

The School of Music  
presents the 87th program of the 1989-90 season

C67  
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## The Contemporary Group

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William O. Smith

Directors

Stuart Dempster

Celebrates

### *Seattle Spring*



Featuring

Numerous Faculty,  
Friends, and Students

Performing Works By

Rob Duisberg  
Ellen Taaffe Zwilich  
Giacinto Scelsi  
Peter Winkler  
R. Murray Schafer

April 30, 1990  
8:00 PM, Meany Theater



School  
of  
Music  
University  
of  
Washington

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# Program

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CASS 11643A

102 Linda's Sonata for Violin and Piano (1989) (16:57) ... ROB DUISBERG (b. 1953)

*Moderate**Slow**Fast*

Linda Melsted, violin

Joel Salzman, piano

3 Intrada for Chamber Group (1983) (4:54) ... ELLEN TAAFFE ZWILICH (b. 1939)

Pamela Ryker, flute          Beverly Setzer, clarinet  
Anne Marie Scotto, piano      Jonathan Graber, violin  
Joseph Bichsel, cello  
Ciro Scotto, conductor

The Intrada and other works were recently performed  
by tonight's ensemble at the  
University of Oregon School of Music in Eugene.

4 H6 — Five Melodies for Solo Voice (1960) (15:12) ... GIACINTO SCLESI (b. 1905)

Emilie Berendsen, voice

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*Intermission* 

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ASS 11643B

5 Yaa Amponsah for Violin and Piano (1988) (10:13) PETER WINKLER (b. 1943)  
A Fantasy on a Ghanaian Popular Song

Dorthea Cook, violin

Peter Winkler, piano

6 Arcana for Voice and Chamber Ensemble (1973) (19:03) R. MURRAY SCHAFFER (b. 1933)

- 1 I HAVE BECOME AN ENCHANTRESS (ENCHANTER)
- 2 THE POISON OF THE SERPENT SPREADS THROUGHOUT MY BODY
- 3 I PURIFY MY GOD WITH MY TONGUE
- 4 I SEARCH FOR THE FORMULA OF SIX WORDS
- 5 I HAVE CLOSED THE PASSAGE OF THE LIPS AND OPENED THE SECRET WAY
- 6 ONE OF US IS A PHANTOM. I DO NOT KNOW WHICH OF US IS A PHANTOM
- 7 YOU WILL EAT NO OPIUM TONIGHT
- 8 QUESTIONS FOR MIDNIGHT
- 9 I AM DREAMING THE WORLD AWAY TO ESCAPE THE FOUR DIMENSIONS
- 10 THE MORE THE SEEKERS, THE FEWER THE FINDERS
- 11 WHOMSOEVER DECIPHERS THE LABYRINTH WILL BE MY FRIEND
- 12 WHEN THE LABYRINTH IS DECIPHERED IT WILL DISAPPEAR
- 13 MANY SACRED FIRES ARE PROFANE
- 14 HE COMES WITH A SWORD AND DISMEMBERS ME ACCORDING TO THE LAWS OF HARMONY. HIS EYES ARE BLOOD. HE TEARS MY FLESH WITH HIS TEETH. I AM TRANSFIGURED

Emilie Berendsen, voice

Twila McDonell, flute & piccolo  
Dennis Schreffler, trumpet  
Jonathan Graber, violin  
Todd Gowers, contrabass  
Dwight Beckmeyer, piano & organ

Sue Kelleher, clarinet & alto saxophone  
Andrew Hillaker, trombone  
Nora Engrebretsen, cello  
Pamela Vokolek, harp  
Bryan Bogue, percussion

Stuart Dempster, conductor

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We are honored to have in the audience tonight R. Murray Schaffer, one of Canada's leading composers and *Seattle Spring* artist in residence.

• **Robert Duisberg**

Robert Duisberg, born in 1953 to an unmusical family, received his DMA in composition in 1980 with William Bergsma here at the UW. His chamber and orchestral music has been performed nationally, and his work in musical theater, including two musicals, reviews and a chamber opera, have been produced locally at ACT, Civic Light Opera and the Village Theater. He is currently on the School of Music faculty.

This sonata was composed for the performer, Linda Melsted. It is in three movements; moderate, slow and fast. It is conceived as homage, or a paen to the late work of Bela Bartok. — *Rob Duisberg*

• **Ellen Taaffe Zwilich**

Ellen Taaffe Zwilich was born April 30, 1939 in Miami, Florida. She studied at Florida State University and at the Juilliard School, where her major teachers were Roger Sessions and Elliott Carter. Ms. Zwilich received the 1983 Pulitzer Prize in Music for her **Symphony No. 1**.

The music of Ellen Taaffe Zwilich has found a wide audience because of the connections it makes — connections with music's past and with its ongoing development, connections with her own previous work, connections with the expressive needs of the performers, connections with the audience, and connections with her own life. Her music comes in many shapes and sizes, and while a number of her pieces share certain structural concerns, the real unifying factors are a certain tone of discourse, a belief that music must appeal to performers before it can appeal to audiences, and a sense of courtesy toward the listener. **Intrada** was commissioned by the Da Capo Chamber Players. — *Ciro Scotto*

• **Giacinto Scelsi**

Giacinto Scelsi, composer and poet, is an Italian nobleman living in Rome. His compositions, published by G. Schirmer and Editions Salabert, include works for orchestra, chorus, chamber ensembles, solo instruments, and voice, and have been performed in concerts and festivals in the United States and Europe. Many of his works have been recorded and the 1983 issue of "Musik-Konzepte" (Nr. 31) was devoted to his work. His poetry collections include **Le polds net** (1949), **L'archipel nocturne** (1954), and **La conscience aigue**, published by Guy Levis Mano in Paris.

Scelsi has written the following about himself:

8 January 1905  
of a son  
a medieval education  
an old castle in southern Italy  
London, marriage  
India  
Nepal  
concerts  
(works that have left traces in the cracks)  
bridges  
(conversations with tramps, borne down-stream)  
incombustible poems survive  
at Rome  
solitary life  
negation of that which makes man opaque  
something forgotten?

a naval officer declares the birth  
fencing chess Latin  
Vienna  
works on dodecaphony  
reception at Buckingham Palace  
Paris

— David Bloch

• Peter Winkler

*The man who spread the palm-wine style far afield was the Ghanaian guitarist, Kwame Asare, or "Sam" as he is usually known . . . It was Sam who composed the famous Highlife standard, Yaa Amponsah, a song about a beautiful and alluring "good-time girl", and a song which laid down the basis for hundreds of others. In many ways, Yaa Amponsah is to Highlife what the 12-bar blues is to Jazz.*

— Joan Collins

I first heard Yaa Amponsah when I participated in a memorable conference on popular music in Accra, Ghana, in the Summer of 1987. I expected to learn much about African musical life, but what I hadn't expected was the Ghanaian musicians' curiosity and eagerness to learn more about the music of my own culture. One of our hosts invited me to write my own version of Yaa Amponsah. As I began work on it, I realized

that the most important lesson I learned in confronting a musical culture so rich and yet so different from my own was to accept and embrace our cultural differences. The only honest way to pay tribute to the glorious music and generous nature of the friends I made in Ghana was to write in an idiom consistent with my own musical roots. I could never invent or perform polyrhythms as intricate as those of Ghanaian master drummers. So I developed the melody and chord-pattern of **Yaa Amponsah** in more "Euro-American" ways, spinning out long melodic lines, working with large patterns of harmonic tension, accumulation, and relaxation.

Having said all that, I must admit to a more personal but even more compelling reason for writing this piece. Immediately after returning from Ghana, I came to Port Townsend, Washington, to teach at a music camp. There I met and fell in love with a remarkable violinist, Dorothea Cook, who is now my wife. **Yaa Amponsah** is a love letter to her (the first notes are a pun on her nickname, "Deede") and one of the first fruits of our collaboration. Its shifting moods — by turns romantic, mischievous, playful, apprehensive, longing, fulfilled — mirror the first months of our life together.

— *Peter Winkler*

Peter Winkler is Associate Professor of Music at SUNY at Stony Brook. For 1989-91 he is on faculty exchange at The Evergreen State College. A composer and pianist, Winkler was fatally seduced by popular music while a graduate student at Princeton. Dorothea Cook, violinist, is well-known to Seattle audiences, having performed extensively in both classical and popular genres. Currently she appears with her husband, Peter Winkler, in the duo "Silken Rags", entertaining gatherings of all kinds with a mixture of classical, jazz, and unabashedly romantic music.

• **R. Murray Schafer**

**Arcana** derives its name from its text, which is in Middle Egyptian hieroglyphics, and was discovered near Memphis by the Arabian explorer Al Mamun at the beginning of the ninth century. The fragmentary text is remarkable because it bears little relationship to any other surviving Egyptian hieroglyphs of the period; but it seems to possess a religious significance and perhaps relates to the secret initiation ceremonies of the labyrinth conducted by the Egyptian priests. It was translated for the composer by Professor D. B. Redford of the Department of Near Eastern Studies, University of Toronto.

The compositional method was as follows: each phoneme of the text was given two notes within a range of two octaves, including a few quartertones. Thus each phonemic element always has the same note or notes associated with it. Often the singer sings one of these notes while the instruments play the other. The frequency with which each

phonemic recurs in the text thus gives the melodic line its character, even a sense of tonality. Motives result from frequently repeated digraphs and trigraphs. This helps to give the songs a melodic and harmonic unity which can be easily sensed, even if it cannot be followed analytically. The accompaniment is never free but forms "words" on its own; and in such places as where the singer sings texts like *I search for the formula of six words*, (Song 4), the instruments scurry about trying out various combinations of letters which may provide the formula the singer is seeking. In the song entitled *When the labyrinth is deciphered it will disappear*, (Song 12), the orchestra elucidates the compositional method by singing or speaking the phonemes and playing the appropriate notes simultaneously.

Arcana was commissioned as the test piece for the 1973 Montreal International Competition; which that year was for singers. The composer was asked deliberately to avoid setting a text in a contemporary language, which, it was felt, might give singers of particular nationalities an advantage over others.

— R. Murray Schafer

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### Upcoming Concerts

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**Baroque Ensemble;** May 2, 8:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium cancelled

**Faculty Recital;** Arthur Grossman, bassoon; Toby Saks, cello; Carole Terry, harpsichord; May 8, 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium

**Keyboard Debut Series;** May 10, 8:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium

**Vanessa;** May 16 & 18, 8:00 PM; May 20, 3 PM, Meany Theater

**Carolyn Canfield Cole,** violin; May 18, 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium

**University Singers;** May 21, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater

**Percussion Ensemble;** May 22, 8:00 PM, Meany Studio Theater

**Madrigal Singers;** May 22, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater

**Wind Ensemble and Symphonic Band;** May 23, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater

**Jazz Combos;** May 24, 8:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium

**Soni Ventorum Wind Quintet;** May 25, 8:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium

**French and German Baroque Concert;** May 29, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater

**Studio Jazz Ensemble;** May 30, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater