

THE CONTEMPORARY GROUP

January 30, 1974
Roethke Auditorium

NOTES AND TEXTS

I. PAUL HINDEMITH: Sonata for Four Horns (1952)

Paul Hindemith composed a Sonata for Horn and Piano (1939), a Sonata for Alto Horn, or Horn, and Piano (1943) which was not published until 1956, and a Concerto for Horn and Orchestra (1949) in addition to the present work.

The composer relates that the Sonata for Four Horns was composed for the horn players of the Salzburg Mozarteum, and that it was premiered by a student performing group at Yale University where he was teaching composition.

The work is remarkable in the sonorities and textural variety achieved by the use of contrapuntal writing, rather than any dependence upon extreme range demands in order to separate the four voices.

The Salzburg horn group had once performed for Hindemith the old Swiss Chorale, "I sound my horn" which the composer later used as the subject of the third movement Variations.

II. OLE SCHMIDT: Toccata No. 2 (1964)

"Unlike my Toccata No. 1, which utilizes all the virtuosic possibilities of the accordion, I am primarily emphasizing, in the present work, an exploitation of the sonorous qualities of the instrument. (In the recitatives, I have also aimed at bringing forth the expressive character of the accordion.)

I have wanted to obtain a specific sound structure, a particularly "transparent" feeling and expression, and I believe the result is rewarding. Even though the work is technically demanding, I feel that the manual accomplishments should not represent a goal...but should rather serve the sonority and the music". OLE SCHMIDT

III. TORBJÖRN LUNDQUIST: Bewegungen. (1966)

"I composed my BEWEGUNGEN partly because I wanted to prove the adaptability of the accordion in a chamber ensemble - and also because this particular instrumental combination has tempted me for a very long time. And it does indeed, turn out that the string sound is highly advantageous for the accordion, which - through its many different registrations and timbres - is able to blend softly, or form a sharp contrast to the strings... all according to the demands of the music.

I wanted in my accordion quintet to utilize the explosive dynamics and the transparent expressiveness of the instrument. Frenetic exclamations alternate with mild, lyrical passages. The rhythmical element is never absent. Plasticity and exactness are the insignia of the accordion - also in slow tempi...a marvellous instrument for chamber music. -

The form of the work: Association form - with large blocks replacing each other constantly, so that at last one gets feeling of listening to one bow, hovering over the smaller bows of each individual block.

Economical thematic presentation of the details". TORBJÖRN LUNDQUIST

IV. GEORGE CRUMB: Ancient Voices of Children (1970)

"In composing ANCIENT VOICES OF CHILDREN I was conscious of an urge to fuse various unrelated stylistic elements. I was intrigued with the idea of juxtaposing the seemingly incongruous: a suggestion of Flamenco with a Baroque quotation (Bist du bei mir, from the Notebook of Anna Magdalena Bach), or a reminiscence of Mahler with a breath of the Orient. It later occurred to me that both Bach and Mahler drew upon many disparate sources in their own music without sacrificing "stylistic purity."

"It is sometimes of interest to a composer to recall the original impulse - the "creative germ" - of a compositional project. In the case of ANCIENT VOICES I felt this impulse to be the climactic final words of the last song: "...and I will go very far...to ask Christ the Lord to give me back my ancient soul of a child". GEORGE CRUMB

Crumb's ANCIENT VOICES is part of an extended cycle of vocal compositions based on the poetry of Federico García Lorca, this cycle dominating the composer's work of the past decade. Crumb's fascination with the poetry of Lorca perhaps finds some explication in Lorca's own definition of "Duende": "All that has dark sounds... This mysterious power that everyone feels, but that no philosopher has explained". ALBERTO RAFOLS

THE LORCA TEXTS

I
El niño busca su voz.
(La tenía el rey de los grillos.)
En una gota de agua
buscaba su voz el niño.

No la quiero para hablar;
me haré con ella un anillo
que llevará mi silencio
en su dedo pequeñito.

II
Me he perdido muchas veces por el mar
con el oído lleno de flores recién cortadas,
con la lengua llena de amor y de agonía.
Muchas veces me he perdido por el mar,
como me pierdo en el corazón de algunos niños.

III
¿De dónde vienes, amor, mi niño?
De la cresta del duro frío.
¿Qué necesitas, amor, mi niño?
La tibia tela de tu vestido.
¡Que se agiten las ramas al sol
y salten las fuentes alrededor!
En el patio ladra el perro,
en los árboles canta el viento.
Los hueyes mugen al boyero
y la luna me riza los cabellos.
¿Qué pides, niño, desde tan lejos?
Los blancos montes que hay en tu pecho.
¡Que se agiten las ramas al sol
y salten las fuentes alrededor!
Te diré, niño mío, que sí,
trinchada y rota soy para ti.
¡Cómo me duele esta cintura
donde tendrás primera cuna!
¿Cuando, mi niño, vas a venir?
Cuando tu carne huele a jazmín.
¡Que se agiten las ramas al sol
y salten las fuentes alrededor!

IV
Todas las tardes en Granada,
todas las tardes se muere un niño.

V
Se ha llenado de luces
mi corazón de seda,
de campanas perdidas,
de lirios y de abejas.
Y yo me iré muy lejos,
más allá de esas sierras,
más allá de los mares,
cerca de las estrellas,
para pedirle a Cristo
Señor que me devuelva
mi alma antigua de niño.

I
The little boy was looking for his voice.
(The king of the crickets had it.)
In a drop of water
the little boy was looking for his voice.

I do not want it for speaking with,
I will make a ring of it
so that he may wear my silence
on his little finger.

II
I have lost myself in the sea many times
with my ear full of freshly cut flowers,
with my tongue full of love and agony.
I have lost myself in the sea many times
as I lose myself in the heart of certain children.

III
From where do you come, my love, my child?
From the ridge of hard frost.
What do you need, my love, my child?
The warm cloth of your dress.
Let the branches ruffle in the sun
and the fountains leap all around!
In the courtyard a dog barks,
in the trees the wind sings.
The oxen low to the ox-herd
and the moon curls my hair.
What do you ask for, my child, from so far away?
The white mountains of your breast.
Let the branches ruffle in the sun
and the fountains leap all around!
I'll tell you, my child, yes,
I am torn and broken for you.
How painful is this waist
where you will have your first cradle!
When, my child, will you come?
When your flesh smells of jasmine-flowers.
Let the branches ruffle in the sun
and the fountains leap all around!

IV
Each afternoon in Granada,
a child dies each afternoon.

V
My heart of silk
is filled with lights,
with lost bells,
with lilies, and with bees,
and I will go very far,
farther than those hills,
farther than the seas,
close to the stars,
to ask Christ the Lord
to give me back
my ancient soul of a child.