

Cascadia Composers
present

Winter Light

New Music by Oregon Composers

Saturday, 3pm, February 26th, 2011
Sherman-Clay Moes Piano
131 NW 13th Avenue, Portland

- P R O G R A M -

Jazz Sonata for Soprano Sax and Piano

Art Resnick

Second Movement: Waltz

Art Resnick, piano
Blake Lyman - sax

- world premiere -

I fell in love with the soprano saxophone the very the first time I heard John Coltrane play it. I wrote a piece shortly after, that I played with a great saxophonist with whom I was working at the time (late 70's) and this later became the first movement of a sonata.

The Waltz is the second movement of that sonata which is now in 4 movements. It contains characteristics of the entire sonata such as compound rhythms including 5:3, 4:3 etc (the first movement is predominantly in 5/4 as is the final movement). 5 seems to be an important number throughout. Also while not being atonal, it does not hold to a harmonic system but the underlying harmony which is improvised upon is created by common tones of the original melody. The entire piece will be performed in a concert of jazz and classical compositions performed and written by Art to be scheduled later in this year.

Epigraph

Jeff Winslow

Rebecca Stuhlbarg, mezzo soprano
Jeff Winslow, piano

On December 26th, 2004, one of the most powerful earthquakes in recorded history struck in the Indian Ocean just west of the island of Sumatra. The resulting tsunami extinguished the lives of almost a quarter of a million human beings. A few days afterwards, workers for Habitat for

Humanity, one of the many organizations contributing to the relief efforts, came across the following, written on the wall of a ruined building on Sumatra:

"As you were playing in the sea without a care, you were taken.
We did not know that you had come into this world
to be part of a tsunami.
Waves, why have you taken away my children?"

[Reported in the March 2005 issue of Habitat World, a publication of Habitat for Humanity.]

In the song, a bereaved mother paces the beach on a typically calm, sunny tropical day, while the ocean laps lazily nearby. It gives no sign, betrays no concern over the horror it unleashed on her people just a few days before, while she pours out her grief. Why should it? The ocean is no more responsible for its reaction to the violent sundering of hundreds of miles of seabed than bathwater is responsible for being splashed on the floor by an overactive child. Yet, in the wake of her desperate demand, something changes... not quite a voice, maybe not even a sound, but a feeling of sympathy, even sorrow, seems to rise out of the depths from a long way away.

Family Portrait, Five Vignettes for Piano

Greg Steinke

Cary Lewis, piano

Family Portrait for Piano was written as a remembrance of my family in 1976-78. It is dedicated to and was presented as a present to my in-laws, Carl and Rose Larsen. It is built around two short pieces originally written as birth announcements for my two sons, Carl and Kyle. Thus most of the musical materials for the other movements for "dad," "mom" and Clara, our dog at the time, are ultimately derived from Music for Carl Asa and Lullaby for Kyle Alban. Family Portrait was premiered in March of 1978 in Olympia, Washington by Diane DeMoulin, a piano student at the time at The Evergreen State College.

Changes, Three Songs

Carol Phillips

"Petitions" (based on John 8:1-11)

"Freedom" (based on Mark 5:24-34)

"The Journey Step" (based on Luke 15:11-32)

Carol Phillips - soprano, Jeff Winslow - piano

The poems were written specifically for me to set to music.

"Petitions"—The music starts awkwardly in 5/4, with self-righteousness pulling the sinner. The meter and tonality change throughout with various changes of thought.

"*Freedom*"—Fear being the opening thought in the poem, and the last word of each line, the musical representation of the word is used with the notes FEAB (as there is no note R, the B is the closest—stretch out the bottom part of B and it becomes an R) The vocal line is in the middle of the FEAR on G. It stays there, only sliding from flat to natural to sharp, confined by the fear. As the thought struggles and changes, tonality changes from confining or abrasive to greater freedom and harmony. At the end, when there is no fear, the pitch still ends on G, but with freedom, and that it represents always being held in the presence of Good.

"*The Journey Step*"—This work opens with a lullaby, with the youngest son growing up. With a desire to leave, the tonality changes with a sense of displacement. The father welcomes the son with open arms, and major tonality. When the oldest brother is mentioned, his theme is stated in the same manner as that of the younger son—in a major tonality, and a childlike state of thought. Anger and confusion are stated with dissonance and percussiveness. The father assures the older son that he lacks no good, and the younger brother can be welcomed without resentment. Introducing the final verse, the father's musical themes of reassures to each are woven together, and then the musical themes of the two brothers are used in counterpoint to bring together a harmonious resolution.

Five Virtues

Elizabeth Blachly-Dyson

Jim Norman, flute
John Hubbard, cello
Cary Lewis, piano

The virtuousness of Five Virtues should be taken with a grain of salt. "Playfulness" was written first. All of the movements are based on one chord progression that was devised to accompany the first whole-tone melody in "Playfulness". "Fortitude" is a sort of a sonata and the other movements are modified passacaglias.

- I N T E R M I S S I O N -

Long Table of Contents, *for dance and fixed media*
Agnieszka Laska - choreography

Dan Senn

Agnieszka Laska Dancers - Allegra Carlson, Cady Cox,
Courtney Coughlin, Heidi Nelson, Nick Cavanaugh,
Keyon Gaskin

- work-in-progress -

The music is comprised of recorded sounds of the composer performing his invented instruments, and then an old violin. None of the sounds have been manipulated using traditional music concrete techniques, meaning the piece could be performed live. DS

The Long Table... experiment started as a series of etudes for dancers exploring their sense of balance – both: physical and emotional - atop a 12x3-foot table found in ALD's Portland rehearsal space, the Polish Hall. The dancers developed choreographic material into a series of solos and duets which follow the opening quartet.

The dance was initially done in silence and after the structure was developed the composer stepped in. This is opposite my typical method, where I first analyze the music and then create the movement, usually, strictly following the score. We're still developing the piece and hoping to premiere the complete work this summer. I personally hope this experiment will be the first step toward a more tangible collaboration between Cascadia Composers and local choreographers – two pools of talent with lots to offer Portland lovers of fine performing arts.

Special thanks to Barry Cox, Kyle Fleming and Carl King for donating material, labor and time in constructing this replica of the Polish Hall table, a portable version, and to the Polish Hall for use of the original and to the Polish Library Building Association for their ongoing support of ALD in donating rehearsal space. AL

Backyard Toccata, *for four hands*

Cynthia Stillman Gerdes

Mary Kogen and Harold Gray - piano

In early spring everything seems restless. Noisy birds defend territories. The breeze rattles the wind chimes. At the end a door shuts, an attempt to close out nature's confusion. Of course, it doesn't.

Alone On the Prairie

Jeff Winslow

Nancy Wood, soprano
Jeff Winslow, piano

An homage to Brahms, in the form of a remake of his well-known song "Feldeinsamkeit", in particular his gradual dissipation of the earth-solid tonal stability at the beginning of each verse. A wanderer lies down amid the waving grasses of the prairies, and becomes totally lost to the world, staring at the clouds passing in stately array overhead. The ecstasy of the last lines is that of a person who is not quite sane.

Translation by the composer (the original German follows):

Lying still and low in the tall green grass,
I send my gaze trav'ling away above.
Crickets incessantly creak and creak around me,
Heaven weaves the bluest spell around me.

Cloud after radiant cloud drifts along
Through all the blue, silent dream on dream...
And I imagine I have long been dead,
Blessed, and sail the Infinite among them.

Feldeinsamkeit (Hermann Allmers)

Ich ruhe still im hohen grünen Gras
Und sende lange meinen Blick nach oben,
Von Grillen rings umschwirrt ohn' Unterlaß,
Von Himmelbläue wundersam umwoben.

Die Schönen weißen Wolken zieh'n dahin
Durchs tiefe Blau, wie schöne stille Träume;
Mir ist, als ob ich längst gestorben bin,
Und ziehe selig mit durch ew'ge Räume.

Fly On (*Variations on a theme by Hendrix*)

Paul Safar

Paul Safar - piano

This piece was written while studying in the graduate program in music composition at the University of Oregon. I had just been exposed to the Frederic Rzewski piece "The People United Will Never be Defeated", a large scale, virtuosic, eclectic set of piano variations on a Chilean Folk Song (and political solidarity). Separately, I had always been enamored with Jimi Hendrix's song "Little Wing". I found it very delicate and charmingly simple. Its' short length and lack of solos made me feel that this could be the starting point for a new piece. "Fly On" uses the song's basic chord structure, its progression presented in reverse order, as well as a few key melodic pitches as the material upon which to build. Each variation's ending is meant to flow into the next. The effect, I hope is something almost akin to a free improvisation although the entire piece is written out note for note. This piece was performed originally at the Seventh Species concert in winter 1996 in Eugene. It has been edited slightly since that time.

Persuasive Fifths, for 2 *i-pads* Bonnie Miksch and Christopher Penrose
- first performance -

Persuasive Fifths is an improvisation using Synthronica, a synthesizer for i-pad created by Christopher Penrose. The piece uses Pythagorean tuning, which we feel helps the fifths to be more persuasive.