

In conjunction with the
Young Internationals Chamber Music Society

presents

M47
2000
3-31

GRENZGÄNGE - BORDER CROSSINGS

New Music from Far Away Places

With guest artist

CLEMENS MERKEL, VIOLIN (Recital)

March 31, 2000

8:00 PM

Brechemin Auditorium

PROGRAM

Germany

- ① METALSEASONS (World Premiere)..... GERHARD STÄBLER (b. 1949) (14:22)
③ MINIATUREN - MOSAIK (World Premiere)..... MICHAEL ROOK (b. 1968) (8:07)
② TOCCATINA..... HELMUT LACHENMANN (b. 1935) (4:47)

INTERMISSION

France

- ④ ROMAN JOËL-FRANÇOIS DURAND (b. 1954) (7:14)

Italy

- ⑤-8 DIVERTIMENTO #4 GIACINTO SCELSI (1905-1988) (14:34)

This concert was made possible by the University of Washington School of Music and the Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany, San Francisco.

Born 1968 in Freiburg, Germany, violinist CLEMENS MERKEL is considered one of the most talented interpreters of contemporary music in Germany today. Integrating a large variety of different styles, he has performed in numerous concerts throughout Europe and North America.

Pursuing an intensive career as a soloist, he is also member of the Thürmchen Ensemble (Cologne) and Kore Ensemble (Montreal). Merkel released a highly-acclaimed solo CD (Edition Wandelweiser, Berlin) including pieces by Bruno Maderna, Antoine Beuger and Thomas Stiegler.

Well known for his innovative and highly individualistic interpretations of such contrasting composers as Bach and Cage, Merkel has made a name for himself by creating his own unconventional style as a violinist, often characterized as simultaneously intense, precise and sensitive.

Mr. Merkel received his training at the Musikhochschule Freiburg, where he studied with Jörg Hofmann, and undertook additional studies with performers such as Irvine Arditti. In 1994, he won a scholarship prize from the Darmstädter Ferienkurse für Neue Musik, and in 1997 was awarded a scholarship to the prestigious Akademie Schloss Solitude.

Born in 1949 near Ravensburg, Germany, GERHARD STÄBLER is one of Germany's preeminent composers. He received his musical training at the Musikhochschule in Detmold and Essen, where he studied composition with Nicolaus A. Huber and organ with Gerd Zacher. He has won many awards, and in 1987, his multimedia composition *Die Spieldose* was made the official contribution of the Federal Republic of Germany to the World Music Days in Frankfurt, Germany. His works have been performed throughout Europe, the US, and Asia.

"Gerhard Stäbler belongs to the generation of composers who had to work with the legacy left by such divergent aesthetic streams as the Darmstadt and New York schools. In the past few decades, Stäbler succeeded in developing a flexible way of handling the various compositional trends of the 20th century. There are numerous pieces that are to be understood as "performance," as well as those that completely conform to the Western notion of a "work." On the other hand, there are pieces by Stäbler in which different means of musical production are treated as equals."

— Björn Gottstein, "Natur als Geschichte: Gerhard Stäbler's *MetalSeasons*/[APPARAT]"

Stäbler's music is characterized by a pluralistic aesthetic, permitting him to use both divergent musical materials and techniques, as well as incorporating "musicians" of different backgrounds, from the classically-trained violinist to the helicopter pilot and his aircraft.

Stäbler's *MetalSeasons*, premiered in M... at a former steel mill in Germany, is a large... various musical forces, consisting of a solo vi... chamber orchestra, several percussionists, choir, electronics, 2 biplanes, 2 helicopters, and a dirigible

"Steel resounds. The foundry, too. The spaces between the halls as well. The halls themselves. Percussionists stamp oil drums, use ratchets to twist time, hammer on metal, wood, stone. Wind players "dance" atop machines, send signals chasing through the area... a violin, an accordion, a double bass tell stories of confinement and vastness, of exclusion and breakthrough. Aircraft growl overhead, singers and instrumentalists transform the halls into cathedrals, into places of life, into forums of debate about being. All this in a world that wants to elevate technology to the measurement of omnipotence, but that still must live with the longing for freedom."

(From the program note of the premiere)

MICHAEL ROOK is a doctoral candidate in Composition at the University of Washington School of Music, where he has been a student of Joël-François Durand since 1995. He was born 1968 in Düsseldorf, Germany, where he received his initial musical training. In 1988 he came to the United States to study composition at Oberlin College, where he received the B.Mus. in 1993. He was awarded prizes by the Northrhine-Westphalian Ministry of Culture in 1987 and 1989, as well as from the German Music Council in 1991. In 1999, he was commissioned by the city of Duisburg, Germany, to write a piece for percussion duo for the final concert of the Rheinisches Musikfest 1999. He has participated in various festivals, most notably the Darmstädter Ferienkurse für Neue Musik and June in Buffalo.

Miniaturen-Mosaik was written as the first in a series of pieces that can be performed either as a work for one instrument, or as part of a work for multiple instruments. The final stage of this project will be a chamber orchestra piece, where each individual voice can be combined with others to form pieces for smaller forces. This idea is an extension of the traditional notion of polyphony, since the final result will be a work in which all voices contain their own identity and character to such a degree that they can stand alone, or become part of something larger without relinquishing their identity.

The title *Miniaturen-Mosaik* hints at the way this violin piece was written: a collection of miniatures form a mosaic. Each miniature is composed in such a manner that it forms a unit unto itself; only the entire collection however reveals the complete picture. Thus, this violin piece consists of a tapestry of miniatures that differ in their shortness, and add up to form a monologue. The first miniature, lasting merely five seconds, is one of the foundations of both this violin solo and the entire cycle, and represents a

individualistic element. It contains three different personae, which are pitted against each other, influence each other, merge, and transform over the course of the piece. A second idea serves to unify and direct these miniatures, enabling the integration of the solo voice into larger contexts (the complete cycle), but, by the same token, acts against the individual aspect of the opening miniature: a grid that increasingly constricts the available range of pitch and time-space by spiraling around a center, until the smallest point is reached. This creates increasingly difficult conditions for the three personae to maintain their identity, as they run out of time and space in which to articulate themselves. This second idea was inspired by the concept of black holes in outer space, whose gravity is so immense that not even light escapes; all that falls in is compacted to an infinitesimally small point. Furthermore, this piece is not only inspired by the long list of solo violin pieces from the past 300 years, but also by ideas explored in the visual arts, such as the mannerist paintings of Archimbaldo, who painted portraits that consist of details otherwise found in still life, allowing the viewer to perceive more than one dimension. It is this multidimensionality, lying at the heart of polyphony, which presents a challenge, that continually resurfaces in *Miniaturen-Mosaik*.

HELMUT LACHENMANN was born in 1935 in Stuttgart, Germany. After studying composition with Johann Nepomuk David in Stuttgart, he went to Venice, Italy to study composition with Luigi Nono (1958-60). After completing his studies, he lived in Munich as a freelance composer before he taught at Ulm, Ghent, and Basel. Lachenmann has won various awards, such as the Bach-Preis from the city of Hamburg, and has been frequently invited to teach at the Darmstadter Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik.

One of the most innovative and important composers of our time, his work not only shows concern for advancing the possibilities in music performance and composition, but is also concerned with developments in society.

"Since *temA* and *Air* my music has been concerned with rigidly-constructed denial, with the exclusion of that which strikes me as the listening expectations a society performs. The aesthetic offering—the intensity, if you will—the beauty of music is for me inseparably bound to the efforts with which the composer opposes these societal pre-determinations in his music. This confronts the implicit social reality of music, which the composer depicts, thereby expressing himself."

He currently teaches Composition at the Musikhochschule Stuttgart.

Associate Professor of Composition at the University of Washington School of Music JOËL-FRANÇOIS

DURAND was born 1954 in Orléans, France. His compositional career brought him from France to Germany, where he studied composition with Brian Ferneyhough, and finally to the United States, where he received a Ph.D. in Composition from the University of New York, Stony Brook, in 1988, where he worked with Bülent Arel and Daria Semegen. In 1979 and 1983 he participated in the composition and analysis classes of György Ligeti and Luciano Berio at the Centre Acanthes. Professor Durand has won various international prizes and scholarships including the DAAD Scholarship (1981-82), a Fulbright (1982-83), French Ministry of Culture (1985-86) and the Kranichsteiner Musikpreis from the Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik, Germany (1990).

Roman (1982), for solo violin

Assessing a piece written exactly eighteen years ago presents an interesting challenge: to what extent were the intentions of the time realized in a successful way, and how did these past concerns develop later on in my music?

The answer to the first question risks at worst to expose the weaknesses or misjudgments of the time, whereas the second question can reveal to what extent these early concerns were either exclusively bound in the spatial and temporal environment which saw their emergence, or turned into some kind of long term creative impetus.

The intention of *Roman*, then, beyond the basic one of writing a virtuosic piece of music, was to create a simulation of polyphony on two levels: the first one, local, is a common feature of music for solo instrument since the Baroque times. One gives the illusion of several lines moving concurrently by placing them in different registers and alternating them at short intervals. The phrases seem to connect to each other mainly because of their common registers. The result is often an immediate complexity in the presentation of the musical elements because the listener is asked to follow a number of independent discourses.

To alleviate these difficulties of perception somewhat I decided here to try to direct the perception away from intervallic or rhythmic details, by placing these "parametric" dimensions in a more global context of characterization. The identities of the phrases have more to do with their profile, placement in register, timbre (with the help of particular instrumental techniques: *arco*, *col legno*, *pizz.*, etc.). Each of the original elements of the piece is therefore characterized by a type of transformation rather than a fixed and recognizable "material." For example, the lyrical phrase which opens the piece goes through a number of small timbral distortions (variation of the amount of vibrato, use of *sul ponticello*, *legato* versus *staccato*, *col legno tratto*, harmonics, etc.). These changes, rather than signaling a kind of variation technique, indicate passages through different characters, as if the main actor of the play

were asked to play a number of different personages, while we know that it is the same actor who is doing all of them. Here, what these characters say is somewhat less important than their identification through their tone, for example calmness or excitement, their personality. These characters keep coming back, alternating with each other, dialoguing and arguing, taking up what they were saying before, before being interrupted. In that sense, the original idea of polyphony becomes formal as well: phrases, identified by types of expression, come back more or less frequently, pushing further what was said before. The initial phrase, for example, characterized by a certain singing, even lyrical quality, always comes back in a slow tempo, but soon becomes a real polyphony (double, then triple stops), warm and expressive. The atmosphere which was surrounding it the first time still imbues its other appearances, but there is little else to help its recognition.

This leads us to the answer to our second question. It goes without saying that the "simplification" mentioned above has one major drawback: the withdrawal of the musical subject, in the form of a theme, or even motivic elements, its eradication and replacement by a somewhat vague (less rational, measurable) category of "profile and timbre" mentioned earlier—a category which, while not being useless or unmanageable, nevertheless does not necessarily engage the attention in the same manner. While certainly indicative of the very particular environment in which I lived at the time of this composition (as a student of Brian Ferneyhough), it also points toward a more general and recurring concern of my compositional work at large: the arduous

search for the center, for the subject and its possible non-destructive realization in the world.

Joël-François Durand

One can view a tone as a cosmic force underlying everything. There is a nice definition of this: the tone is the first motion of the immovable, and this is the beginning of creation. The tone in its resting condition (if one can say that) is circular, but since the nature of its being is flexible, it can take on any shape and become multidimensional. Due to its cosmic nature it can be "activated" or "applied" by humans, for example. In a certain occult tradition there is a nice idea: the tone can have three bodies, the physical body, the psychical body and the logical body. This means that it can give impulses on all three levels.

Divertimento No. 4 from 1955 consists of four movements, which, beginning in similar meters, develop their own characters and structures from a small cell. Classical types of development of a movement are hardly recognizable, although the second movement distantly resembles a Scherzo and the third movement hints at a "slow" movement.

From the initial cell of each movement, long, drawn out musical phrases are unfolded, that are richly embellished—quasi-improvised—and equipped with ornaments reminiscent of the Far East. These ornaments circle sometimes audibly, sometimes covertly around a central pitch that appears in all sorts of registers, and is sometimes transposed, but almost always present.

GIACINTO SCELSI, *Klang und Musik*, 1953/54

1999-2000 UPCOMING EVENTS

Tickets and information for events listed below in Meany Theater and Meany Studio are available from the UW Arts Ticket Office at 543-4880.

Tickets for events listed below in Brechemin Auditorium (Music Building) and Walker-Ames Room (Kane Hall) are on sale at the door, beginning thirty minutes before the performance. Information on events is available from the School of Music Calendar of Events line, 685-8384, and the School of Music website (<http://depts.washington.edu/musicweb/>).

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

- | | |
|--|---|
| April 4, Faculty Artists in Recital: Soni Ventorum Wind Quintet. 8 PM, Meany Theater. | April 19, Guest Keyboard Artists Series: Andrew Rangell, piano. 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium. |
| April 7, Brechemin Scholarship Winners Concert. 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium. | April 21, Seattle Opera Preview: Rossini, THE BARBER OF SEVILLE. 1:30 PM, Brechemin Auditorium. |
| April 10, University Jazz Group. 8 PM, Meany Theater. | April 24, University Symphonic and Concert Bands. 8 PM, Meany Theater. |
| April 11, Visiting Artists in Ethnomusicology: Music of Ghana and Trinidad. 8 PM, Meany Theater. | April 28, Mallet Head Series. 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium. |
| April 13, Keyboard Debut Series. 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium. | April 28, Guest Keyboard Artists Series: Marnie Giesbrecht & Joachim Segger, Duo Organists. 12:30 PM and 8 PM, Walker-Ames Room.. |
| April 17, Voice Division Recital. 7 PM, Brechemin Auditorium. | May 9, Jazz Combos. 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium. |