



A program of works by
ANTHONY BRANDT
TOSHI ICHIYANAGI
RICHARD LAVENDA
and
AUGUSTA READ THOMAS

Thursday, November 4, 2010
8:00 p.m.
Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall

Celebrating 1975-2010
35 *Years*

THE SHEPHERD SCHOOL OF MUSIC RICE UNIVERSITY

PROGRAM

Nano Symphony (2010)

Anthony Brandt

(b. 1961)

- I. Tuning
- II. Overture
- III. Modern
- IV. Piano Concerto I
- V. Piano Concerto II
- VI. Piano Concerto III
- VII. Intermission
- VIII. Symphony I
- IX. Symphony II
- X. Symphony III (Scherzo)
- XI. Symphony IV (Finale)
- XII. Encore

Henry Williford, flute
Kevin Pearl, oboe
Michael Webster, clarinet
Max Pipinich, bassoon
Nicholas Hartman, horn
Rebecca Hook, percussion
Jeewon Lee, piano
Eric Siu, violin
Myoung Ji Jang, violin
Kathleen Magill, viola
Lachezar Kostov, cello
Karl Blench, conductor

Trio Webster (2008)

Toshi Ichiyonagi

(b. 1933)

The Webster Trio
Leone Buyse, flute
Michael Webster, clarinet
Robert Moeling, piano

What He Said (2010) *

Richard Lavenda

(b. 1955)

Benjamin Kamins, bassoon
David Kirk, tuba
Desmond Hoebig, cello
Timothy Pitts, double bass

* Richard Lavenda is a recipient of an Individual Artist Grant Award. This grant is funded by the City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance.

Traces (2006; revised 2010)

Augusta Read Thomas

(b. 1964)

I. *Reverie*

*Like Robert Schumann (The Poet Speaks)
crossed with George Crumb 1'30"*

II. *Caprice*

*Like Scarlatti's Baroque Ornamentation
crossed with Art Tatum 2'30"*

III. *Tango*

Like Astor Piazzola crossed with John Coltrane 3'

IV. *Impromptu*

Like Chopin crossed with Thelonious Monk 5'30"

V. *Toccata*

Like J.S. Bach crossed with BeBop 2'30"

Makiko Hirata, solo piano

PROGRAM NOTES

Nano Symphony Anthony Brandt

The Nano Symphony was commissioned by the Richard E. Smalley Institute for Nanoscale Science in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the discovery of the Buckyball. To celebrate Smalley's vision of "small is big," the work offers a complete symphonic concert in a little about six minutes: there is a tuning section, overture, modern work, piano concerto, intermission, symphony in four movements, and encore. Some movements, such as the Symphony's first and third movements, are complete miniatures of their "life-size" counterparts; others are merely "brush-strokes." The Modern movement – the most nano of them all – consists of molecules of all of the others. The Encore is a swift synopsis of everything that has come before.

– Note by the composer

Anthony Brandt is currently Associate Professor of Music Theory and Composition at The Shepherd School of Music.

Trio Webster Toshi Ichianagi

Born in Kobe, Japan, in 1933, three years after Toru Takemitsu, Toshi Ichianagi studied composition with Kishio Hirao and John Cage, and piano with Chieko Hara and Beveridge Webster, father of Michael Webster. After attending the Juilliard School of Music and the New School for Social Research in New York between 1954 and 1960, he returned to Japan in 1961 and introduced many new musical concepts, exerting a strong influence on the direction of Japanese contemporary music. After Takemitsu's death in 1996, Ichianagi has been largely viewed as Japan's most important living composer.

Immensely prolific, Ichiyangi has composed in most genres of music: opera, orchestral, chamber, and instrumental. Many of his compositions have been performed throughout the world, especially by the Tokyo International Music Ensemble, an organization of which he has served as Artistic Director. Since his return to Japan, he has received numerous awards including the prestigious Nakajima Kenzo Award (1984), the Grand Prix of Kyoto Music Award (1989), and the Otaka Prize (four times). He received the Suntory Award in 2001 and in 2008 was awarded the title "Person of Cultural Merit," Japan's equivalent to the Kennedy Center Awards.

After attending a performance in Tokyo by the Webster Trio Japan (Leone Buysse and Michael Webster with pianist Chizuko Sawa), Ichiyangi accepted a commission from them to write a one-movement work. In honor of the centennial of the birth of Beveridge Webster, Ichiyangi completed the work in 2008 and named it **Trio Webster** after his former teacher. It was premiered at Bunka Kaikan Hall in Tokyo in March of 2009 and received its western hemisphere premiere at ClarinetFest 2010 in Austin, Texas.

Known as a member of the avant-garde, Ichiyangi writes in a broad palette of colors and styles. **Trio Webster** has certain avant-garde leanings, but also contains impressionistic and tonal facets as well. It is written in one movement with two sections. The music begins slowly with moods ranging from thoughtful to dramatic. The second section is driven by fast odd meters and perfect fourths culminating in a huge climax.

— Note by Michael Webster

Michael Webster is Professor of Clarinet at The Shepherd School of Music and Artistic Director of the Houston Youth Symphony.

What He Said Richard Lavenda

What He Said has its unusual, even compositionally challenging, instrumentation because it was written for four specific individuals: Benjamin Kamins, David Kirk, Desmond Hoebig, and Timothy Pitts. When Ben first suggested it to me, I thought he was kidding, but I quickly became intrigued by the possibilities and for the opportunity to work with these players. In addition to each being an extraordinary musician, they are long-standing friends and colleagues of each other, and of mine. Writing for them was a great pleasure, and thinking of ways for them to express their personalities, in terms both musical and not, allowed me to customize the piece for them. As the title suggests, there is much imitation and interaction, and while the piece has many rather broad theatrical elements, and perhaps some humor as well, I hope that some of the joy these friends have in playing together is also apparent.

— Note by the composer

Richard Lavenda is Professor of Music Theory and Composition, Chair of the Music Theory and Composition Department, and Director of Graduate Studies at The Shepherd School of Music.

Traces Augusta Read Thomas

Traces for solo piano, composed in 2006, was commissioned by the Montalvo Festival for Lang Lang. The world premiere took place on January 26, 2009, in Baltimore, on the Evolution Contemporary Music Series (at An Die Musik Live) with pianist Amy Briggs.

The idea was to take the distant perfumes of other musical idioms (and it should be noted that there are no quotes of music by other composers in *Traces*) and to imagine what it would be like to cross-fertilize them. What would J.S. Bach crossed with bebop sound like? How would Scarlatti's Baroque ornamentation crossed with Art Tatum sound? These works took me countless months to compose. They were fun, challenging, and exhilarating to create. I composed them at a piano, note by note, playing the music at a super slow tempo over and over again.

Traces is dedicated to Amy Briggs. "Impromptu" is an expansion of my *Piano Etude No. 6*.

Although my music is highly notated, precise, carefully structured, thoughtfully proportioned, and so forth, and although the pianist is playing from the very specific text, I like my music to have the feeling that it is organically being self-propelled – on the spot, as if we listeners, the audience, are overhearing a "captured improvisation."

I like my music to be played so that the "inner-life" of the different rhythmic syntaxes is specific, with characterized phrasing of the colors and harmonies, etc. – keeping it ultra alive – such that it always sounds spontaneous. For their sublime precision and technical mastery, I deeply thank pianists who play my notations in this way. My works are organic and, at every level, concerned with transformations and connections.

Augusta Read Thomas is an award-winning American composer. She is currently the MUSICALIVE Composer-in-Residence with the New Haven Symphony in New Haven, Connecticut.

UPCOMING SYZYGY CONCERT

Thursday, January 27

Yehudi Wyner, guest composer

PROGRAM

Yehudi Wyner - Works including *Trio 2009* (2009)

Gunther Schuller - *Bass Quartet* (1947)

Arthur Gottschalk - *Sonata for Horn and Piano* (2006)

Performers include Michael Webster, clarinet; Norman Fischer, cello;

William VerMeulen, horn; Timothy Pitts, double bass;

Brian Connelly, piano; and students of the Shepherd School.

8:00 p.m., Duncan Recital Hall

Free admission