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SPECULUM MUSICAE

Friday, October 28, 2005

8:00 p.m.

Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall

Celebrating 30 *Years* 1975-2005

THE SHEPHERD SCHOOL OF MUSIC RICE UNIVERSITY

PROGRAM

- Glint* (1995) *Jacob Druckman*
(1928-1996)
for clarinet, violin, and piano
- Quartetto* (1987) *Mario Davidovsky*
(b. 1934)
for flute, violin, viola, and cello
- Critical Moments 2* (2001) *George Perle*
(b. 1915)
Movements I-IX; for chamber ensemble

INTERMISSION

- Trio, Op. 45* (1946) *Arnold Schoenberg*
(1874-1951)
for violin, viola, and cello
- Wick* (2000) *Melinda Wagner*
(b. 1957)
for chamber ensemble

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Susan Palma-Nidel, flute, alto flute, piccolo
Allen Blustine, clarinet, bass clarinet
Aleck Karis, piano
Pablo Rieppi, percussion
Curtis Macomber, violin
Maureen Gallagher, viola
Gregory Hesselink, cello
James Baker, conductor

The reverberative acoustics of Duncan Recital Hall magnify the slightest sound made by the audience. Your care and courtesy will be appreciated. The taking of photographs and use of recording equipment are prohibited.

PROGRAM NOTES

Glint Jacob Druckman

Glint springs from nocturnal imagery, not peaceful dark, but rather night that is charged and expectant. The work is colored by a five-note "ohrwurm" ("earworm": a tune that keeps insisting itself on one's mind) received from a work by my great colleague and dear friend Toru Takemitsu. I hope he will forgive the five notes and see my theft as the tribute it is.

Glint was commissioned by the Verdehr Trio, the Michigan Committee for the United Nations at 50, and Michigan State University. The Verdehr Trio premiered the work at Weill Recital Hall in October 1995.

— Note by the composer

Quartetto Mario Davidovsky

When the National Flute Association instituted a new series of commissions, Mario Davidovsky was the first composer it approached. The **Quartetto** was composed in fulfillment of that commission and is dedicated to Harvey Sollberger. **Quartetto** opens with a theme—a lyrical, arching flute line that moves into and out of the string ensemble in the course of the piece. In one aspect, the dramatic shape of the piece is theme and variation with a number of parallel beginnings that reactivate the theme. Each of the moments of return is clear enough, but following each, the music veers away from literal repetition and finds surprising ways of developing and intensifying. Sometimes development occurs through layering material of different affects, such as strident flute fragments placed in counterpoint to a thematic variant in strings. The phrase lengths are always changing and they frequently overlap by means of reharmonization. While the piece consists of two sections, there is overall an exaggerated arch from the slow and lyrical beginning toward the extended passage of fast music. Most often in the music of Davidovsky, such passages are very compact and abbreviated, deriving their power from the way they are crosscut with contrasting materials. Here, the fast music is crosscut too—appearing early on in the guise of quirky little sixteenth-note figures. As the fast music becomes more extended, it leads convincingly to the climax and provides a dramatic release from the arching, slow music that pervades much of the piece.

— Note by Eric Chaslow

Critical Moments 2 George Perle

*The instrumentation of these nine short, self-contained, and strikingly individual movements for six players corresponds to that of **Pierrot Lunaire**, except for the substitution of a percussion part for the quasi-spoken (Sprechstimme) vocal part of Schoenberg's work. I had taken much pleasure in the composition of a set of six such pieces in 1995-96 and was already strongly inclined to undertake such a project again when an unexpected commission from the Naumburg Foundation gave me an opportunity to do exactly that.*

— Note by the composer

Trio, Op. 45 Arnold Schoenberg

*Arnold Schoenberg's **String Trio, Op. 45**, was written during the six-week period in 1946 when the composer was recuperating from a near-fatal heart attack. Several occurrences during that illness are evoked in this fragmentary, highly dramatic work. Although played without pause, the Trio is composed of three Parts divided by two Episodes; the third Part is a drastically abbreviated recapitulation of much of Part I and the first Episode. The wealth of motivic material in the Trio is of a highly condensed nature. The resources of the three instruments are exploited to their extremes, which include playing on the bridge, rapid pizzicato, and drawing the wood of the bow across the strings. The work's characters, which usually change abruptly, encompass violence, tenderness, desolation, and Viennese elegance.*

— Note by Curtis Macomber

Wick Melinda Wagner

In the broadest sense, the piece can be said to contain three main sections: an extended introduction leading to a "big tune," a quiet, more lyrical section, and finally a return to faster material, including a brief recapitulation and coda. I didn't plan it this way, however, nor did I view the piece as a ternary structure as I was going along. Actually, the process of composing became one of collecting, or gathering up, increasing amounts of energy at various points, then finding ways (this I found to be quite challenging) of "releasing" the music. Sometimes the energy scatters into fanciful cadenza-like solos; sometimes it is absorbed or disguised by overlapping descending waves moving in slow motion—thrown into second gear, so to speak. At the end of the work, the musical energy is released through the performers' voices as the entire ensemble, including conductor, intones the pitch D.

— Note by the composer

SPECULUM MUSICAE

For almost thirty-five years, Speculum Musicae has been internationally recognized for its immaculately prepared and passionately rendered performances of the music of our time. Since its formation in 1970, Speculum has maintained its position as the nation's preeminent contemporary chamber ensemble. They have been called "New York's most important New Music group" by the Boston Globe. The years have in no way diminished their commitment; their tribute to Elliott Carter during the 2000 season was cited by the New York Times as one of that year's ten best concerts.

The group is comprised of twelve of the most gifted musicians on the New York scene, working together in a democratic, musician-run organization. Over the years, these artists have developed an unequaled rapport and ensemble sound. Their artistry, combined with a deep and lasting commitment to new music, has made them important proponents in the development of the contemporary repertoire. In turn, these players have benefited from extensive collaboration and interaction with the composers whose works they present to the public.

Speculum Musicae has been in residence at leading universities including Harvard and Brandeis and as well as Rice and has performed at numerous festivals, including the Bath (England) Festival, Festival Geneva, and Warsaw Autumn. In 2003 they represented New York City at the Venice Biennale. Speculum is currently planning a tour of China in the spring of 2007. They have recorded for Electra Nonesuch, CRI, New World, Columbia Masterworks, and Bridge Records.

Speculum Musicae's original purpose remains its central objective: to work together as performing musicians to bring new pieces of music to life in concert and on recordings, and also, after three and a half decades, to work with young performers to pass on to them the extraordinarily rich repertoire and tradition that the group has helped form.

UPCOMING SYZYGY CONCERT

Wednesday, November 30

8:00 p.m., Duncan Recital Hall

Program:

*John Anthony Lennon - **Echolia** (for solo flute; 1985)*

*Bernard Rands - **Walcott Songs** (for mezzo-soprano and cello; 2002)*

*Shih-Hui Chen - **Twice Removed** (for solo clarinet; 2002)*

*John Anthony Lennon - **Death Angel** (for solo piano; 1984)*

*Derek Bermel - **Twin Trio** (for flute, clarinet, and piano; 2005)*

Performers include The Webster Trio;

Brian Connelly, piano; Norman Fischer, cello;

Abigail Fischer, mezzo-soprano (guest); and others.



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