

SONATA..... BÉLA BARTÓK

Prior to the Basel première, the 13th January, 1938 issue of the Basel National Zeitung carried a German language statement by the composer, reviewing the SONATA for Two Pianos and Percussion.

"For some years now I have been planning to compose a work for a piano and percussions. Gradually, however, I became convinced that one piano and the frequently very sharp tones of the percussions were not in balance. That was why I changed my intentions, so that instead of a single piano I would contrast two of them with percussions. When last summer the Basel ISCM (International Society of Contemporary Music) asked me to compose something for their anniversary concert of 16th January 1938, I was very pleased to have got the opportunity to realize my plan.

Only two players are required for the seven percussion instruments - timpani, bass drum, cymbals, tam-tam, side drum with snares, side drum without snares and xylophone. Both of them play all the instruments; just one of them leaves the xylophone untouched and the other one does the same with the timpani. Both percussion parts are equal in rank with either one of the piano parts. The role of the percussion sounds are varied: they often colour merely the sound of the piano, some time they reinforce the more important accents, in places they carry motives serving as a counterpoint to the piano part, while the timpani and the xylophone frequently play themes that act as principal subjects. As to the formal arrangement of the work the following should be noted: the first movement starts with a slow introduction, foreshadowing one of the motives of the Allegro section. The Allegro section itself is in C and has a sonata form."

The second movement belongs to Bartók's typical slow movements of his maturity, evoking the association of mystical "nocturnal" and nature-music. The closing movement, roughly corresponding in form to the first one, and contrasting it in atmosphere, brings relief and liberation, entering the sunshine after the "night." It also bears a relationship to the "folk dance finales" of the late Bartók works such as the Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta, the Divertimento and the Concerto for orchestra.



DAT - 13,754
CDS - 13,755
13,756

University of Washington
THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

C67
2000
6-1

presents the

CONTEMPORARY GROUP

Joël-François Durand, *director*

June 1, 2000

8:00 PM

Meany Theater

PROGRAM

CD-13,755

1 THIRTEEN WAYS OF LOOKING AT A BLACKBIRD
for flute, percussion, voice and piano..... LUKAS FOSS
(16:31) (b. 1922)

Fumi Takiguchi, *soprano* Miho Takekawa, *percussion*
Lucas Robatto, *flute* Asta Vaicekonis, *piano*
Channing Daniel, *soprano*

2 BRIGHT AIR/BRILLIANT FIRE.....(11:04).....DIANE THOME
for flute and tape (b. 1942)

Sarah Basingthwaighte, *flute*

3 CASCADES, for solo piano.....(9:44).....LOUIS KARCHIN (b. 1951)
David Kopp, *piano*

4 KAIROS.....(6:50).....RYAN HARE
for bass trombone and ensemble (b. 1970)

Chad Kirby, *bass trombone* Brad Hawkins, *cello*
Yu-Ling Cheng, *violin* Julie Ives, *piano*
Stephen Creswell, *viola* Matt Drumm, *percussion*
Linda Antas, *conductor*

INTERMISSION

- 1 LABYRINTHE COSMIQUE.....(7:04).....JEAN-LOUIS PETIT (b. 1937)
for flute and percussion (*World Premiere*)

Felix Skowronek, *flute* Miho Takekawa, *percussion*

- 2 THREE JAPANESE LYRICS.....(4:16).....IGOR STRAVINSKY
for soprano and ensemble (1882-1971)

- I. *Akahito*
II. *Mazatsumi*
III. *Tsaraiuki*

Nicole Blackmer, *soprano*
Lucas Robatto & Myriam Kruger, *flutes*
Erica Strandberg & William McColl, *clarinets*
Jensina Byington, *piano*
Yu-Ling Cheng & Karen Halliburton, *violins*
Alexis Schultz, *viola*
Danna Birdsall, *cello*
Eric Flesher, *conductor*

- 3 SONATA for two pianos and percussion.....(27:50).....BÉLA BARTÓK
I. *Assai Lento - Allegro molto* (1881-1945)
II. *Lento, ma non troppo*
III. *Allegro non troppo*

Jeanne Drumm & Conney Lin, *pianos*
Matt Drumm & Miho Takekawa, *percussion*

PROGRAM NOTES

THIRTEEN WAYS OF LOOKING AT A BLACKBIRD LUKAS FOSS

In 1978, radio station WFMT, Chicago, came to me with a laudable project: an American song festival made up of song cycles to be composed especially for the station. I promptly began to work on the Stevens Poem. I decided on a mezzo-soprano; a distant flutist visible or invisible; a pianist playing now on the keyboard, now inside the piano 'a la autoharp'; a percussionist playing mostly on the piano strings with triangle beaters, cowbells, Japanese bowls and other objects. I had made a study of possibilities obtained from sounds inside the piano in an earlier work for two pianos and percussion. My song cycle is based

on some of the finds in that piece (*Ni Bruit Ni Vitesse*) and in a song cycle, Three Airs from Frank O'Hara's *Angel*. Perhaps this is a typical pattern of the artistic development of a composer: one work contains the seeds of the next. Stylistically, *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird* is an odd combination of the tonal lyricism of my early music and experimental sonorities and procedures of my recent work.

(Notes by Lukas Foss)

Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird by Wallace Stevens

1. Among twenty snowy mountains,
The only moving thing
Was the eye of the blackbird.
2. I was of three minds.
Like a tree
In which there are three blackbirds.
3. The blackbird whirled in the autumn
winds.
It was a small part of the pantomime.
4. A man and a woman
Are one.
A man and a woman and a blackbird
Are one.
5. I do not know which to prefer,
The beauty of inflections
Or the beauty of innuendoes,
Or just after.
6. Icicles filled the long window
With barbaric glass.
The shadow of the blackbird
Crossed it, to and fro.
The mood
Traced in the shadow
An indecipherable cause.
7. O thin men of Haddam,
Why do you imagine golden birds?
Do you not see how the blackbird
Walks around the feet
Of the women about you?
8. I know noble accents
And lucid, inescapable;
rhythms
But I know, too,
That the blackbird is involved
In what I know.
9. When the blackbird flew
out of sight,
It marked the edge
Of one of many circles.
10. At the first sight of blackbirds
Flying in the green light,
Even the bawds of euphony
Would cry out sharply.
11. He rode over Connecticut
In a glass coach.
Once, a fear pierced him,
In that he mistook
The shadow of his equipage
for Blackbirds
12. The river is moving
The blackbirds must be flying.
13. It was evening all afternoon.
It was snowing
And it was going to snow.
The blackbirds sat
In the cedar-limbs.

BRIGHT AIR/BRILLIANT FIRE.....DIANE THOME

At times my initial compositional impulse is connected with poetic metaphors. Such is the case with *BRIGHT AIR/BRILLIANT FIRE* which was suggested by a quotation from the 6th century Greek physician, poet and philosopher of mind, Empedocles: "For by earth we see earth, by water water; by air bright air, and by fire brilliant fire." Exactly how these poetic images evoke sonic gestures is, of course, part of the mystery and exhilaration of the creative process. In any case, I believe it is always the listener's choice how far to carry a visually or programmatically suggestive title.

The flute and tape parts are shaped as complementary and contrasting partners in a continuously unfolding sonic structure that moves through time in three overlapping sections. The electronic music opens the piece very slowly in an ethereal, airy, deliberate manner with the flute responding to its mysterious ambience in a series of separate phrases that often take their point of departure from melodic motifs in the tape.

The electronic music of the second section is articulated through a long succession of slowly changing harmonies that evolve out of a new timbral complex. The flute provides a constant line of reiterated and ebullient patterns which bubble irrepressibly on the surface of the much more slowly changing tape music until a clear and climactic fusion of the two is reached with high trills in both. This climax dissolves into a descending glissando in the tape, signaling the start of the third and final section of the piece. In contrast to the previous two, the tape portion of this section presents layerings of multiple acoustic sounds electronically processed and integrated with the live flute in a conflagration of sound. The third section is the only one to utilize alto flute.

The electronic portion of *BRIGHT AIR/BRILLIANT FIRE* was constructed utilizing the following: KYMA software running on the Cappybara - 66 DSP System; SoundHack and Deck II.5 software running on a Power Macintosh computer; and a Kurzweil 2000 keyboard. Robert Austin was my collaborator in the production of the tape.

BRIGHT AIR/BRILLIANT FIRE was commissioned in 1996 by Sigma Alpha Iota, International Music Fraternity.

(Notes by Diane Thome)

Composer of a wide variety of works which span solo, chamber, choral, orchestral and electronic media, DIANE THOME is the first woman to write computer-synthesized music. Her compositions have been presented in Europe, China, Australia, Israel, Canada and throughout the United States. She has been a guest of the Ecole Nationale Claude Debussy and featured on French radio, composer-in-residence at the University of Sussex and the Bennington Chamber Music Conference and Composers Forum of the East. Recent awards include 1994 Washington Composer of the Year, 1995-96 Solomon Katz Distinguished Professor in the Humanities, and a 1998 International Computer Music Conference Commission. Her collaborative works include *Night Passage*, an environmental theatre piece presented in the pavilion of the Moore College of Art

in Philadelphia and *Angels*, for virtual reality artwork shown at the Biennale des Arts Electroniques in Paris. Her music has been recorded on the CRI, Crystal Records, Capstone and Centaur labels including *Palaces of Memory*, an 18-year retrospective of her electro-acoustic music on the Centaur label. She holds a Ph.D. and M.F.A. in Composition from Princeton and an M.A. in Theory and Composition from the University of Pennsylvania. Diane Thome is Professor and Chair of the Composition Program in the School of Music at the University of Washington.

CASCADES.....LOUIS KARCHIN

CASCADES was composed in the spring of 1997, and premiered by pianist Cathy Callis in July of that year in Vienna, Austria. At about nine minutes in length, it is a relatively short, and in large measure, scampering work. At the opening, a chant-like melody is presented over seemingly diatonic chords. But the underlying, rippling accompaniment is, in retrospect, the more crucial element, suggesting the "cascading" idea from which most of the music's material evolves. The music often changes character; short impressionistic moments alternate with single-line passages and light-hearted angular gestures. The music builds in intensity as the piece approaches a culminating *maestoso* reprise of the chant-like opening.

(Notes by Louis Karchin)

LOUIS KARCHIN (born Philadelphia, 1951) studied at the Eastman School of Music and Harvard University, with additional training as a fellow at the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood. Among his most recent honors is the 1999 Heckscher Foundation Prize for his song cycle, *American Visions*, based on poems of the Russian poet, Yevgeny Yevtushenko; this work was premiered in January of 1999 by the *Da capo* Chamber Players. Other recent premieres have included his *Rhapsody* with the Louisville Orchestra, and *Saraband/Variation*, by guitarist David Starobin. Upcoming projects include new works for the Talujon Percussion Quartet, the Jubal Trio, and saxophonist Taimur Sullivan. Mr. Karchin has been honored with awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Koussevitzky, Copland and Fromm Foundations, among others. His music is published by C. F. Peters Corporation and recorded on CRI and New World Records labels. A second disc on New World will be released in July and will include six of Mr. Karchin's recent chamber works, including *Cascades*.

Mr. Karchin is currently Associate Professor of Music at New York University, a co-director of the Washington Square Contemporary Music Society, and a conductor of the Chamber Players of the League-ISCN.

KAIROS..... RYAN HARE

KAIROS was written in the Summer of 1999 for trombonist Chad Kirby and the Contemporary Chamber Composers and Players based in Seattle. The piece is conceived as a sort of mini-concerto for bass trombone and ensemble, with the violin and percussion parts also featuring prominent solos. The ancient Greek word "kairos" refers to a specific moment in time (as opposed to "chronos," the flow of time or a span of measured time) with the additional connotation of suitability: thus arises the concept of a critical moment in time which requires or provokes a decisive action.

(Notes by Ryan Hare)

RYAN HARE'S compositions have been performed in various locations around the US and in Darmstadt, Germany, where he received private lessons from Brian Ferneyhough at the summer Ferienkurse für Neue Musik. He is a student of Joel-Francois Durand, and has also studied with Richard Karpen and Diane Thome at the UW. Past teachers include Jacob Druckman, Shulamit Ran, and Greg Woodward. He recently spent a year teaching composition and music theory at Oregon State University and has been active as a bassoonist in various professional ensembles in Oregon and Washington.

LABYRINTHE COSMIQUE..... JEAN-LOUIS PETIT

The basic material for *LABYRINTHE COSMIQUE* comes from a twelve-tone all-interval row that is identical to itself when read backwards. The constraints of this dense and specific material can be found as well in the form, the rhythm, the dynamics, etc. They can be adapted to all kinds of aesthetics, and *LABYRINTHE COSMIQUE* is an illustration of that fact.

(Notes by J. L. Petit)

JEAN-LOUIS PETIT is a French composer and conductor. After studying at the Reims Conservatoire, he entered the Paris Conservatoire in the classes of Simone Plé and Olivier Messiaen, and studied conducting with Igor Markevitch, Franco Ferrara and Pierre Boulez. Since 1957 he has been very active as a conductor of new music, in particular since the foundation of the Atelier Musique de Ville d'Avray in 1974, for which he has commissioned and premiered a large number of works. He is the author of over 270 works for diverse instrumental combinations and of many transcriptions of baroque music.

THREE JAPANESE LYRICS..... IGOR STRAVINSKY

The *THREE JAPANESE LYRICS* were composed at the end of 1912, during the time when Stravinsky was completing the Rite of Spring. The outer songs of the set are indeed pure embodiments of the melodic spirit of The Rite of Spring, with its decorative treatment of folksong, while the chief influence on the texture and the instrumental coloring, at any rate, of the second one, "Mazatsumi" is apparently Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*, which Stravinsky heard in Berlin in December 1912.

In the first song a six-note ostinato in slow ornamented eighth-notes runs through the entire setting, varied only by changes of scoring and by octave displacement. In the third one, there is a foretaste of the mechanical ostinato schemes of the Three Pieces for string quartet (1915) in the way tiny refrain figures are allocated to specific instruments. But all the time the most intriguing use of cells is in the voice part. Here we find a mobile arrangement of (typically) two-note cells, often placed obliquely to the more mechanical instrumental patterns.

When the songs were first performed in Paris and Moscow in 1914, listeners (especially Russians) commented on the prevailing ambiguity of vocal accent. The observation was that the vocal part had been, as it were, shifted sideways by (usually) one eighth-note. Stravinsky explained that his object was to emulate in Russian the accentless character of the Japanese originals. Another interesting link between the *THREE JAPANESE LYRICS* and the Rite of Spring is their main subject: the coming of spring. In contrast to the primal violence of the orchestral work, in the *THREE JAPANESE LYRICS*, however, our attention is drawn to the decorative aspects of the season, symbolised by the colour white - patterns of white flowers against fresh snow.

(after Stephen Walsh)

I. Akahito: I have flowers of white. Come and see where they grow in my garden. But falls the snow: I know not my flowers from flakes of snow.

II. Mazatsumi: The Spring has come! Through those chinks of prisoning ice the white flocs drift, foamy flakes that sport and play in the stream. How glad they pass, first flowers that tidings bear that Spring is coming.

III. Tsaraiuki: What shimmers so white faraway? Thou would'st say 'twas nought but cloudlet in the midst of hills. Full blown are the cherries! Thou art come, beloved Spring time.

Three Japanese Lyrics will be sung tonight in Russian.