Violin and Piano* was premiered in 1978 by Sergiu Luca with the composer at the piano. Like many of Bolcom's works, it exhibits clear influences of jazz and popular music. The first movement features a repeating pattern in the bass of the piano. Its rhythm and rocking motion are perhaps a nod to the "Boogie-Woogie" piano tradition, and its harmonic progression has echoes of the blues. Above this accompaniment, the violin presents a lyrical melody filled with pointed chromaticism, "blue notes" and large, expressive leaps. The relaxed mood of the opening is contrasted with dry, incisive articulations in the second movement, marked "Brutal-fast." The third movement is a plaintive slow movement, with a decorative violin line and a chorale-like piano accompaniment. The last movement again makes reference to popular idioms, this time early jazz. The first major exponent of jazz violin, Joe Venuti (1903-1978), died while Bolcom completed the Sonata, and the last movement pays homage to this pioneer. The violin part in this cheerful movement includes playful glissandi and a light swing syncopation.

— Note by Karim Al-Zand

Mandala David Colson

A mandala is a pictorial design usually enclosed in a circle, representing a sacred universe. In Jungian psychology it is a symbol representing the self and harmony within the individual. My *Mandala* also has a circular form and includes a rotation of other musical elements such as pitch, harmony, rhythm, and meter. The music of both Ligeti and Carter influenced the eclectic use of texture in this work.

— Note by the composer

Active as a professional musician for thirty years, DAVID COLSON'S compositions have been performed and recorded by professional musicians in both the United States and Europe. He has been a featured composer at music festivals across the country. In 2000, he was a Resident Fellow of the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire. Recent performances include a new composition for the Colorado Symphony Orchestra's "Drums of the World" concert and a major work for the North State Symphony Orchestra's 2002-03 subscription series. Currently, he has completed a new piece for the Dorian Wind Quintet's West Coast tour in March 2005, a new work for a cappella choir commissioned by The Colorado College Collegium Musicum, and a composition for flute and vibraphone to be performed in January at the Flute Society of Kentucky's Annual Festival and at the Florida Flute Fair. Colson's works are published and distributed by Avera Music Press, and are recorded by MMC Recordings and RedMark.

David Colson has extensive experience as a performing musician. Throughout his career he has been a leader in the performance of new music. He founded the "Current and Modern Consort," a new music ensemble based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and was a conductor and percussionist with "The Center for New Music" at the University of Iowa. At the Shepherd School of Music, he formed and directed "Pierrot Plus," the school's new music ensemble.

As a percussionist, Colson recorded George Crumb's *Makrokosmos III: Music for a Summer Evening* for Bridge Records. The recording was featured as "CD of the Month" (June 2001) on *Classicstoday.com* and received its highest artistic rating. It was also "Editor's Choice" in *Sequenza21/The Contemporary Classical Music Weekly*. In 2002 he recorded the complete

Crumb *Madrigals (Books I-IV)* with soprano Tony Arnold and *Idyll for the Misbegotten* with flutist Rachel Rudich, both for future release on Bridge Records. He has also recorded Poul Ruder's *De Profundis* with the piano duo "Quattro Mani" with whom he performed in concerts at Carnegie Recital Hall on two occasions during the past three years. Colson has also recorded the music of Carlton Gamer and David Crumb on the Innova label. Most recently, Colson conducted two concerts celebrating George Crumb's seventh-fifth birthday, and in January will lead a composer-supervised recording of Crumb's *Ancient Voices of Children* to be released by Bridge Records. As a conductor, he has also recorded for New World Records, Red Mark, and MMC Recordings, Ltd.

At the Shepherd School of Music, Colson studied with composers Paul Cooper and Ellsworth Milburn, and was awarded the Sallie Shepherd Perkins Prize for "highest achievement in music." In 1990, Colson was awarded a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in composition from the Shepherd School. He is Professor of Music at California State University, Chico, where he is head of composition and theory.

The Dragon and the Undying Anthony Brandt

The Dragon and the Undying was commissioned by the Bowdoin International Festival, where it was premiered last summer by Karol Bennett and the Cassatt String Quartet. The work sets two poems by Siegfried Sassoon. Like his compatriot Wilfred Owen, Sassoon served in the British Army in World War I and wrote of his horrific experiences. Indeed, it was Sassoon who published Owen's work posthumously after his friend was killed one week before the armistice. I was drawn by my distress at current events to Sassoon's vivid and brutal language. Musically "The Dragon and the Undying" has a tonal essence, which falls under greater and greater "bombardment" as the piece progresses. The "song left unsung" at the poem's end is set as an expansive refrain of the opening, stretched out both in time and in register. "Slumber Song," in which the poet attempts to shield his loved one from a troubled outer world, seemed like an appropriate complement. This song uses the same musical material as the first. Couched at first in a more comforting context, this motivic link asserts itself more and more strongly, becoming most explicit at the line "the cruelty of swords." The piece ends with a passionate affirmation of love.

— Note by the composer

Anthony Brandt is currently Assistant Professor of Music Theory and Composition at the Shepherd School of Music.

The Dragon and the Undying

All night the flares go up; the Dragon sings
And beats upon the dark with furious wings;
And, stung to rage by his own darting fires,
Reaches with grappling coils from town to town;
He lusts to break the loveliness of spires,
And hurls their martyred music toppling down.

Yet, though the slain are homeless as the breeze,
Vocal are they, like storm-bewilder'd seas.
Their faces are the fair, unshrouded night,
And planets are their eyes, their ageless dreams.
Tenderly stooping earthward from their height,
They wander in the dusk with chanting streams,
And they are dawn-lit trees, with arms up-flung,
To hail the burning heavens they left unsung.

Slumber Song

Sleep; and my song shall build about your bed
A paradise of dimness. You shall feel
The folding of tired wings; and peace will dwell
Throned in your silence: and one hour shall hold
Summer, and midnight, and immensity
Lulled to forgetfulness. For, where you dream,
The stately gloom of foliage shall embower
Your slumbering thought with tapestries of blue.
And there shall be no memory of the sky,
Nor sunlight with its cruelty of swords.
But, to your soul that sinks from deep to deep
Through drowned and glimmering colour, Time shall be
Only slow rhythmic swaying; and your breath;
And roses in the darkness; and my love.

Leila Karim Al-Zand

The name "Leila" (or "Laila") is a trope in classical Arabic poetry. The woman's name represents an ideal object of romantic love, but a love which is ultimately unanswered. The history of Leila, as this symbol of longing, begins with the seventh-century poet Quais Ibn al-Mulawwah. As the story goes, the young poet became infatuated with his beautiful cousin, Leila. As their love for one another grew, Mulawwah began to express his romantic desire in poems of intense passion. These so angered Leila's family that the two were never allowed to wed. Soon Leila was married to another man, an event which ultimately caused the sensitive poet to lose his sanity. He spent the rest of his days wandering the country in search of Leila and professing his love for her in verse. He has since become known as "Majnun Leila" ("majnun" literally means "mad"), and his poetry deals almost exclusively with his unrequited love.

In this work I have gathered together several "Leila poems" from diverse sources, some attributed to Majnun Leila, others by later poets incorporating the symbol. The poems are arranged in a quasi-narrative, divided into roughly three sections: Majnun's initial affection for Leila; his despair at her loss; and the poet's undiminished love for her in old age. The guitar has the principal accompanying voice in the work; the string quartet plays a supporting role in the ensemble.

— Note by the composer

Karim Al-Zand is currently Assistant Professor of Music Theory and Composition at the Shepherd School of Music.

Leila

Shine in the moon's place when it dips.
The dawn is late, become the sun.
You reflect the light of the sun
But the sun lacks your mouth and smile.

Your quality is sunlight coiled
With moonlight, but your eyes dazzle
Too brightly to cup sun or moon.

You radiate the moon's first hue,
But the moon has no neck like yours.
Where are the sun's dark eyes
and sleepy lids?

Leila, when I gaze upon you
My altered cheek turns pale;
And upon yours, sweet maid, I see
A deepening blush prevail

Leila, shall I seek to impart
Why such a change takes place? –
The crimson stream deserts my heart
To mantle on your face.

When you mingled with the local
girls they seemed
Lovely, when you left they lost their looks.

Mad love takes me to Leila's house,
I spill out all my wont and pain.
My cloudy eyes water the dust

My heart is low and full of fret.
I shout my desire to the streets,
My tears roll, and I talk to her.
Only the cold earth seems to listen:
The face in the sand does not answer.

A crow caws, Leila goes in the morning.
This break was ordained.
At gatherings with friends
I droop like a plucked arrow.

As I wake Leila slips away
Like water through clutched fingers.

Surprised by this heart,
so inflammable still
when gray I stand in the wake of youth,
I think of Leila, her nearness gone,
of things untoward that set us apart.

Do you wonder that I flew
charmed to meet my Leila's gaze?
Do you wonder that I stood
raptured by my Leila's voice? –
When I die, if I should know
where my Leila's relics lie,
Majnun's dust will flit away,
there to join his Leila's clay.

Chiaroscuro Richard Lavenda

This piece was written for my friend, the wonderful bassoonist Benjamin Kamins. We had many conversations about what sort of piece he wanted, and we decided that a chamber group of instruments that blend well with the bassoon was ideal. An added bonus turned out to be that, between us, we know quite a few great musicians who play the alto flute, vibraphone, and double bass, and so we concluded that the unusual combination would work both musically as well as socially.

I decided on the title after completing the music. I think it fits the inherent duality of the piece quite well. Although it is in one movement, **Chiaroscuro** is based on a clear contrast of tempo, mood, affect and instrumental combinations. While I would hesitate to label either kind of music the light or the dark areas characteristic of the painting style, there certainly are some aspects of shadowing and blurred borders that are audible. Also, each instrument has multiple paired roles to play: soloist, accompanist; leader, follower; blending or standing alone.

– Note by the composer

Richard Lavenda is currently Professor of Music
Theory and Composition at the Shepherd School of Music.

