

Compact disc

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2017
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SCHOOL OF MUSIC
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

MODERN ENSEMBLE

Stephen Drury, guest conductor

7:30 PM

March 1, 2017

Meany Theater

UW MUSIC

2016-17 SEASON

PROGRAM

CD1-#17,087

1 - remarks, Valdes

2 The Viola in My Life I (1970).....10:08..... Morton Feldman (1926-1987)

- Vijay Chalasani, Viola
- Natalie Ham, Flute
- Mario Alejandro Torres, Violin
- Chris Young, Cello
- Hexin Qiao, Piano
- Emerson Wahl, Percussion

3 Selections from Exercises (1973-4) and Microexercises (2006).....~~12:37~~.....Christian Wolff (b.1934)

- Exercise 1
- Microexercise 1
- Microexercise 6
- Microexercise 8a
- Microexercise 10

- Natalie Ham, Flute
- Vijay Chalasani, Viola
- Chris Young, Cello
- Hexin Qiao, Piano
- Emerson Wahl, Percussion
- no conductor

4 Tracking Pierrot (1992).....14:24..... Earle Brown (1926-2002)

- Natalie Ham, Flute
- Mo Yan, Clarinet
- Luke Fitzpatrick, Violin
- Chris Young, Cello
- Hexin Qiao, Piano
- Emerson Wahl, Percussion

INTERMISSION

CD2-#17,688

1 Cobra (1984) 38:46 John Zorn (b. 1953)

3
6
Natalie Ham, Flute
Gemma Goday Díaz-Corralejó, Alto flute
Mario Alejandro Torres, Violin
Vijay Chalasani, Viola
Chris Young, Cello
Schuyler Asplin, Trumpet
Stuart MacDonald, Saxophone
Alex Oliverio, Electric Guitar
Tony Lefaive, Electric bass
Hexin Qiao, Piano
Remy Morrirt, Drums
Emerson Wahl, Percussion

Morton Feldman was a big, brusque Jewish guy from Woodside, Queens, the son of a manufacturer of children's coats. He worked in the family business until he was forty-four years old, and he later became a professor of music at the State University of New York at Buffalo. To almost everyone's surprise but his own, he turned out to be one of the major composers of the twentieth century, a sovereign artist who opened up vast, quiet, agonizingly beautiful worlds of sound. Feldman was a close lifelong friend of John Cage, after the two met in the lobby following a New York Philharmonic performance of Anton Webern's Symphony, Op. 21 in 1950. Cage introduced him to his circle of composer and artist friends, and Feldman was to become most influenced by the painters of the group, including such notable artists as Jackson Pollock, Philip Guston, Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, and Robert Rauschenberg. About his music, Alex Ross says: "Feldman was patient. He let each chord say what it had to say. He breathed. Then he moved on to the next. His textures were daringly spare. In confining himself to a minimum of material, Feldman discovered the expressive power of the space around the notes. The sounds animate the surrounding silence."

The cycle *THE VIOLA IN MY LIFE I-IV* was begun in July 1970, composed for violist Karen Phillips, and consists of individual compositions using various instrumental combinations with the viola. The attention demanded by Feldman's music – so soft that it can almost not be heard – is so uniform that it suggests the idea of a surface, similar to the paintings of the artist friends Feldman so admired. We are never quite sure where the sounds are coming from. Time, articulated in most music by rhythm, is perceived as being static. Each sound floats in space, and is entirely independent of what has gone before and what has yet to come. Sounds do not progress but merely accumulate in the same place.

The Viola in My Life is a gorgeous succession of delicate sounds in which Feldman, through the interaction of sound and silence, conjures up a desolate magic on a plane where time is somehow altered, transformed.

- Vijay Chalasani

The title *TRACKING PIERROT* comes from the closeness of instrumentation and my admiration for the instrumental writing in Arnold Schoenberg's "Pierrot Lunaire." I do not refer to the angst or "moon-madness." The conducting is basically one of cueing entrances, exits, changes of tempi and dynamics, etc. as in many of my previous "open-form" works for ensembles and orchestras. This is basically a "closed form piece with 'open' interior structures." All of the instrumental music is composed by myself and notated and scored in a "mobile" context.

The "poetics" of this performance (never to be repeated and unique to this time and place) reflect the special talents, sensitivity and musicality of the conductor.

There is a chord progression on page 6 of the score which is a kind of "homage" to Olivier Messiaen, and the very first and very last pages are a remembrance of Morton Feldman.

- Earle Brown

The written music for *EXERCISES* does not specify instrumentation or number of performers, except that percussion material is specifically indicated—six items to be chosen by the performer in increasing degrees of resonance, from 1 to 6. For Exercises 1–14 the music consists of single line phrases, sometimes two line phrases. These are marked off by a notation that represents a pause whose duration, which may vary widely, is determined by each player in the course of playing. All players have the same music. All the music is written on a single staff that can be read in any two ways, usually in treble and bass clef, as each player decides and as is possible for an instrument's range. Each player can play as much or as little of the material as desired, in effect an improvising at the time of performance of the instrumentation. Coordination of the players as well as ways of playing—dynamics, articulation, color—are also determined in the process of playing by a kind of real-time improvised aural negotiation. The underlying rule is that unison should be a point of reference, though it may not often be represented as such. You could say that heterophony is the basic procedure. It's in the nature of these pieces that there will not be any final, definitive version

of any one, though there might be several, different versions of the same *Exercise* that equally represent a particularly good way of doing it.

MICROEXERCISES were started when the Miniaturist Ensemble asked for a piece with no more than 100 notes in it. Having enjoyed making one such piece, I went on to make 21 more (and then a second collection, *Grete*, with an additional 14). Instrumentation and number of players are mostly open, as are selection of pieces, playing order, clef and transposition readings, and dynamics.

I like the notion of quite long pieces, and, more recently, also quite short ones (these have a history too: Beethoven's Bagatelles, Schumann, Webern, Cage's piano Haiku from the 1950s, Kurtag). I don't worry too much about intensity of focus; it's more about transitoriness and catching what's going by, then letting it go. And making each piece itself, not like the others, or, if repeated, there is also the possibility of its being different from itself.

- Christian Wolff

American composer, arranger, producer, and multi-instrumentalist John Zorn is an experimental artist who defies genre and style boundaries. He has established himself as an important contemporary musical voice as both an improviser and as a composer of music ranging from avant-garde concert music to jazz, hardcore, rock, klezmer, and nearly everything in between. Many of Zorn's early compositions were "game pieces," the most famous and enduring of which is COBRA. These compositions involve strict rules, role playing, and prompters with flashcards, all in the name of melding structure and improvisation in a seamless fashion. About these pieces Zorn says:

"From 1974 until about 1990, a large part of my compositional time was spent devising music for improvisers, what I know call "game pieces." Tying together loose strings left dangling by composers such as Earle Brown, Cornelius Cardew, John Cage, and Stockhausen, I began to work out complex systems harnessing improvisers in flexible compositional formats.

"My first thought was: 'Here is a series of individuals, each has his own personal music. All worked on their instruments, on their own, to develop a highly personal language.' So my first decision, which I think was the most important, was never to talk about language or sound at all. I left that completely up to the performers. What I was left with was structure.

"What I came up with is a series of rules, like a trading system - one person plays, then the next person plays, then the next person plays - and event systems, where people independently perform events. Everybody can perform one event each, for example, but nobody can time it at the same time with anybody else. There might be a series of downbeats where at a downbeat a change will happen - if you're playing, maybe you must stop. If you're not playing, you may come in. That's just one example.

"With each new piece, I made up new sets of rules, sometimes incorporating similar ideas and systems from old pieces but changing the sequences, or the overall way it was put

together. I would perhaps get a series of fifteen systems, each one able to spark a different set of relationships among players, then figure out a way that these different systems could be used by them."

- Vijay Chalasani

Pianist and conductor STEPHEN DRURY has performed throughout the world with a repertoire that stretches from Bach to Liszt to the music of today. He has appeared at Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, the Barbican Centre and Queen Elizabeth Hall in London, the Cité de la Musique in Paris, and the Leipzig Gewandhaus, and from Arkansas to Seoul. A champion of contemporary music, he has taken the sound of dissonance into remote corners of Pakistan, Greenland and Montana.

In 1985 Stephen Drury was chosen by Affiliate Artists for its Xerox Pianists Program, and performed in residencies with symphony orchestras in San Diego, Cedar Rapids, San Angelo, Spokane, and Stamford. He has since performed or recorded with the American Composers Orchestra, the Cologne Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Vienna Radio Orchestra, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the Boston Philharmonic, the Boston Pops, the Springfield (Massachusetts) and Portland (Maine) Symphony Orchestras, and the Romanian National Symphony. Drury was a prize-winner in the Carnegie Hall/Rockefeller Foundation Competitions in American Music, and was selected by the United States Information Agency for its Artistic Ambassador Program and a 1986 European recital tour. A second tour in the fall of 1988 took him to Pakistan, Hong Kong, and Japan. He gave the first piano recitals ever in Julianehaab, Greenland, and Quetta, Pakistan. In 1989 the National Endowment for the Arts awarded Drury a Solo Recitalist Fellowship which funded residencies and recitals of American music for two years. The same year he was named "Musician of the Year" by the Boston Globe.

Stephen Drury's performances of music written in the last hundred years, ranging from the piano sonatas of Charles Ives to works by György Ligeti, Frederic Rzewski and John Cage have received the highest critical acclaim. Drury has worked closely with many of the leading composers of our time, including Cage, Ligeti, Rzewski, Steve Reich, Olivier Messiaen, John Zorn, Luciano Berio, Helmut Lachenmann, Christian Wolff, Jonathan Harvey, Michael Finnissy, Lee Hyla and John Luther Adams. Drury has appeared at the MusikTriennale Koln in Germany, the Subtropics Festival in Miami, and the North American New Music Festival in Buffalo as well as at Roulette, the Knitting Factory, Tonic and The Stone in New York. At Spoleto USA, the Angelica Festival in Bologna and Oberlin Conservatory he performed as both conductor and pianist. He has conducted the Britten Sinfonia in England, the Santa Cruz New Music Works Ensemble, and the Harvard Group for New Music. In 1988 - 1989 he organized a year-long festival of the music of John Cage which led to a request from the composer to perform the solo piano part in Cage's 101, premiered

with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in April, 1989. In 2009 Drury performed the solo piano part in the Fourth Symphony of Charles Ives, again with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, under Alan Gilbert. In 1999 Drury was invited by choreographer Merce Cunningham to perform onstage with Cunningham and Mikhail Barishnikov as part of the Lincoln Center Festival. Drury has also appeared in New York at Alice Tully Hall as part of the Great Day in New York Festival and on the Bargemusic series, in Boston with the Boston Symphony Chamber Players and as soloist with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, and with the Seattle Chamber Players in Seattle and Moscow at the International Music Festival "Images of Contemporary American Music." In 2003 he performed and taught at the Mannes College of Music's Beethoven Institute; in 2005 he returned to Mannes to play and teach at the Institute and Festival for Contemporary Performance. That summer he was also the piano faculty at the Bang on a Can Summer Institute. In 2006, Drury's performance of Frederic Rzewski's "The People United Will Never Be Defeated!" at the Gilmore Keyboard Festival was a sensation; he was invited back in 2008 to premiere Rzewski's Natural Things with the Opus 21 Ensemble at the Gilmore Festival in Michigan and Carnegie's Zankel Hall in New York as part of the composer's 70th birthday. That same summer Drury appeared at Bard College's SUMMERSCAPE Festival, and at the Cité de la Musique in Paris for a week-long celebration of the music of John Zorn. In 2007 he was invited to León, Mexico to perform music by Rzewski, Zorn and Cage at the International Festival of Contemporary Art.

Drury has commissioned new works for solo piano from John Cage, John Zorn, John Luther Adams, Terry Riley, and Chinariy Ung with funding provided by Meet The Composer. He has performed with Zorn in Paris, Vienna, London, Brussels, and New York, and conducted Zorn's music in Bologna, Boston, Chicago, and in the UK and Costa Rica. In March of 1995 he gave the first performance of Zorn's concerto for piano and orchestra Aporias with Dennis Russell Davies and the Cologne Radio Symphony Orchestra. Later that same season he gave the premiere of Basic Training for solo piano, written for him by Lee Hyla. Drury has recorded the music of John Cage, Elliott Carter, Charles Ives, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Colin McPhee, John Zorn, John Luther Adams and Frederic Rzewski, as well as works of Liszt and Beethoven, for Mode, New Albion, Catalyst, Tzadik, Avant, MusicMasters, Cold Blue, New World and Neuma.

Stephen Drury has given masterclasses at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory, Mannes Beethoven Institute, and Oberlin Conservatory, and in Japan, Romania, Argentina, Costa Rica, Denmark, and throughout the United States, and served on juries for the Concert Artist Guild, Gaudeamus and Orléans Concours International de Piano XXème Siècle Competitions. Drury is artistic director and conductor of the Callithumpian Consort, and he created and directs the Summer Institute for Contemporary Performance Practice at New England Conservatory. Drury earned his undergraduate degree for Harvard College, and has also earned the New England Conservatory's select Artist Diploma. His teachers have included Claudio Arrau, Patricia Zander, William Masselos, Margaret Ott, and Theodore Lettvin, and conducting with Donald Thulean. He teaches at New England Conservatory, where he has directed festivals of the music of John Cage, Steve Reich, and (in 2010) Christian Wolff.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- MAR 2 Brechemin Piano Series. 7:30 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
- 3 Chamber Singers & University Chorale. 7:30 PM, Meany Theater.
Notable Femmes: Trio Nova Mundi. 7:30 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.
- 5 Campus Philharmonia Orchestras. 3:30 PM, Meany Theater.
Intersections: *Music, Words, and Pictures* (4:00 pm lecture, Catherine Roche). 4:30 PM,
Brechemin Auditorium.
- 6 Studio Jazz Ensemble, UW Modern Band. 7:30 PM, Meany Theater.
UW Gospel Choir. 7:30 PM, University Presbyterian Church.
- 7 Wind Ensemble and Symphonic Band with Mary Lynch, oboe. 7:30 PM, Meany Theater.
- 9 Faculty Recital: Robin McCabe, piano. 7:30 PM, Meany Theater.
- 10 UW Symphony with Concerto Competition Winners & Ludovic Morlot. 7:30 PM, Meany
Theater.
Luke Fitzpatrick, adapted viola: Works of Harry Partch. 7:30 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.

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