

FACULTY RECITAL

BRIAN CONNELLY, Piano

*MUSIC OF
WILLIAM BOLCOM*

(b. 1938)

Tuesday, November 7, 2006

8:00 p.m.

Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY

the
Shepherd
School
of Music

PROGRAM

Scherzo–Fantasy (1958)
for wind quintet and piano

William Bolcom
(b. 1938)

Five Fold Five (1985-87)
for wind quintet and piano

Clint Foreman, flute
Jaren Philleo, oboe
Matthew Nelson, clarinet
Bradley Balliett, bassoon
Erin Koertge, horn

Trio for Clarinet, Violin, and Piano (1993)
(performed without pause between movements)

1. *Twist of Fate*
2. *Mazurka*
3. *Apotheosis of J.V.*
4. *Dithyramb*

Maiko Sasaki, clarinet
Cristian Macelaru, violin

INTERMISSION

California Porcupine Rag

Incineratorag

Tabby Cat Walk

Old Adam

Epitaph for Louis Chauvin

Seabiscuits Rag

The Poltergeist – Rag Fantasy

Dream Shadows

Brass Knuckles (co-composed with William Albright)

PROGRAM NOTES

The pieces on the second half of tonight's program are some of the twentieth century's most inventive, accomplished, challenging, and engaging works for piano solo. The composer's mastery of idiom and harmony, his imagination and sentiment, and his dazzling ability to exploit and extend the pianist's technique are apparent on every page. These works live at an altitude shared by Chopin's Mazurkas, Debussy's Preludes, Bartók's Folkdances, and Gershwin's song arrangements. Oh — and they just happen to be rags.

Perhaps their titles make us suspicious of their worth. (Classic rags always had nonsensical titles: the **Maple Leaf Rag**?) Pianists might be more likely to value them if the composer had given his works their real titles: "Etude for playing two voices in one hand" instead of **Incineratorag**. "Etude for huge leaps and sudden contrasts" instead of **California Porcupine Rag**. "Etude for legato chords and maddeningly inventive pedalling" instead of **Dream Shadows**. And always, of course, "Etude for left hand."

Bolcom was one of a small group of musicians who effectively "rediscovered" classic American ragtime in the 1960s. (Tonight's rags were composed between 1969 and 1974). I heard him play a rag recital around then, and the effect on my young ears was electrifying. Later, at the University of Michigan, I learned a lot from him (and from his late colleague, the composer William Albright) about playing rags, and much more.

Scherzo-Fantasy was written when Bolcom was twenty, and shows the influence of his teacher, Darius Milhaud. **Five Fold Five** was written for Dennis Russell Davies and the Philadelphia Orchestra Wind Quintet. The title sounds like Blake, but refers to the five-note clusters on which the piece is based. The **Trio for Clarinet, Violin, and Piano** was composed for the Verdehr Trio. The "J.V." of the third movement is one of Bolcom's composition teachers, John Verrall. The Trio is dedicated to Albright.

— Notes by Brian Connelly

BIOGRAPHY

BRIAN CONNELLY is recognized as a pianist of unusual range and accomplishment in both historical and modern repertoires. Born in Detroit, he studied at the University of Michigan with pianists György Sándor and Theodore Lettvin. He has premiered works by William Albright, Karim Al-Zand, Derek Bermel, William Bolcom, Anthony Brandt, Paul Cooper, David Diamond, Ross Lee Finney, Arthur Gottschalk, Laura Karpman, Richard Lavenda, and many others. He has performed as soloist and chamber player in major cities throughout the United States and Europe, and as guest artist with groups such as the Chicago Contemporary Players and the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble. He was featured in the Carnegie Hall series "Making Music" in a tribute to composer William Bolcom, and he performs regularly at the Cascade Head and Grand Teton music festivals. He has appeared in concert with a host of preeminent artists such as violinist Sergiu Luca, violist Nobuko Imai, cellists Gary Hoffman and Roel Dieltiens, flutist Carol Wincenc, clarinetists Charles Neidich and Lorenzo Coppola, pianists Robert Levin and André-Michel Schub, fortepianists John Gibbons and Riko Fukuda, and he has shared ragtime recitals with jazz pianist Marcus Roberts. Mr. Connelly played nearly 150 solo and chamber works for the acclaimed Da Camera of Houston in its path-breaking first six seasons. He is a member of the ensemble CONTEXT, performing on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century pianos as well as the modern Steinway. He teaches piano performance and chamber music at the Shepherd School.



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