The School of Music presents the 72nd program of the 1990-91 season

The Contemporary Group

William O. Smith  Directors  Stuart Dempster

Celebrates

"Seattle Spring"

Featuring
Stuart Dempster
[25 years of commissioning]

Works By
Robert Erickson
Ursula Mamlock
Susan Botti
Luciano Berio
Harvey Sollberger
Donald Martino

Monday, March 11, 1991
8:00 PM, Meany Theater
Program

Ricercare #5 for Trombones (1966) (12:00) ... ROBERT ERICKSON (b. 1917)

[Commissioned by Stuart Dempster]

Stuart Dempster, soloist
Jay Bulen, Steve Wampler, tenor-bass trombone
Cauhtemoc Escobedo, alto trombone
Chad Kirby, contra-bass trombone

Festive Sounds: A Concertino (5' 13) ... URSULA MAMLOCK for Wind Quintet (1978)

The Soni Ventorum

Felix Skowronek, flute
Laila Storch, oboe
William McColl, clarinet
David Kappy, horn
Arthur Grossman, bassoon

Waltz for Brass Quintet (1990) (6' 24) ... SUSAN BOTTI (b. 1962)

Michael Kane, Matt Armstrong, trumpets
Tony Miller, horn; Dan Wolch, trombone
Craig White, tuba

Intermission

Sequenza V for Trombone Solo (1966) (4' 26) ... LUCIANO BERIO (b. 1925)

[Commissioned by Stuart Dempster]

Stuart Dempster, trombone

Grand Quartet for Flutes: (9' 21) ... HARVEY SOLLBERGER

In Memoriam Friedrich Kuhlau (1962)

Felix Skowronek
Antonia Cimino
Megan Lynden
Andrea Mogil

Notturno for Mixed Ensemble (1973) (17:06) ... DONALD MARTINO (b. 1931)

Pamela Butler Ryker, flute and alto flute
Joel Barbosa, clarinet and bass clarinet
Jonathan Graber, violin and viola; Joseph Bichsel, cello
Kevin Johnson, piano; Daniel Oie, percussion
Ciro Scotto, conductor
Program Notes

Ricercare à 5 for Trombones was commissioned by Stuart Dempster. It was composed in such a way that it could be performed either with five players or by having the soloist prerecord four of the parts, then perform with those parts on loudspeakers. The version performed this evening uses contrabass and alto trombones in addition to the usual tenor-bass trombone. In the spirit of the Baroque model the Ricercare à 5 is through-composed and characterized by imitation among the voices. The technical demands made on the trombonists are manifold and include simultaneous singing and playing; whistling, quarreling, and bellowing into the instrument; and the imitation of percussion sounds.

Erickson began his formal musical study at the Chicago Conservatory of Music. In 1936 he met Ernst Krenek with whom he studied first privately and then at Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota. Erickson subsequently taught at the San Francisco Conservatory for several years, after which he became a founding professor at the University of California at San Diego.

Festive Sounds is a continuous one-movement work of relative brevity and seemingly-serial construction, in which inversions and retrogrades contribute to a recognizable sense of form. Melodic interest is enhanced by the whimsical use of quarter-tone bends, and a series of constricting chorale blocks set against sinuous solo lines peppered with frenzied angular cadenzas for the bassoon, oboe, and flute in turn. The opening horn announcement serves also as the conclusion of the work, hammered in retrograde with all available forces.

Among Ursula Mamlok’s teachers were Giannini, Sessions, Shapey, Szell, Schuller, and Wolpe. She has received grants from the American Academy & Institute of Arts and Letters, Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund, NEA, Koussevitzky Music Foundation, and many others. In 1987 BMI presented to her the Commendation of Excellence “for long outstanding contribution to the world of concert music.”

Waltz performers receive three special instructions: #1: DANCE; #2: THINK CHAPLIN; #3: ALL KINDS OF HUMOR BUT NO SARCASTIC. “It is dedicated to my father who has played the trumpet and loves to waltz.”

Susan Botti, originally from Cleveland, received her Bachelor of Music at Berklee College of Music and her Masters from the Manhattan School of Music where she was awarded the Jon Woolley Merit Award for outstanding achievement in composition. She was the winner of the 1990 Marzena New Music Performance Competition and during the 1990 Seattle Spring festival she presented a solo voice recital. The recipient of various grants, she is currently active in New York as a freelance singer and composer.
Sequenza V was commissioned by Stuart Dempster and first performed by him in San Francisco on March 21, 1966. Berio is one of Italy's leading composers and is well known for several large orchestral works as well as the solo works with the Sequenza titles. Berio's own program note on the work is characteristically elusive as well as allusive:

"Behind Sequenza III and Sequenza V lurks the memory of Grock, the last great clown. Grock was my neighbor. He lived in a strange and complicated villa with small pagodas, streams, bridges, and willow trees. Many times, with my schoolmates, I climbed a high iron fence to steal oranges and tangerines from his garden. During my childhood the closeness, the excessive familiarity with his name and the indifference of the adults around me, prevented me from realizing his genius. It was only later, when I was perhaps eleven, that I saw him perform on the stage of Teatro Cavour in Porto Maurizio and understood him. Like everyone else in the audience I didn't know whether I should laugh or cry and wanted to do both. After that experience I stole no more oranges from his garden."

"My Grand Quartet is dedicated to the memory of the German-Danish flutist composer of the last century, Friedrich Kuhlau... The dedication of my quartet is my way of thanking the shade of Kuhlau for the pleasure his works have afforded me over the many years that I have played the flute." Contrary to popular belief, the pianist/composer Kuhlau did not play the flute at all. However, Kuhlau did have a natural intuition about writing for the flute. Grand Quartet explores textural possibilities using both traditional and unusual sounds. Improvisational in style, the various sections are marked by harmonic and textural ideas, rather than by clearly defined boundaries. A graduate of the University of Iowa and Columbia University, Harvey Sollberger has distinguished himself as a flutist-composer, and an interpreter of contemporary music. For many years a major figure in the New York music scene, he is presently director of the new music ensemble at Indiana University.

Notturno earned Donald Martino the Pulitzer Prize in 1974. Martino has provided the following information:

"Movement I is characterized by disjunct motions, i.e., dramatic contrast, while Movement III, which uses the same material loosely retrograded, is characterized by conjunction and attempts in the foreground to parallel the 'long line' that is ever present in the background.

"Movement II exploits both non-pitch percussion and non-pitch finger taps on the body, and col legno strokes on the tail-pieces, of the stringed instruments, as well as key-clicks for flute and clarinet. Here an effort is made to begin the movement with 'noise' and transform it into pitch (via key-clicks and piano stopped notes and pizzacato) and back again."
"If I were asked for a non-technical analysis of the work, I would quote music critic Michael Steinberg who, writing in the Boston Globe, described the work as ‘nocturnal theater of the soul.’ I am very pleased with that perception."

Donald Martino's composition teachers included (Ernst) Bacon, Sessions, Babbitt, and Dallapiccola. He has taught at Princeton and Yale, and has been a visiting lecturer at Harvard University. He has received numerous awards besides the Pulitzer noted above. Since 1969 he has been chair of the composition department at the New England Conservatory.

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Upcoming Concerts

Wind Ensemble and Symphonic Band; March 12, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater
Proconart; March 13, 8:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium
University Symphony and Combined Choruses; March 14, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater
Keyboard Debut Series; March 14, 8:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium
Pacific Northwest Band Festival; March 15 & 16, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater
Bruce Brubaker, pianist; March 15, 8:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium
Opera Workshop; March 18, 8:00 PM, Meany Studio Theater
Brechemin Scholars Concert; April 8, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater
UW Harp Ensemble; April 15, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater

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