

LUCIANO BERIO is one of the world's most distinguished composers. He was born in Oneglia, Italy, in 1925. He studied with Ghedini at the Milan Conservatory and worked at the Italian Broadcasting Corporation in Milan from 1953 to 1960 where he founded the Studio di Fonologia and led the concert series of the same name. He has taught in Tanglewood, Mills College (California), Dartington, Darmstadt, Harvard University and from 1965 to 1971 he was a member of the Composition Faculty of the Juilliard School of Music in New York. Luciano Berio runs the Electro-Acoustic Department of IRCAM, in Paris. In 1980 he founded Tempo Reale, a new music institute in Florence.

Berio's works are performed regularly throughout the world, particularly in the major music centers and festivals of Western Europe, the USA, Israel, Japan and Australia. Many festivals have featured his works in depth including Paris, Royen, La Rochelle, Metz, Venice, Donaueschingen and Holland. He frequently conducts concerts of his own compositions and in this capacity has conducted, among others, the London Symphony and BBC Symphony Orchestras, the London Sinfonietta in the UK and abroad, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Cleveland, Israel Philharmonic, Concertgebouw, Rotterdam Philharmonic, French National, Stuttgart Radio, Bavarian Radio, Cologne Radio and Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestras.

Of his prolific output the following works constitute some of his most important: "Differences" (1959), "Epifanie" (1961-62), "Circles" (1960), "Visage" (1961), "Passaggio" (1962-63), "Laborintus II" (1965), "Sinfonia" (1968), "Bewegung" (1971), "Concerto for Two Pianos" (1973), "Coro" (1976), and, of course, the "Sequenza" and "Chemins" series which span his career from 1958.

1995-96 UPCOMING EVENTS:

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, ProConArt. 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.

November 29, University Wind Ensemble. 8 PM, Meany Theater.

November 30, Jazz Artist Series. 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.

December 2 and 3, Collegium Musicum & Madrigal Singers. December 2 at 8 PM, and December 3 at 3 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.

December 4, Voice Division Recital. 7 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.

December 5, University Chorale. 8 PM, Meany Theater.

December 6, Jazz Combos. 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.

December 6, University Symphony with Craig Sheppard, piano. 8 PM, Meany Theater.

December 7, University Studio Jazz Ensemble. 8 PM, Meany Theater.

December 10, Student Chamber Music Ensembles. 3 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.

December 11, Jazz Combos. 8 PM, Brechemin Auditorium.

December 12, Opera Workshop. CANCELLED.



School
of
Music
University
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Washington

University of Washington
THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

presents

The Sequenzas of Luciano Berio (b. 1925)

as performed by the

CONTEMPORARY GROUP
Stuart Dempster and
William O. Smith, *Co-directors*

FACULTY

Felix Skowronek, *flute*

Pamela Vokolek, *harp*

Emilie Berendsen, *voice*

Carmen Pelton, *voice*

Craig Sheppard, *piano*

Stuart Dempster, *trombone*

William O. Smith, *clarinet*

GUESTS

Shannon Spicciati, *oboe*

Jonathan Graber, *violin*

AND SPECIAL GUEST

Michael Nicoletta, *guitar*

8:00 PM
November 28, 1995
Meany Theater

CD
C67
1995
11-28

DATE # 12,693

CASS # 12,694
12,695

C67 1995 11-28

PROGRAM

Dedications:

- DAF ID1 SEQUENZA I for flute (1958) 0'15 to Severino Gazzelloni
Felix Skowronek
- ID2 SEQUENZA II for harp (1963) 10'48 to Francis Pierre
Pamela Vokolek
- ID3 SEQUENZA III for voice (1966) 8'07 to Cathy Berberian
Emilie Berendsen

(brief pause)

SEQUENZA III for voice
Carmen Pelton

- ID4 SEQUENZA IV for piano (1965) 10'40 to Jocy de Carvalho
Craig Sheppard

INTERMISSION

- ID5 SEQUENZA V for trombone (1966) 5' to Stuart Dempster
Stuart Dempster
- ID6 SEQUENZA VII for oboe (1969) 9'16 to Heinz Holliger
Shannon Spicciati
- ID7 SEQUENZA VIII for violin (1976) 9'30 to Carlo Chiarappa
Jonathan Graber

(brief pause)

- ID8 SEQUENZA IXA for clarinet (1980) 14'40 to Anthony Pay
William O. Smith
- ID9 SEQUENZA XI for guitar (1988) 15'50 to Eliot Fisk
Michael Nicoella

NB - bad balance on I-V
balance changes during VII and others

CASS 12,694-SIDE A

12,694-SIDE B

12,695-SIDE A

I have been asked if I began my series of *Sequenzas* by chance, or if I had a plan. My first *Sequenza* was written in 1958 for the flute of Severino Gazzelloni, and it was not by chance that we were together in Darmstadt during those years—as it wasn't by chance that I met the harp of Francis Pierre and the voice of Cathy Berberian. In the *Sequenzas* there are different unifying elements, planned and unplanned. The most obvious, and maybe the most external, is virtuosity. I have a great respect for virtuosity even if this word can give rise to scornful smiles, and can even suggest the image of a slinky man with quick fingers and an empty head. Virtuosity has often to do with a conflict or a tension between the musical idea and the instrument, between the musical material and the musical matter. It may often happen that technical stereotypes or concerns prevail over the idea, as was the case with Paganini, whose work certainly didn't stir musical history, but it did contribute to the development of violin technique. A different case of tension arises when novelty and complexity of musical thought—with its equally complex and diversified expressive dimensions—impose changes in the approach to the instrument, often requiring some new technical solutions, as is the case with Bach's *Partitas* or Beethoven's late piano music, where the performer is asked to function at a very high level of intellectual and technical virtuosity. Finally, today's virtuoso, worthy of such a name, is a musician able to perform in a broad historical perspective, capable of coping with the tensions between past and present creative issues. My *Sequenze* are written for this type of performer (I have neither interest nor patience of a 'specialist' in contemporary music) whose virtuosity is, above all, a virtuosity of awareness.

Another unifying aspect of all the *Sequenzas* is my own awareness of the fact that instruments cannot really be changed, destroyed or invented: not only those occasional conflicts between idea and performance techniques, but also processes of a social and economic nature are responsible for their slow transformation through centuries. It would be naive to say that Beethoven, with his late piano works, actually *invented* the modern piano—without understanding the position of those impressive works in a world where music, looking for larger spaces and larger audiences, was conquering a larger dynamic range and was becoming 'louder.' I think that a musical instrument is in itself a piece of language. Trying to invent a new one—with its mechanical and acoustical properties—is as futile and pathetic as trying to invent a new syntactical rule in language. A synthesizer, in fact, can certainly be a clever gadget, but it is not an instrument. The individual can contribute to the transformation of instruments only by using them and understanding, *post factum*, the complex nature of those transformations. The individual is excluded from the logic and the continuity of the transformations, just as in a transportation system, the continuity stems from the system itself and not from the traveller. No individual was ever able to change the violin; after 350 years it is still the same (with the exception of the bow, the bowing technique and the substance of the strings): I am attracted to that dignified and slow-paced transformation of certain instruments and techniques through the centuries.

It may sound unfortunate, but in the *Sequenzas* I have never tried to 'change' the instruments and I have never attempted to treat them in a manner contrary to

their own nature. I could never bring myself to insert screws and rubbers between the strings of a piano, or even attach a contact-mike to a violin (although I am totally involved with the possibility of extending instrumental performance—as it is—through a new digital technology.) To 'prepare' a piano is like drawing mustaches on the Mona Lisa, even when the pretext is to explore a non-tempered musical space. One might wonder, indeed, why such a well-tempered instrument was chosen: because, I suppose, it was the most readily available and the most sturdy. Anyway, the piano is still a piano and it has certainly survived its gentle, smiling American rapists.

In the *Sequenzas* I have often explored certain specific technical aspects of the instrument and I have also tried to comment on the relationship between the virtuoso and his instrument. This is why certain of the *Sequenzas* (*III* and *V*, for instance) can also be heard and seen as a theatre of vocal and instrumental gestures; and why others seem to challenge the conventional notion of the instrument—*Sequenza II* for harp, for example, French "Impressionism" left us with an image of the harpist as an almost naked girl with long hair making delicate glissandi. But the harp also has another face: it can be hard, loud and aggressive. A combination of those two faces is something I tried to bring out in *Sequenza II*.

Like *Sequenza III* for voice (mainly based on everyday vocal behaviour and on a 'modular' text by Markus Kutter¹) and *Sequenza V* for trombone (developing an intermodulation between instrumental and vocal sounds), *Sequenza I* for flute (a 'sequence' of harmonic and articulatory characters) and *Sequenza VII* for oboe can be heard as polyphonic essays based on fast transitions, or a simultaneous interaction between different modes of behavior. In *Sequenza VII* for oboe, this research for a virtual polyphony is realized through consistent hierarchies of pitches, colours (through the same pitch played with different fingerings) and registers constantly placed in perspective (and consequently more subtly perceived) through an ever present B natural, which can be played by any other instrument.

Both *Sequenza IV* for piano and *Sequenza VI* for viola are concerned with density. In the former, there are two harmonic 'sequences' simultaneously developed: one on the keyboard and the other through the 'sustaining pedal.' In the *Sequenza* for viola (a formal study on 'repetition' and 'periodicity,' opposing repeated schemes to others appearing only once) a maximum acoustical density is constantly paralleled by a very high degree of harmonic tension. Because of its harmonic and technical complexity, *Sequenza VI* also constitutes the basis, the mould, for other works such as *Chemins II* (for viola and nine instruments) and *Chemins III* (for viola, nine instruments and orchestra), both of which, while keeping the solo part intact, expand the harmonic and articulatory implications of *Sequenza VI*. *Sequenza VI* may thus be considered the central element of a triple-faced idea.

¹ Give me—a few words—for a woman—to sing a truth—allowing us—to build a house—without worrying—before night comes.

To compose *Sequenza VIII* has been like paying a personal debt to the violin, which to me, is one of the most complex of instruments. I studied violin myself, while I was already learning the piano, and before starting the clarinet (my father wanted me to practice 'all' the instruments), and I have always maintained a strong attraction for this instrument, mixed, however, with rather tormented feelings (perhaps because I was already 13—much too late—when I started my violin lessons). While almost all the other *Sequenze* develop to an extreme degree a very limited choice of instrumental possibilities, *Sequenza VIII* deals with a larger and more global view of the instrument. In fact it can also be listened to as a development of instrumental gestures. *Sequenza VIII* is built around two notes (A - B natural) which act as a compass in the work's rather diversified and elaborate itinerary, where polyphony is no longer virtual but real, and where the virtuoso must make the listener constantly aware of the history behind each instrumental gesture.

Luciana Berio

Berio's notes take us to 1980. Annotator Paul Griffiths notes that *Sequenza IX*, like *Sequenza VIII*, is concerned with the perception of melody, the ways in which a theme can be made to grow or decay, the limits to which it can be changed and yet remain recognizable, a central characteristic of Berio's music since 1970. On the other hand, *Sequenza XI* is a very dramatic and powerful work and makes a fitting conclusion to the evening.

Among the many points of interest are the two performances of *Sequenza III* by Emilie Berendsen and Carmen Pelton. This is done to demonstrate the remarkable and divergent approaches one can take in interpreting this *Sequenza*; we are exceedingly fortunate in having two such excellent vocalists on the School of Music faculty.

Luciano Berio is one of the major composers of the late 20th century. When we set about to celebrate his 70th year, the idea was to perform all the *Sequenzas*². However, as one might expect, it was not possible to mount all of them.

Stuart Dempster

² *Sequenzas* not being performed include: *Sequenza VI* for viola, 1967 (dedicated to Walter Trampler); *Sequenza IXb* for alto saxophone, 1980 (dedicated to Iwan Roth and John Harle for their help in adapting *Sequenza IXa* to the alto saxophone), and *Sequenza X* for trumpet, 1984 (dedicated to Thomas Stevens.)