

University of Washington
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1993
11-22

School

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Music

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CONTEMPORARY GROUP

Stuart Dempster and William O. Smith
Co-Directors

Works by

Ken Benshoof
Michael Angell
Joël François Durand
Donald Harris
William Thomas McKinley
Gunther Schüller
Bright Sheng

8:00 PM
Meany Theater
November 22, 1993

DAT # 12,240

CASS # 12,241

PROGRAM

- DA-
122 OUT AND BACK AGAIN (1993)..... (1930) Ken Benshoof
Sort of Country
Sunday Afternoon
Out and Back Again

Ella Gray, *violin soloist*; Walter Gray, *cello soloist*;
Libby Gray, *piccolo*; Felix Skowronek, *flute*; Molly Sandvick, *oboe*;
Taina Karr, *english horn*; Joel Barbosa, *clarinet*; William McColl,
bass clarinet; Arthur Grossman, *bassoon*; Jason Schilling, *contrabassoon*;
David Kappy and Jennifer Barrett, *horns*; Kevin Karnes, *trombone*;
Stuart Dempster, *bass trombone*; William O. Smith, *conductor*

- 123 DUELING OBOES (1984)..... (565) Michael Angell
Allegro
Cantabile
Dogfight

Alex Klein and Molly Sandvick, *oboes*

- 124 LA MESURE DE L' AIR (the measure of the air) (1954) Joël François Durand
(1992)
LA MESURE DE LA MER (the measure of the sea) (1989-93)

Joel Barbosa, *clarinet soloist*; Laurent Philippe, *piano soloist*

INTERMISSION

- 125 A BIRTHDAY CARD FOR GUNTHER (1985)..... (1) Donald Harris
(b. 1931)

- 126 BAGATELLES AND FINALE (1985)..... (1) William Thomas McKinley
(b. 1938)
Jonathan Graber, *violin soloist*

- 127 EPISODES (1964)..... (522) Günther Schüller
(b. 1925)
William O. Smith, *clarinet soloist*

Spoken Intro

- 128 TWO POEMS FROM THE SUNG DYNASTY (1985)..... (1305) Bright Sheng
Chai Tou Feng (by Lu You)
Sheng Sheng Man (by Li Qing Zhao)

Carmen Pelton, *soprano soloist*

Pamela Butler Ryker, *flute*; Molly Sandvick, *oboe*; Joel Barbosa, *clarinet*;
Jason Schilling, *bassoon*; Lorraine Fader, *horn*; Mark Wilbert,
percussion; Alexis Odell, *harp*; Dwight Beckmeyer, *piano*; Kim Zabelle
and Anja Kluge, *violins*; Felicia McFall, *viola*; Nora Engebretsen, *cello*;
Olav Hekala, *contrabass*; Bright Sheng, *conductor*

CHAITOU FENG

Hong Su Shou. Huang Teng Jou. Pink creamy hands, yellow-labeled wine.
Man Cheng Chun Se Gong Qiang. City full of spring color, and palace
Liu. wall and willows.
Dong Feng Wo. Huan Qing Bo. East wind is hateful, joys of love scarce.
Yi Hua Chou Xu. One heart full of sorrowing thoughts.
Ji Nian Li Suo. Many years of separation.
Cuo. Cuo. Cuo! Wrong, wrong, wrong!

Chun Yu Jou. Ren Kong Shou. The spring the same as before.
Lei Hen Hong Yi Jiao Shao Tou. She thin in vain.
Her, mermaid-silk scarf tear-stained
Tao Hua Luo. Xian Chi Guo. and red-stained, wholly soaked.
Peach blossoms fall, quiet ponds and
Shan Meng Sui Zai. pavillions
Although our sacred mountains vows
Jing Shu Nan Tou. remain
Muo. Muo, Muo! The brocade letters can't be sent.
No more, no more, no more!

SHENG SHENG MAN

Xun Xun Mi Mi. Leng Leng Qin. Seek, seek! Search, search!
Qin. Cold, cold! Bare, bare!
Ci Ci Can Can Qi Qi. Grief, grief! Cruel, cruel!
Sorrow, sorrow!
Zha Nuan Huan Han Shi Hou. Just warm but still cold.
Zui Nan Xiang Si. Most difficult to rest.
San Bei Liang Zhan Dan Zui. A few cups of light wine.
Zen Di Ta Wan Lai Feng Ji! How can that overcome the evening
wind's sharp rustling!
Yan Guo Ye. Zhen Shang Sin. Wild geese pass, pensive.
Que Shi Zou Shi Xiang Shi-E. Old time's acquaintances.
Man Di Huang Hua Duo Ji-E. Chrysanthemums lay bestrewn all
Qiao Cui Sun. over the ground.
Withered and decreasing.

Yu Jin You Shei Kan Zhe?
Shou Zhe Chuang Er,
Du Zi Zen Sheng De He!

Wu Tong Gen Jian Xi Yu,
Dao Huang Hun Dian Dian Di Di.

Zhe Ci Din. Zen Yi Guo Chou
Zi Liao De!

Now who would bear to pluck?
Leaning on the window.
How horrible to see the darkening
day alone!
Parasol tree and the misty rain.
At dusk drop by drop and drip by
drip.
This grief, how could it ever be
ended by a word of sorrow.

Translated by Bright Sheng, Edited by Michael Biondi.

OUT AND BACK AGAIN was commissioned by the Rainier Chamber Winds of Seattle, Washington.

This is a chamber work featuring violin and cello with twelve wind players. The piece is blatantly "Americana" in its first movement, lyrical and reflective in the second. The third movement begins with larger dramatic shapes and gradually finds its way back to thoughts from the first and second movements.

Ken Benshoof

Ella Marie Gray began her career concertizing with the Kronos Quartet in New York. On returning to her native Seattle, she performed nine seasons with the Northwest Chamber Orchestra. She currently performs with the Seattle Symphony, is a member of the Pacific Northwest Ballet Orchestra and of the New Performance Group, is a faculty member of Cornish College of the Arts.

A founding member of the Sonora Quartet, Ella makes regular appearances on chamber music series in the Northwest and Canada. She is a member of the New Hampshire Festival and has also appeared at the Cabrillo, Tidewater, Olympic, and Waterloo Festivals.

Walter Gray studied at the Curtis Institute of Music. He has been a member of the Seattle Symphony and the Seattle Opera Orchestra for twelve years, including solo performances on the New Music and Baroque series. He currently teaches at Western Washington University.

Walter was a co-founder of the Kronos quartet and performs with the Sonora String Quartet, New Performance Group of Cornish College of the Arts, Moor Cello Quartet, and is the principal cello for New Hampshire and Waterloo Music Festivals. Walter has performed on and produced for several recording labels, including Delos, New Albion, Mode, and Hyperion.

Ken Benshoof has lived in Seattle since 1960. A Fulbright scholar in 1965, a Guggenheim fellow in 1976 and resident composer for several seasons for the Old Globe Theatre and the Seattle Repertory Theater, Benshoof currently teaches composition at the University of Washington.

The oboe is commonly known as a mellow-sounding instrument, sometimes in an exotic way, sometimes in a romantic way, but always in a melodic and mellifluous manner. This special character of the instrument exerts a certain power over oboe players, influencing their interpretation of music and in some cases even their lives. The notion that "Good oboe players cannot be 'outphrased'" has been heard often throughout the history of the oboe. It has been said that an oboist's worst nightmare would be to find another player with incomparable mellowness and matchless phrasing. Michael Angell's *DUELING OBOES* seems to explore that phenomenon in oboedom. In the "Allegro" and in the "Cantabile," both instruments sing away their joys and sorrows, always expressively challenging each other. Occasionally, someone steps over the line and a little conflict sets in, but nothing that can't be fixed by more expressiveness. One might compare the situation to a mutual dependency that, when disturbed, creates a temporary animosity. The temporary animosity always leads back to calm waters, until another disturbance comes along. But then, there seems to be a limit to this musical run-around, calling for the final movement: "Dogfight."

Alex Klein

These two works belong to a group of five pieces for solo instruments, to be played either in succession in the same concert, or separately. *LA MESURE DE L'AIR* is for solo clarinet, *LA MESURE DE LA MER* for solo piano. The other works will be for solo oboe, solo viola, and for percussion. The original conception for this set is based on Heraclitus' cosmogony, which includes transformations of one element (earth-sea-water-air-fire, with the addition of time) into each other. My reflection on these transformations led me to interpret these natural elements in their relation to human experience.

The air as the representation of the present, what goes continually through the human body, barely perceptible yet always in changing motion, like the immediate passage of time: it is the present in the human consciousness.

The "sea" is not experienced here in its materiality, its occasional fury, its "d' mesure" (excess), but in its capacity to make us perceive an image of eternity, to suggest a time beyond human measure. It is a "conceptualized," idealized sea; the sea as a vast mass with large and periodic motions; the flux of its deep, powerful and contradictory currents; with independent, non-synchronized periodicities, whose influences express themselves in the continuous motion of the surface.

Accordingly, in the clarinet piece, a number of melodic models—archetypes—are constantly transformed, their shapes being altered every time they come back, in length as well as in intervallic content. This provides the basis for the organization of musical phrases of varying lengths. This same process of small constant transformations is applied to a harmonic texture in *LA MESURE DE LA MER*. In both pieces, and more evidently perhaps in the second one, the unfolding of time is closely related to the human experience mentioned earlier. The present is occupied by trains of thoughts, altering constantly the perceived speed of time; the texture of the clarinet pieces is often changing, but the main activity is one of a febrile, creative activity renewing itself all the time. The slowness of *LA MESURE DE LA MER* is indicative of its contemplative nature, where the changes are also constant, yet there unfolds progressively a sensation of larger rhythms, of global accelerations or slowing down. What was affected of a light, ethereal, and playful character in *LA MESURE DE L'AIR* becomes now an object of contemplation, serene and visionary.

Joël-François Durand

Gunther Schuller, sixty-eight years old today, is an accomplished composer, jazz scholar, and educator. His talents have been recognized in the form of, among other accolades, two Guggenheim grants and the ASCAP Deems-Taylor Award.

For the 19 November 1985 concert by the Enchanted Circle at the New England Conservatory of Music, of which Schuller served as President from 1967-77, eleven sixty-second solo pieces were written by Conservatory faculty members for four instruments associated with Schuller: the French horn, the instrument with which he built his performing career, having served as a member of the Cincinnati Symphony and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra; the flute, the first instrument he studied; the violin, his father's instrument in the New York Philharmonic; and the piano, which he plays.

Donald Harris' Birthday card, marked "quarter=60 (Years)," derives the pitches of its initial three-note motive from Schuller's name: G, A, S (E-flat). The other two motives are labeled "Ragtime" (for many years, Schuller directed the New England Conservatory Ragtime Ensemble) and "Margie" (Marjorie Black, Schuller's wife).

The "Allegro molto burlesco" performance instruction well suits the fanfare-like quality of the McKinley. Here the composer exploits the multiple stopping (realized as pizzicati in the coda) and dynamic (the piece begins *fff* and ends *ppp*) capabilities of the violin.

Jonathan Graber

Gunther Schuller has taught at Yale University and at Tanglewood, and has appeared as guest conductor with leading orchestras. From 1968 to 1977, he was head of the New England Conservatory of Music. Schuller is self-taught as a composer. His music shows many of the influences to which his generation has been responsive. On the one hand he has been affected by the rhythmic freedom and instrumental innovations of experimental jazz. He has been associated with the Modern Jazz Quartet and is a leading representative of the "third stream" movement, which combines the techniques of contemporary music with those of jazz; his "Early Jazz" (1968) is one of the best books on the subject. On the other hand, he has absorbed the serial techniques of the twelve-tone method, which he handles in an unorthodox and altogether personal manner. Schuller leans toward an expressively chromatic atonal idiom, which he uses with poetic imagination, and a flair for orchestral sonorities. "Episodes" was written for William O. Smith and premiered at the Venice Biennale Festival in 1964.

W. O. Smith

The period of the Sung Dynasty (960-1279 AD) was an era in Chinese History distinguished for its cultural achievements, particularly in literature and philosophy, and art. Bright Sheng's *TWO POEMS FROM THE SUNG DYNASTY*, a 14-minute setting for soprano and chamber orchestra, presents texts by the well-known Sung poets Lu You and Li Qing Zhao. The poems are from different periods in the dynasty and are notable for their outpourings of grief; they are thematically unified by references to the city of Hangzhou, in eastern China near Shanghai, but do not develop a story line, as would a song cycle in the Schubertian tradition. Setting poetry from the Sung dynasty particularly interested Sheng, as it was originally written to be sung and is inherently musical. (Unfortunately, all original musical materials for this poetry have been lost.) These texts also lend themselves particularly well to contemporary music settings. Sheng believes, as Sung dynasty poetry contains a different number of syllables in each line, this syllabic irregularity is musically reflected in his score.

"Chai Tou Feng," the cycle's first song, deals with regret over lost love. It tells of the poet's ill-fated marriage to his cousin. The poet's mother forced the happy couple to separate after the wedding because she did not like her son's bride. The couple did not see each other again until they accidentally met in a park in Hangzhou ten years later. Although the girl had since remarried, she graciously offered her former husband food and wine. Still in love with one another, the two soon separate, knowing that they will never be allowed to be together again. The cycle's second song, "Sheng Sheng Man," one of the composer's favorites, dates from the end of the Sung Dynasty. At the time of the poem's composition, a Mongolian invasion had forced the emperor to move the capital city from occupied territory to Hangzhou. The poet's beloved husband, a high-ranking government official, died during the move to the new capital; in this poem she laments her lonely and impoverished state, a sharp contrast to the luxurious life she once led at court.

TWO POEMS FROM THE SUNG DYNASTY was written for soprano Irene Gubrud, who premiered the work in New York City on 26 March 1986 with the Music Today Ensemble, Gerard Schwarz conducting.

Bright Sheng's personal experiences as survivor, victim, and witness of the Cultural Revolution led to one of his best-known compositions, *H'un* (Lacerations), which was awarded first runner-up of the 1989 Pulitzer Prize. He has been awarded National Endowment for the Arts and Guggenheim Fellowships, and has recordings on New World Records and Delos. From 1989 to 1992, Mr. Sheng was Composer-In-Residence with the Chicago Lyric Opera. His music has been widely performed throughout the United States, Europe, and China, and he has received commissions from such organizations as the New York Philharmonic, the New York Chamber Symphony, and the Seattle Symphony.

Born in Shanghai, Mr. Sheng started piano studies at the age of five. After graduating from high school during the Cultural Revolution, he went to work as a pianist and timpanist in a music-dance company in Chinbai, where he had his first opportunities to study and collect various Chinese folk music. After the Cultural Revolution, he was one of the first students accepted by the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, but was denied his diploma when he chose to emigrate to the United States in 1982. Studies at Columbia University, Queens College, and City University of New York with such eminent composers as Mario Davidovsky, George Perle, and Hugo Weisgall precipitated his rapid rise to international recognition. He lives in Seattle, where he is Composer-In-Residence with the Seattle Symphony and Affiliate Professor of Music at the University of Washington.

Bright Sheng

UPCOMING 1993-94 CONCERTS:

To request disability accommodations, contact the Office of the ADA Coordinator at least ten days in advance of the event. 543-6450 (voice); 543-6452 (TDD); 685-3885 (FAX); access@u.washington.edu (E-mail).

November 29, University Singers. 8 PM, Meany Theater.

November 29, Percussion Ensemble. 8 PM, Meany Studio Theater.

December 1, Wind Ensemble. 8 PM, Meany Theater.

December 3, Jazz Studies Concert Series, 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.

December 4 and 5, Madrigal Singers, Collegium, Musicum and Baroque Ensemble, "To Saint Cecilia". 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.

December 5, *FACULTY RECITAL*: Soni Ventorum Wind Quintet, 3 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.

December 6, Studio Jazz Ensemble. 8 PM, Meany Theater.

December 6, Voice Division Recital. 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.

December 7, University Chorale. 8 PM, Meany Theater.

December 7, ProConArt. 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.

December 8, University Symphony with guests Carmen Pelton, *soprano* and Patricia Michaelian, *piano*. 8 PM, Meany Theater.

December 9, Keyboard Debut Series, 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.

January 6, *FACULTY RECITAL*: Bassoon Bash! 8 PM, Meany Theater.

January 10, Orchestra Festival Concert, featuring the University Symphony and outstanding high school orchestras from Washington state. 6 PM, Meany Theater.

January 11, Choral Festival Concert featuring The Trenchcoats. 7 PM, Meany Theater.

January 13, Jazz Band Festival Concert featuring Eddie Daniels, *clarinet*. 7 PM, Meany Theater.

January 14 and 15, Concert Band Festival Concert featuring Eddie Daniels, *clarinet*. 7 PM, Meany Theater.

January 18, Brechemin Scholarship Winners Recital. 7 PM, Meany Theater.

January 25, Concerto Competition Winners & the University Symphony. 8 PM, Meany Theater.

January 31, Voice Division Recital. 7 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.

February 2, *FACULTY RECITAL*: Craig Sheppard, *piano*, Barry Lieberman, *double bass*, and friends. 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.

February 10, Keyboard Debut Series. 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.

February 14, Contemporary Group. 8 PM, Meany Theater.

February 23, University Symphony with Gerard Schwarz, *conductor*. 8 PM, Meany Theater.

February 24, Jazz Studies Concert Series. 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.

February 25, *UW FACULTY-DEBUT RECITAL*: Craig Sheppard, *piano*. 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.