



THE VERDEHR TRIO

Walter Verdehr, violin

Elsa Ludewig-Verdehr, clarinet

Silvia Roederer, piano

Friday, March 19, 2010

8:00 p.m.

Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY

the
Shepherd
School
of Music

PROGRAM

<i>Dash</i> (2002)	Jennifer Higdon
<i>Recordando una melodia olvidada</i> (2008) (<i>Remembrance of a forgotten melody</i>)	Roberto Sierra
<i>Sea-change</i> (2009)	Pamela Madsen
<i>Tibetan Dance</i> (2000)	Bright Sheng
Prelude	
Song	
Tibetan Dance	

INTERMISSION

<i>Dancing Helix Rituals</i> (2006)	Augusta Read Thomas
<i>I Got Variations</i> (1999)	George Gershwin, Ira Gershwin, William David Brohn
<i>Suite</i> (1992)	Alexander Arutiunian
Largo	
Scherzo	
Dialog - Final	

All of the works on tonight's program were commissioned by the Verdehr Trio with assistance from Michigan State University and the Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C. (work by Bright Sheng).

PROGRAM NOTES

Dash Jennifer Higdon

Dash comes at the beginning of the 21st century, where speed often seems to be our goal. This image fits well the instruments in this ensemble – clarinet, violin, and piano – because these are some of the fastest moving instruments in terms of their technical prowess. Each individual plays an equal part in the ensemble, contributing to the intensity and forward momentum, as the music dashes from beginning to end.

– Note by the composer

JENNIFER HIGDON, born in 1962 in Brooklyn, New York, is active as a freelance composer. She is the recipient of awards, including a Pew Fellowship, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and two awards from the American Academy of Arts & Letters. Her works are recorded on over two dozen discs, including the Grammy winning *Higdon: Concerto for Orchestra/City Scape*. Commissions have included pieces for the Philadelphia Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Chicago Symphony, National Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony, eighth blackbird, and the Lark, Ying and Tokyo String Quartets, as well as such artists as Gary Graffman and Carol Wincenc. Her work *blue cathedral* was the most-performed work for orchestra by a living American composer during the 2004-05 season. She is on the composition faculty at The Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia.

Recordando una melodía olvidada Roberto Sierra

The way we often remember and try to reconstruct a long forgotten tune is the concept that generates the form of this work. The melody appears first in a duo between the clarinet and the piano, where the latter does not “recall” all the pitches that are “remembered” by the clarinet. As the trio evolves, similar transformations of the melodic material occur, and also more parts of the “forgotten” melody are remembered. In these transformations the texture changes, bringing back the material transformed through rhythm, harmony, and textural colors. The work was commissioned by the Verdehr Trio and Michigan State University.

– Note by the composer

For more than a decade the works of American ROBERTO SIERRA have been part of the repertoire of many of the leading orchestras, ensembles and festivals in the United States and Europe. His numerous commissions include works for many major orchestras – Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Atlanta, New Mexico, Houston, Minnesota, Dallas, Detroit, San Antonio, and Phoenix, as well as the American Composers Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the National Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, and Tonhalle Orchestra of Zurich, among others.

Roberto Sierra was born in Vega Baja, Puerto Rico, and studied composition both in Puerto Rico and Europe, where one of his teachers was György Ligeti at the Hochschule für Musik in Hamburg, Germany. In 2003 he was awarded the Academy Award in Music by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. The award states: “Roberto Sierra writes brilliant music, mixing fresh and personal melodic lines with sparkling harmonies and striking rhythms...” His *Sinfonía No. 1*, a work commissioned by the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, won the 2004 Kenneth Davenport Competition for Orchestral Works. Sierra has served as Composer-in-Residence with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, Puerto Rico Symphony Orchestra, and New Mexico Symphony. Sierra’s music may be heard on CDs by Naxos, EMI, New World Records, Albany Records, Koch, New Albion, Koss Classics, BMG, Fleur de Son, and other labels.

Sea-change Pamela Madsen

Sea-Change by Genevieve Taggard (1894-1948)

You are no more, but sunken in a sea
Sheer into dream, ten thousand leagues, you fell;
And now you lie green-golden, while a bell
Swings with the tide, my heart; and all is well
Till I look down, and wavering, the spell –
Your loveliness – returns. There in the sea,
Where you lie amber-pale and coral-cool,
You are most loved, most lost, most beautiful.

“Sea-change” is a poetic term meaning a striking change or a gradual transformation in which the form is retained but the substance is replaced. The expression is Shakespeare’s, taken from the song in *The Tempest*, when Ariel sings about transformation brought about by the sea.

This work is from a series of pieces called ... **from the edges of the earth** based on images and texts of sea, sea nymphs, and sirens. The other works from this collection are **The Singing of the Wave** for three flutes, piano, and spoken voice, commissioned and premiered by Jane Rigler, Anne LaBerge, John Fonville, flutists, and Lisa Moore, pianist and spoken voice, and **The Living Sea** for flute, electronics, and film, commissioned by Claire Chase, flutist, International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE) with IMAX filmmaker Greg MacGillivray for Laguna Beach Music Festival and premiered last January.

– Note by the composer

PAMELA MADSEN is acclaimed internationally as a composer, performer, and scholar. Through her compositions, interactive opera/installations, writings, collaborative projects, collected archives of works by women in electronic music, teaching, performances, and organization of events, she has created a body of work with a profound breadth of vision. With a Ph.D. in Composition from University of California, San Diego, with Brian Ferneyhough, doctoral studies in Music Theory from Yale University, and post-doctoral studies in Music Technology at IRCAM, Paris, Madsen has been honored with awards, grants, residencies, and concerts internationally. She works collaboratively to create new works that challenge performers beyond their current technical, musical, and personal limitations. To engage in this experience requires focus, concentrated musicianship, strong improvisational skills, and willingness to reflect in the moment and engage with technology, which are crucial elements of Madsen's work. According to Mark Swed of the Los Angeles Times, Madsen's work (for the string quartet *Ethel*) proved a "gripping essay of powerfully thrusting, thickly scored micro-tones."

Her large scale operas/music dramas for various ensembles, voices and electronics have been commissioned and premiered by such ensembles as: Zeitgeist, *Ethel*, SONOR, New York New Music Ensemble, California E.A.R. Unit, and the Arditti String Quartet. She has been an invited guest composer and researcher at major centers for contemporary music throughout the United States and Europe, namely BIMHUIS, Gaudeamus, Amsterdam, Sparkfest, IAWM International Congress, Miami, Acrosanti, June in Buffalo, Darmstadt Ferienkurse für Neue Musik, IRCAM, Paris, Acanthes Festival, Avignon-Ville-neuve, and Mills College. Her theoretical work focuses on issues of voice, women in new music, collaboration and the influence of technology on compositional thought, and is published in *Contemporary Music Forum* and *Musik Texte*, "Resonances" at IRCAM (Pompidou Center, Paris). A frequent guest lecturer, performer, and invited scholar at festivals and universities, she is organizer of the Annual Women in New Music Festival, International Electro-Acoustic Women's Listening Room Project, and Director of the New Music Ensemble at California State University, Fullerton, where she is an Associate Professor of Composition, Music Theory, and Music Technology.

Tibetan Dance Bright Sheng

Tibetan Dance was written in October 2000. The work was commissioned by Michigan State University and the Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C. for the Verdehr Trio, to whom the work is also dedicated.

The work is anchored on the last movement, the longest of the three. The first two movements are reminiscent, as if one is hearing songs from a distant memory. And the music becomes real in the last movement. Its material is based on the rhythm and melodic motive of a Tibetan folk dance from Qinghai, a Chinese province by the border of Tibet, where I lived during my teenage years."

— Note by the composer

BRIGHT SHENG, born in Shanghai, China, on December 6, 1955, started piano studies with his mother at the age of four. After graduating from high school during the Cultural Revolution he was one of the first students accepted by the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, where he earned his undergraduate degree in music composition. In 1982 he moved to New York, attending Queens College, CUNY, and Columbia University. Among his main teachers were Leonard Bernstein, Chou Wen-chung, Mario Davidovsky, George Perle, and Hugo Weisgall. He presently teaches composition at the University of Michigan.

Sheng received a number of prizes in China including Chamber Music Composition and Art Song Competition. In the United States he has received awards and prizes from the National Endowment for the Arts, American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, the Illinois Council on the Arts, The Naumburg

Foundation, The Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, the Guggenheim Foundation, and recently became the recipient of the MacArthur Award.

His music has been performed to great critical response by major ensembles and soloists around the world. Sheng has received commissions and performances of his works from the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony, the Houston Symphony, the Seattle Symphony, Tanglewood Music Center, the Shanghai Symphony, Orchestra sinfonica dell'Accademia Nazionale de Santa Cecilia, the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society, and from musicians including Leonard Bernstein, Peter Serkin, Yo-Yo Ma, Emanuel Ax, Cho-Liang Lin, Gerard Schwarz, David Zinman, John Oliver, Kenneth Jean, Jahja Ling, and Hugh Wolff, among others.

Dancing Helix Rituals Augusta Read Thomas

Commissioned by the Verdehr Trio and Michigan State University and dedicated with admiration to the Verdehr Trio, **Dancing Helix Rituals** was composed in 2006 and premiered by the Trio on October 21 at the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C.

Although I feel this music stands fully on its own as art music, this composition could be performed along with dancers. The early Stravinsky ballets are works I hold in great reverence, have studied, love, follow, etc., and as a result, I tend to hear and feel all of my music, in particular my orchestral works, as music suitable for dance. As I compose, I sing, dance, move, and conduct at my drafting table. The process is visceral. My ears and mind are both analytical as well as intuitive and I "feel" and "hear" every note and rhythm and color clearly (I hope you can sense that precision.).

This is music composed with the whole ear and whole body, not a cerebral, overly analytical exercise in pushing twelve-tone rows – or spectra – or re-arranged quotes of borrowed ethnic phrases – around a computer screen, for instance! There is a highly refined logic to every nuance which stems from the sound, in context, on its own terms. The sounds are varied, colorful, crosscut, unexpected, and yet hopefully sound inevitable in the way that a jazz improvisation sounds spontaneous and unpreventable.

This eight-minute trio was inspired by the generosity of spirit, energy, and dedication of the Verdehr Trio. The score is marked with words including passionate, bright, driving, with flair and ritualistic energy, clock-like and mechanical, scurrying and playful, majestic and stately, funky, syncopated, jazzy, colorful, fanfare-like, romp-like, light, and bouncy. It required a great deal of energy to compose this piece because it is basically eight minutes of fast music (lots of notes! and no "Largo" chorales.). And it requires the same force of the virtuoso players today, to which I offer my heartfelt gratitude."

– Note by the composer

AUGUSTA READ THOMAS, born in 1964 in New York, was the Composer-in-Residence from 1997 through 2006 with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for whom she composed nine works. She taught composition at Tanglewood during the summers of 2003, 2004, and 2005 and was an associate professor of composition at the Eastman School of Music (1993-2001) and the Wyatt Endowed Professor of Music at Northwestern University (2001-2006). She currently is composing full-time. In 2007 her **Astral Canticle** was one of the two finalists for the Pulitzer Prize in Music.

G. Schirmer, Inc. is the exclusive publisher of Thomas' music, and her discography includes thirty-six commercially recorded CDs. Please visit www.augustareadthomas.com. Her music has been conducted by Barenboim, Sir Andrew Davis, Rostropovich, Boulez, Ozawa, Salonen, Robertson, Eschenbach, Alsop, Maazel, Knussen, Slatkin, Nelson, Stenz, Kahane, Boreyko, Lintu, and Honeck.

Augusta Read Thomas has received prizes and awards from the Siemens Foundation in Munich, ASCAP, BMI, the National Endowment for the Arts

(1994, 1992, 1988), the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters (2001, 1994, 1989), the American Academy of Arts and Letters lifetime achievement award (2001), the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the Koussevitzky Foundation, and the New York Foundation for the Arts.

I Got Variations George Gershwin, Ira Gershwin,
William David Brohn

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I Got Variations is just that. George Gershwin first composed the song ***I Got Rhythm*** (to his brother Ira's lyrics) in 1930 for the Broadway show ***Girl Crazy***. In 1934 he composed a set of variations on the song for piano and orchestra, which was first performed on a radio broadcast with George playing the piano. During the broadcast he also spoke about the piece, and this fascinating archival record is available commercially today. The Broadway arranger William David Brohn has written a short set of his own variations, which directly follow the introduction, and statement of them from the original Gershwin. He re-visits the Gershwin piece briefly in the Coda. This piece results from a commission by the Verdehr Trio.

– Note by William David Brohn

WILLIAM DAVID BROHN (A.B. Mus., 1955) received the Tony Award in 1998 for best orchestrations for the Broadway hit ***Ragtime***. He is heard globally for his work on ***Miss Saigon***, ***The Secret Garden***, ***Show Boat***, ***Crazy for You***, ***Carousel***, and ***Oliver!*** His adaptation of Prokofiev's ***Alexander Nevsky*** is played frequently by symphony orchestras. He has provided arrangements for Marilyn Horne, James Galway, Plácido Domingo, and Joshua Bell on CD and in concert.

Suite Alexander Arutiunian

The ***Suite*** for violin, clarinet, and piano was commissioned by the Verdehr Trio and composed in 1992. One notes the vivid Armenian character of the music which is always present in Arutiunian's style. The opening phrases of the Introduction, marked *Lento*, create tension with dark intonations in the low registers of the piano in combination with the violin. Though emotionally tense, the prevailing mood in this movement is lyrical. The Scherzo is a graceful fugato. Next follows the Dialog for violin and clarinet – a short intermezzo between the Scherzo and Finale. The Dialog ends with a transition into the Finale. This movement contains the elements of Armenian dance rhythms with their capricious pulse and unexpected irregularities in a freely improvised melodic style.

– Note by the composer

ALEXANDER ARUTIUNIAN was born in 1920 in Erevan, Armenia (USSR) and is one of the best known and highly esteemed composers of the former Soviet Union. He studied composition and piano at the Armenian Conservatory and then perfected his skills with Genrik Litinsky in Moscow (1946-48). He is presently head of the composition department at Erevan State Conservatory.

Arutiunian's works have won many prizes both nationally and internationally and are performed frequently throughout the world. Perhaps best known for the trumpet concerto, his total output includes operas, cantatas, symphonic, and chamber works.



BIOGRAPHIES

An acknowledged leader in the field of new music, the VERDEHR TRIO has concentrated for over thirty-five years on molding and defining the personality of the violin-clarinet-piano trio. The Trio has created a large repertoire by commissioning over 200 new works from some of the world's most prominent and exciting composers – known and unknown, young and old, from this country and abroad.

The Verdehr Trio has performed throughout the world – in seventeen European countries, the former Soviet Union, and in South and Central America, as well as in Asia, Australia and in all fifty of the United States. Among major concert halls where the Trio has appeared are the Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, the Library of Congress, Vienna's Brahmsaal, the Sydney Opera House, London's Wigmore Hall, Auditorio de Madrid, IRCAM Centre in Paris, the Dvořák Hall in Prague, and Leningrad's Philharmonic Chamber Hall. The Trio has also played at various international festivals – the Spoleto Festival, Prague Spring Festival, the Vienna Spring Festival, the Warsaw Autumn Festival, and the Grand Teton Music Festival. The Trio has received a Creative Programming Award from Chamber Music America.

To complement its commissioning efforts, the Verdehr Trio has embarked upon a project of making CD recordings of the new works created for the Trio: 18 Volumes in **The Making of a Medium CD Series** on Crystal Records. A second parallel project is **The Making of a Medium Video Series**, consisting of ten half-hour programs with interviews and discussions by both composers and performers as well as a complete performance of each work. The third project, **The Making of a Medium Music Publishing Series**, has been inaugurated in cooperation with the Michigan State University Press to help disseminate the repertoire as well as information about the trio's CD recordings and videos (www.msu.edu/unit/msupress).

The Verdehr Trio is in residence at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan. An article about the Trio appears in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.

WALTER VERDEHR was born in Gottschee, Yugoslavia, and received his first violin instruction at the Conservatory of Music in Graz, Austria. A student at the Juilliard School, he was the first violinist to receive the doctorate there, and as a Fulbright Scholar, he studied at the Vienna Academy of Music. He has taught on the International Congress of Strings faculty and at Michigan State University where he is Professor of Music. He has made numerous appearances as soloist with orchestras (Houston Symphony, orchestras in Michigan, New York, Oklahoma, Wisconsin, California, Czechoslovakia, and Turkey) and in solo and chamber music recitals in the United States and Europe. The London Times wrote that "his performance was sweeping and vigorous." From the Vienna Express: "he is a perfect violinist with beautiful blossoming tone and noble musicality." He has served on juries for the Naumberg and Prague Spring International violin competitions and has made solo recordings for Golden Crest Records and NET-TV. He recently was awarded the Distinguished Faculty Award by the Arts and Letters College of Michigan State University. His students teach in universities and perform in orchestras throughout the U.S. and abroad. He performs on the "ex-Stephens/Verdehr" Stradivarius of 1690.

ELSA LUDEWIG-VERDEHR studied at the Oberlin Conservatory and at the Eastman School where she received a Performer's Certificate and the Doctor of Musical Arts degree. She has performed, lectured, and given master classes at numerous National and International Clarinet Congresses, and for several years was a participant in the Marlboro Music Festivals and touring groups. She has appeared frequently in the U.S., Canada, and abroad as a recitalist, clinician, and soloist with orchestras and as principal clarinetist of the Grand Teton Festival Orchestra. As a member of the Richards Wind Quintet, she played in more than half of the states in the U.S., in Canada, and at the White House. She was recently awarded a Distinguished Faculty Professorship at Michigan State University and her students occupy numerous university and orchestral positions

throughout the U.S. and abroad. She has solo recordings on the Grenadilla and Mark labels. Her playing has been called "distinguished and musical" by the New York Times. The Boston Globe noted her "musical tone and elegant sense of phrasing" while the Chicago Tribune wrote of her "virtuosity of a most compelling sort." She recently was awarded the 2007 Lifetime Achievement Award and honorary membership in the International Clarinet Society for her "life-time achievements as a performer and teacher."

SILVIA ROEDERER was born in Argentina, but her musical training began in the U.S. After graduating from the Eastman School with high honors, she completed her doctorate degree as a student of John Perry at the University of Southern California. A winner of several important competitions, including the Joanna Hodges International Piano Competition, she has also appeared as soloist with the Denver Symphony Orchestra and the Jacksonville (Florida) Symphony Orchestra. Her Los Angeles debut was an acclaimed recital at the prestigious Ambassador Auditorium, where her "control, introspective poise, and elegantly pointed phrases" drew special praise from the Los Angeles Times. She recently performed for the Myra Hess Series in Chicago. As a chamber musician, she has appeared in mainland China and Hong Kong, in Austria, London, Paris, Warsaw, Moscow, and at New York's Carnegie Hall. Currently Professor of Music at Western Michigan University, she lives in Kalamazoo with her husband and three children.

RECORDINGS BY THE VERDEHR TRIO

The Making of a Medium All on Crystal Records.

Vol. 1: Works of Mozart, Hovhaness, Frescobaldi, Pasatieri, and Bartók, CD 741

Vol. 2: Works of Vanhal, Rorem, David, Musgrave, and Liszt, CD 742

Vol. 3: Works of Averitt, Currier, and Schuller, CD 743

Vol. 4: Works of Husa, Freund, Niblock, and Dickinson, CD 744

Vol. 5: Works of Arutiunian, Schickele, and Sculthorpe, CD 745

Vol. 6: Works of Diamond, Corigliano, and Sculthorpe, CD 746

Vol. 7: Works of James Niblock written for the Verdehr Trio, CD 747

Vol. 8: Triple Concertos of Skrowaczewski, Sarasate-David, and David: Sinfonia Concertante, CD 748

Vol. 9: Triple Concertos of David Ott and William Wallace, CD 749

Vol. 10: Works of Beethoven, Bruch, Larsen, Tchaikovsky, Druckman, and Bolcom, CD 940

Vol. 11: Works of Gian Carlo Menotti, Constantinides, Bruch, and Deak, CD 941

Vol. 12: Works of Chihara, Diamond, Satterwhite, Biggs, Erb, and Kramer, CD 942

Vol. 13: American Music II: Works of Tower, S. Currier, Biggs, Brohn, Hoag, and Welcher, CD 943

Vol. 14: Austrian Music: Works of von Einem, Erod, and David, CD 944

Vol. 15: Double Concertos for Violin and Clarinet by Wallace, Chihara, Niblock, and Constantinides, CD 945

Vol. 16: International I: Works of Chatman, Higdon, Rihm, Sheng, and Wolfgang, CD 946

Vol. 17: American Images, III: The Michigan Connection: Works of Smith, Ruggiero, Liptak, Black/Bolcom, Mann and Hartway, CD 947

Vol. 18: Music from Down Under: Works of Sculthorpe, Mills, Conyngham, Knehans, and Marshall, CD 948

To be released in 2010:

Vol. 19: American Images IV. Works of Brouwer, Wallace, Hoiby, Puts, and Thomas.

Vol. 20: American Images IV. Works of Sierra, Lorenz, Wolfgang, Sowash, and Freund.

OTHER RECORDINGS BY THE VERDEHR TRIO

LP Works by Jere Hutcheson and Thomas Christian David, S644, Crystal Records

Works by Joseph Haydn and Karel Husa, S648, Crystal Records

Works by Don Freund and Thomas Christian David (Duo),

LP I 122 Stereo, Leonarda Records

Triple Concerto, Thomas Christian David, Tonkünstler Orchestra, Amadeo, 423-733-1

CD Works by Bassett, Bruch, Hoag, and Hoover, LE 326, Leonarda Records

Works by Ida Gotkovsky, Musique de Chambre, CC 890680, Corélia

Music from France: Works of Blasius, Jolas, Manoury, Milhaud, Poulenc, and Saint-Saëns Dux 0525