



A program of works by

Martin Bresnick

Elizabeth Brown

John Harbison

Pierre Jalbert

Friday, October 26, 2007

8:00 p.m.

Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY

the
Shepherd
School
of Music

PROGRAM

Arcana (2004)
for flute and recorded sound

Elizabeth Brown
(b. 1953)

Leone Buyse, flute

String Quartet No. 2 "Bucephalus" (1983-84) Martin Bresnick
(b. 1946)

- I. Bucephalus
- II. Around To The Sun
- III. Alexandrine
- IV. At Jhelum
- V. The New Advocate

The Jasper String Quartet

J Freivogel, violin
Sae Niwa, violin
Sam Quintal, viola
Rachel Henderson, cello

INTERMISSION

Abu Ghraib (2006)
Scene I, Prayer I
Scene II, Prayer II

John Harbison
(b. 1938)

The Fischer Duo
Norman Fischer, cello
Jeanne Kierman, piano

String Quartet No. 3 (2006)
I. Prelude (h.c.a.)
II. Scherzo in 15 scenes
III. Finale

Pierre Jalbert
(b. 1967)

The Jasper String Quartet

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

Arcana Elizabeth Brown

arcnum: 1. A deep secret; a mystery. 2. Often **arcana**. Specialized knowledge that is mysterious to the average person. 3. A secret essence or remedy; an elixir.

In *Arcana* for solo flute and recorded sound, the ghostly voice of the theremin shadows the melancholy and lyrical solo flute through a dark soundscape. Written in Brooklyn, New York, in 2004, *Arcana* was commissioned by Itzhak and Toby Perlman for the 21st birthday of their daughter, flutist Ariella Perlman. Ariella performed the premiere at the Shepherd School on April 1, 2006.

— Note by the composer

Composer and performer ELIZABETH BROWN was born in Camden, Alabama, where she grew up on an agricultural research station. She received a master's degree in flute performance from the Juilliard School and started composing in her late 20s. Since then her music has been heard in Japan, Vietnam, Russia, Colombia, and Australia as well as across the United States and Europe.

Brown has been a fellow at the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Center in Italy and at the MacDowell Colony. She has been composer-in-residence at several festivals, including the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival, and has written for such unusual instruments as viola d'amore, glass armonica, theremin, shakuhachi, koto, dan bau (traditional Vietnamese monochord), and composer Harry Partch's microtonal instruments. She performs as flutist with a number of New York-based ensembles, and is the only musician to have both played with and written for the chamber orchestra Orpheus, which commissioned her *Lost Waltz* and premiered it in Carnegie Hall in 1997. She also plays shakuhachi, dan bau, and theremin, and performs the theremin lines heard in *Arcana*.

String Quartet No. 2 "Bucephalus" Martin Bresnick

String Quartet No. 2 "Bucephalus" was written in honor of György Ligeti's 60th birthday and commissioned by the Alexander String Quartet with support of Chamber Music America and the Connecticut Commission for the Arts. The titles of the five movements were drawn from a number of events, real or imaginary, in the lives of Alexander the Great and his war horse Bucephalus. The concluding movement "The New Advocate" is based on a short story by Franz Kafka. Kafka imagined Bucephalus today in the quiet lamplight of law school.

From *A Country Doctor* by Franz Kafka:

We have a new advocate, Dr. Bucephalus. There is little in his appearance to remind you that he was once Alexander of Macedon's battle charger. Of course, if you know his story, you are aware of something... even a simple usher who I saw the other day on the front steps of the Law Courts... was running an admiring eye over the advocate as he mounted the marble steps with a high action that made them ring beneath his feet.

In general the Bar approves the admission of Bucephalus. With astonishing insight people tell themselves that, modern society being what it is, Bucephalus is in a difficult position, and therefore, considering also his importance in the history of the world, he deserves at least a friendly reception. Nowadays — it cannot be denied — there is no Alexander the Great. There are plenty of men who know how to murder people; the

skill needed to reach over a banqueting table and pink a friend with a lance is not lacking; but no one, no one at all, can blaze a trail to India. Even in his day the gates of India were beyond reach ...

So perhaps it is really best to do as Bucephalus has done and absorb oneself in law books. In the quiet lamplight, his flanks unhampered by the thighs of a rider, free and far from the clamor of battle, he reads and turns the pages of our ancient tomes.

From Questions from a Worker Who Reads by Bertolt Brecht:

*Every page a victory
Who cooked the feast for the victors?
Every ten years a great man.
Who paid the bill?
So many reports.
So many questions.*

String Quartet No. 2 was recorded on CRI CD-682 Martin Bresnick, Music for Strings by The Alexander Quartet. A forthcoming recording by The Flux Quartet will be released by Cantaloupe Records.

– Note by the composer

MARTIN BRESNICK was born in New York City was educated at the High School of Music and Art, the University of Hartford, Stanford University, and the Akademie für Musik, Vienna. His principal teachers of composition include György Ligeti, John Chowning, and Gottfried von Einem. Presently Professor of Composition and Coordinator of the Composition Department at the Yale School of Music, he has also taught at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music (1971-72) and Stanford University (1972-75). He has served on the faculties of Amherst College (1993), Duke University (1998), the University of British Columbia (2000), Composer-in-Residence, Australian Youth Orchestra National Music Camp (2001 and 2004), International Bartók Seminar, Eastman School of Music (2002-2003), New College, Oxford (2004), Florida State University (2005), and Royal Academy of Music, London (2005). Mr. Bresnick was elected to membership of the American Academy of Arts and Letters (2006).

Mr. Bresnick's orchestral music has been performed by the National Symphony, Chicago Symphony, American Composers Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, City of London Chamber Orchestra, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Oregon Symphony Orchestra, and Bilbao Orkestra Sinfonika, among others. His chamber music has been performed in concert by The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Sonor, Da Capo Chamber Players, Speculum Musicae, Bang on A Can All Stars, and Zeitgeist, among others. He has received commissions from the Koussevitzky Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Institute of Sacred Music, Macon Arts Alliance, Fromm Foundation, Lincoln Center Chamber Players, Meet the Composer, and Chamber Music America.

*Mr. Bresnick has written music for films, two of which, **Arthur & Lillie** (1975) and **The Day After Trinity** (1981), were nominated for Academy Awards in the documentary category. Mr. Bresnick's music has been recorded by Cantaloupe Records, Composers Recordings Incorporated, Centaur, New World Records, Artifact Music, and Albany Records and is published by Carl Fischer Music, Bote and Bock, Berlin, and CommonMuse Music Publishers, New Haven.*

The title of this piece refers to an important episode in our country's history. Abu Ghraib, while inscribed on our nation's consciousness by photographs and reports, has been absorbed into the nation's bloodstream, its long term effects yet to be known.

[My piece is not a protest or moral lesson. These would require little bravery. Instead it seeks music in a moment when words can fail.]

There are two movements, separated by a pause: Scene I, Prayer I; Scene II, Prayer II. Each prayer begins with the violoncello playing alone.

Scene I, in its harmonic details, investigates infection and wrongness. Then, in a less rebarbative language, Prayer I begins a tentative plea for help beyond ourselves.

Scene II is based on an Iraqi song which I was hired to transcribe back in 1962, for a collection called **Lullabies of the World**. (I was asked to transform its bent pitches and asymmetrical rhythms into "American family-sing form.") This song is shown to have connections to two of our well-known hymns. Prayer II again suggests that by entering a difficult meditative world we may find courage to face our own Shadow.

This piece was composed for performance by Rhonda Rider and David Deveau.

— Note by the composer

JOHN HARBISON is one of America's most prominent composers. Among his principal works are four string quartets, three symphonies, the cantata **The Flight into Egypt**, which earned him a Pulitzer Prize in 1987, and three operas including **The Great Gatsby**, commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera and first performed to great acclaim in December 1999.

John Harbison's recent works and first performances include **Six American Painters** in versions for flute and oboe quartet, and **String Quartet No. 4**, a co-commission for the Orion Quartet by the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, La Jolla Chamber Music Festival, and Caramoor Festival. He has written for the Boston Symphony a **Requiem** and **Four Psalms**, completed in 1999, commissioned by the Israeli Consulate of Chicago and composed to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. Harbison has been composer-in-residence with the Pittsburgh Symphony, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Tanglewood, Marlboro, and Santa Fe Chamber Festivals, and the American Academy in Rome.

He did his undergraduate work at Harvard University and earned an Master of Fine Arts degree from Princeton University. Harbison has taught at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, CalArts, Boston University, Duke University, and is currently on the faculty of the Aspen Music Festival. In 1998 Harbison had the distinction of being named winner of the important Heinz Award for the Arts and Humanities. He has a particular interest in furthering the work of younger composers, and serves on the boards of directors of the American Academy in Rome, the Copland Fund (as president), and the Koussevitzky Foundation, as well as juries of the Fromm Foundation and the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

String Quartet No. 3 Pierre Jalbert

My third string quartet developed out of a children's piece of mine based on the fairy tales of Hans Christian Andersen. The original work was written for narrator and string quartet and consisted of twenty-one separate scenes. The Maia Quartet, who commissioned the work, also wanted a concert piece without narrator, so I revised, combined, and developed these separate scenes into what is now the middle movement of the work, "Scherzo in 15 scenes."

This movement retains something of its narrative characteristics. It's very rhapsodic; full of starts and stops. I also added a short Prelude and short Finale to frame the more substantial middle movement.

– Note by the composer

PIERRE JALBERT served as Composer-in-Residence with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra from 2002 to 2005 and is currently Associate Professor of Composition and Theory at The Shepherd School of Music. He has received numerous awards for his compositions, including the 2007 Stoeger Award from the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center for his contributions to the chamber music repertory. Previous awards include the Rome Prize, the BBC Masterprize, a Guggenheim fellowship, a Society of Composer's Award, BMI and ASCAP Awards, and the Bearns Prize in Composition.

His compositions have been performed throughout the United States and abroad, including four Carnegie Hall performances of his orchestral works, one of the most recent being the Houston Symphony's premiere of his orchestral work, *big sky*, in 2006. The London Symphony Orchestra performed his *In Aeternam* at the Barbican Centre in London as part of the BBC's Masterprize Competition in 2001, in which he received first prize. He has also been commissioned and performed by violinist Midori, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Ying Quartet, the Seattle Symphony, Albany Symphony, the Fischer Duo, the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, *Zeitgeist*, and the Chiara String Quartet, among others. He has also served as Composer-in-Residence with the California Symphony and Music in the Loft in Chicago. His music is published by Theodore Presser Company, and he is a member of Musiqa, a Houston new music group.

Current projects include a new work for the Maia String Quartet and an orchestral work commissioned through Meet the Composer's Magnum Opus Project for three California orchestras who will each perform the work over the next three years (the Santa Rosa Symphony, the Oakland East Bay Symphony, and the Marin Symphony).

UPCOMING SYZYGY CONCERT

Thursday, November 29

Shulamit Ran, guest composer

Program

Shulamit Ran - *East Wind* (for solo flute; 1987)

Arthur Gottschalk - *In Memoriam: Sonata for Cello and Piano* (2006)

Shulamit Ran - *Soliloquy* (for piano trio; 1997)

Karim Al-Zand - *Lamentation on the Disasters of War*
(for string sextet; 2006)

Shulamit Ran - *Mirage* (for five players; 1990)

Performers include The Fischer Duo;

Leone Buyse, flute; Michael Webster, clarinet;

Kenneth Goldsmith, violin; and others.

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