



30th Anniversary Celebration

Concert 1

*A program of works by
guest composers George Burt
and Ellsworth Milburn, and by
Paul Cooper and Eugene Kurtz.*

Friday, October 27, 2006

8:00 p.m.

Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY

the
Shepherd
School
of Music

PROGRAM

Entre nous (1988) *
for violin and viola

Ellsworth Milburn
(b. 1938)

Récitatif
Jeux
Voûtes
Fantaisie

Duo Patterson

Ronald Patterson, violin
Roxanna Patterson, viola

Octet: "The Mystery Hour" (2004; Premiere)

George Burt
(b. 1929)

With nervous energy, ♩ = 108

Quietly, ♩ = 54 (In Homage to Duke Ellington)

♩ = 96

Clint Foreman, flute and alto flute
Janet Rarick, oboe and English horn
Michael Webster, clarinet
Melanie Yamada, bass clarinet
Stephanie Nussbaum, violin
Pei-Ling Lin, viola
Semiramis Costa, cello
Evan Halloin, contrabass
Karl Blench, conductor

Versés (1991)
for violin and viola

Paul Cooper
(1926-1996)

I.
II.
III.
IV.
V.

Duo Patterson

The Last Contrabass in Las Vegas (1974) †
for mezzo-soprano and contrabass

Eugene Kurtz
(1923-2006)

Susan Lorette Dunn, mezzo-soprano
Paul Ellison, contrabass

First performance on a concert of SYZYGY, New Music at Rice:

* May 3, 1988

† November 4, 1980

Everyone is invited to a reception in Room 1401 following the concert.

PROGRAM NOTES

Entre nous Ellsworth Milburn

The first movement, *Récitatif*, is based on the opening viola solo from an earlier work, *Ménage*, and features the viola in both lyrically and flamboyantly virtuosic passages. *Jeux*, the scherzo of the piece, is in a rather clear ABA form, and contains a game in the middle. This section, labeled "Initiate or respond," pits the two players against each other in a challenge for leadership; after a certain period of time, one interrupts with an unrelated fragment, and the other must follow. The choice of who does what when is left to the performers. The third movement, *Voûtes*, is named for its arch-like dramatic shape and is an intense, impassioned, almost confrontational slow movement. *Fantaisie* is the most virtuosic of the four movements and has a recapitulatory function, bringing back some of the material from the first movement.

— Note by the composer

ELLSWORTH MILBURN's music has been described by critics as craggy, colorful, romantic, aggressive, searing, sweetly poignant, overwhelming, thrilling, powerful, wickedly funny, eloquent, brilliant, raging, and engaging.

He received his musical education at UCLA, Mills College, and the College-Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati, where he subsequently taught for five years.

He was an original faculty member of the Shepherd School of Music from its inception in 1975, and was a founding director of the series SYZYGY, *New Music at Rice*. He served almost twenty-five years on the faculty as Professor of Music. He chaired the Composition and Theory Department for thirteen of those years.

In an earlier phase of his career he played jazz and was music director for The Committee, San Francisco's improvisational theater company. He also wrote music for radio, television, and film.

As a composer he has received four grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Presser Foundation Grant for publication of his *String Quartet No. I*, numerous ASCAP Awards, and residencies at MacDowell Colony and Yaddo. Among others, he has received commissions and performances from the Houston Symphony, the Springfield (Missouri) Symphony, the Pardubice (Czech Republic) Chamber Symphony, the Concord, Blair, and Lark String Quartets, Da Camera of Houston, and the Concert Artists Guild. His music has been featured on National Public Radio's "Performance Today," and has been recorded on the CRI, Gasparo, Grenadilla, and Summit labels. His recent CD on CRI features two string quartets and other chamber music.

Octet: "The Mystery Hour" George Burt

Written in 2004, this Octet held a unique fascination for me in that I had the feeling that many ideas were in small part coming from a particular place or experience, but I couldn't put my finger on it. Then one day my wife (who had been forced to hear me work on passages over and over again) said, "You know, there are places in this piece that sound rather mystery-like to me." I thought about this for a while and found out that in a sense she was right, hence the title. The piece is more involved than that, of course.

The second movement is dedicated to Duke Ellington. I had the pleasure of meeting him once. I was in the CBS orchestra in San Francisco, and we had just finished a show with the Duke as guest. He and I happened to be walking out the studio door at the same time, and he courteously asked what I did otherwise. I told him I was studying with Roger Sessions. And he said,

"REALLY." As we were walking down Van Ness Avenue towards Union Street, he asked all kinds of question about Sessions. We ended up at the next corner and kept talking until he said, "Well, George (he knew my name by now) I've got to get going." We called a cab, he got in and waved goodbye. As I watched him drive off I was frozen to the ground at the sheer wonder of what had just happened. When I told Sessions the story, he was very flattered by Ellington's interest. There are several influences of Ellington in this movement. They might not be immediately discernible, but I know where they are.

– Note by the composer

GEORGE BURT has written about forty works (orchestral, chamber, and electronic) and has been performed by the Detroit Symphony, the Houston Symphony Orchestra, the Paris Opera Orchestra, and the Cleveland Chamber Symphony Orchestra. Most recently he has written a Symphony (No. 1), this Octet called "The Mystery Hour" and a Quartet for mixed instruments, commissioned by Benjamin Kamins. In addition to concert music, George Burt, a "recovering film addict," has scored seven feature-length films, two by Robert Altman, which, according to ASCAP, have been shown in virtually every corner of the earth.

Born in San Francisco, he received degrees from the University of California at Berkeley and Mills College, and finished graduate studies at Princeton. He considers himself very fortunate to have studied during these years with such luminaries as Darius Milhaud, Roger Sessions (for five years), Andrew Imbrie, and Milton Babbitt. He also worked with György Ligeti for a year while on a grant in Vienna.

Between ages twelve and thirty-two he worked as a "doubler" (winds) and played "what seemed a thousand endless shows" in theaters and hotels. When work slackened ("which it invariably did, particularly around Lent") he shipped out as a deckhand in the Merchant Marine, drove an ambulance, or worked as a laborer. Life was a bit more manageable once he secured a teaching position. As a professor of composition, George Burt has taught at Smith College, the University of Michigan, the Shepherd School of Music, and the University of Southern California. He resides in Sonoma, California.

Jobert (Paris), M.M.Cole (Chicago), and Alexander Broude, Inc. (New York) have published his works. He also is the author of "The Art of Film Music" used as a teaching text in the United States, Europe, and the Republic of China.

Versés Paul Cooper

Versés was composed for the tenth wedding anniversary of Roxanna and Ronald Patterson, the Duo Patterson, beloved friends and esteemed colleagues. Unlike all of the other purely instrumental works in my catalogue, *Versés* is based on a pre-existing composition, the song cycle *Last Call*. When my wife died in 1989, Sergiu Luca, the founder and director of Da Camera of Houston, commissioned me to compose a vocal and instrumental work using the seven last poems of my wife, the distinguished poet, C.E. Cooper. Six of the poems were written in the hospital, and the seventh was penned at our beautiful home overlooking the pool, lush landscaping, and the flights of numerous species of birds. The work was probably the most difficult I have ever had to compose. *Last Call* had seven movements and was scored for soprano and six instruments. "Recomposing" a composition of seven lines down to two is difficult. Some movements had to be eliminated; musical ideas that were subliminal in *Last Call* now come to the fore; perhaps it would have been easier to start fresh. I felt strongly, however, that had the poet been alive she would have written several poems on the Pattersons' anniversary.

There are five movements, each with a different tempo, mood, and set of expressions. These modest Duos express the anger, hope, reflection, and resignation of dying — but with a most positive denouement.

— Note by the composer

PAUL COOPER (1926-96), composer-in-residence and Lynette Autrey Professor of Music at the Shepherd School of Music, was internationally known as a composer, music critic, author, and teacher. He earned degrees from the University of Southern California and studied at the Conservatoire Nationale and the Sorbonne in Paris. He made his professional debut in 1953 with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. He was a music critic in Los Angeles and Ann Arbor, Michigan, and taught at the University of Michigan (1955-68) and the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati before joining the Shepherd School faculty in 1974. Paul Cooper held guest professorships in Stockholm and Copenhagen. He received Fulbright and Guggenheim Fellowships, grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Ford, Rockefeller and Rackham Foundations and the National Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, and twenty-five consecutive ASCAP awards beginning in 1966. He served as cultural representative to Yugoslavia for the U.S. State Department in 1965, and in 1976 began his involvement with the Music Teachers National Association. He served on the boards of Meet-the-Composer (Texas), Houston Composers Alliance, Voices of Change, Texas Composers Forum, and Phi Beta Kappa Alumni of Houston. He was married to the former Christiane Ebert, a noted poet with whom he collaborated on oratorios, song cycles, instrumentals and chamber works.

***The Last Contrabass in Las Vegas* Eugene Kurtz**

The Last Contrabass in Las Vegas was commissioned by the University of Las Vegas and completed by Eugene Kurtz while he was living in Paris in 1974. It is a musical sketch for one man, one woman, and one contrabass. Bertram Turetzky, renowned interpreter of new music for the bass, performed the premiere with Judith Vaccaro at the Fourth Annual Contemporary Music Festival in Las Vegas, Nevada, in February of 1974. At an early concert of SYZYGY, *New Music at Rice* (in the mid-1970s), *The Last Contrabass in Las Vegas* was performed at the Shepherd School of Music by yours truly and Isabelle Ganz. We can thank Arthur Gottschalk for bringing it to my attention the first time, and again for this 30th anniversary SYZYGY revival with Susan Lorette Dunn. The piece will be self-explanatory as we allow it to unfold.

— Note by Paul Ellison

EUGENE KURTZ was born in Atlanta in 1923 and died this July at the age of eighty-two in Paris, France. After serving in an artillery division in France and Germany during World War II, Eugene Kurtz pursued musical studies at the Eastman School of Music. He felt compelled to return to France, however, and so in 1949 he began studies at the l'Ecole Normale de Musique, working first with Arthur Honegger and then with Darius Milhaud. When Milhaud left for the United States, Kurtz decided to remain in Paris, and make it his home. He began composition studies with Max Deutsch, one of Schoenberg's Viennese disciples, and worked as an editor for famed music publisher l'Editions Jobert. His music, widely admired in Europe, gained him many performances and honors, including the Prix Nicolo de l'Academie des Beaux Arts in 1997. He also garnered an excellent reputation as a pedagogue, replacing many of America's foremost university composers while they were on sabbatical leaves from the nation's top conservatories. Upon his death, Gérard Condé wrote in *Le Monde*, "Kurtz composed serious music, often times marvelous music, with constant inventiveness, yet always with a smile." For those of us who were fortunate enough to have known him, it is the smile that we'll miss the most.

— Arthur Gottschalk

GUEST PERFORMERS

DUO PATTERSON was formed in 1980 in the Principality of Monaco with the encouragement of Princess Grace of Monaco. Comprised of Ronald, violin, and Roxanna, viola, this unique duo has performed in recitals and as soloist with orchestras in the major cities of France, Italy, Monaco, England, Spain, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Germany, and the United States. They have performed often on European and American television, and have recorded for VOX, CRI, and Ante Aeternum records. They have given many world premieres and have had duos for violin and viola and double concertos with orchestra written for them. Among composers who have written works for the Pattersons are Paul Cooper, Ellsworth Milburn, and Richard Lavenda. Duo Patterson received the first Princess Grace Foundation U.S.A. Special Award in 1984 in New York and were honored by Prince Rainier of Monaco in 1998 with l'Ordre du Merite Culturel, one of the Principality of Monaco's highest honors.

Ronald Patterson became Associate Professor at the Shepherd School of Music in 1974 when he was hired to help form and write the curriculum for the Shepherd School. Roxanna (Johnson) was a student at the Shepherd School from 1975 to 1979. Ronald was concertmaster from 1965 to 1999 of the Monte Carlo Philharmonic, the Houston Symphony, the Denver Symphony, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and the Miami Philharmonic. Since 1999 he has been Professor of Violin at the University of Washington. In addition, he is concertmaster of the New Hampshire Music Festival. Roxanna played in the orchestras of Houston, Monte Carlo, and Fort Worth. She is principal viola of the New Hampshire Music Festival, viola coach of the Seattle Youth Symphony, teaches privately, and is active in Seattle's recording industry.

UPCOMING CONCERTS DURING 2006-2007 CELEBRATING THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF SYZYGY, NEW MUSIC AT RICE

CONCERT 2: Wednesday, November 29

Works by David Rakowski, William Bolcom,
Jacob Druckman, George Rochberg, and George Crumb
featuring guest violinist Curt Macomber, cellist Norman Fischer,
flutist Leone Buyse, and pianist Jeanne Kierman.

CONCERT 3: Wednesday, March 28

Works by Paul Cooper, Mario Davidovsky,
Karim Al-Zand, Richard Lavenda, and Pierre Jalbert,
featuring organist Clyde Holloway, percussionist
Richard Brown, The Fischer Duo, and others.

CONCERT 4: Thursday, March 29

Symphonic wind ensemble music of Samuel Jones,
Anthony Brandt, and Arthur Gottschalk.



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