

compact disc

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3-10

Harry Partch: The Complete Works for Adapted Viola and Intoning Voice

March 10th, 2017, 7:30 PM
Brechemin Auditorium

Luke Fitzpatrick: Adapted Viola and Intoning Voice

CD#17,714

Program

Two Psalms (1931)

Harry Partch (1901-1974)

- 1 The Lord Is My Shepherd (23rd Psalm) 3:17
- 2 By the Rivers of Babylon (137th Psalm) 5:28

Seventeen Lyrics by Li Po (1930-33)

Harry Partch

- 3 The Long Departed Lover
- 4 On the City Street
- 5 An Encounter in the Field
- 6 The Intruder
- ~~7 On Ascending the Sin-Ping Tower~~
- 8 In the Spring-time on the South Side of the Yangtze Kiang
- 9 The Night of Sorrow
- 10 On Hearing the Flute in the Yellow Crane House
- 11 On Hearing the Flute at Lo-cheng One Spring Night
- 12 A Dream

27:37

Intermission

- 13 On Seeing off Meng Hao-jan
- 14 On the Ship of Spice-wood
- 15 With a Man of Leisure
- 16 A Midnight Farewell
- 17 Before the Cask of Wine
- 18 By the Great Wall
- 19 I Am a Peach Tree

19:02

20 The Potion Scene from Romeo and Juliet, Act IV, Scene 3 (1931)

Harry Partch

Luke Fitzpatrick, Adapted Viola and Intoning Voice

Program Notes by Luke Fitzpatrick

1931 was a transitional time for Harry Partch, both personally and compositionally. Having recently arrived in San Francisco, the *Two Psalms* (1931) represent a development in his writing for Intoning Voice. Seeking a more accurate representation of human speech, Partch transcribed *Psalms 23* by Cantor Reuben Rinder, of the Congregation Emanu-El in San Francisco. This transcription became the basis of the vocal part for the first setting of the *Two Psalms*. Using this vocal transcription as a guide, Partch was able to complete *By The Rivers of Babylon* (137th Psalm). He later re-orchestrated the *Two Psalms* for Voice, Chromelodeon, Kithara and Adapted Viola/Cello.

Harry Partch's *17 Lyrics by Li Po* (1930-33) were composed following Partch's dissolution with Western music. Partch sought to expand the 12 tone equal-tempered scale through just intonation, exploring 29 notes before reaching his well-known 43-note scale and others. Partch's first of many instruments was his Adapted Viola. Using a custom viola built with a cello neck, Partch fashioned a series of brads along the neck indicating his initial 29-note scale. His first work he did not destroy, Partch sets the music in the *17 Lyrics by Li Po* to the poetry of Li Bai (701-762) so the "vitality of spoken inflection is retained in the music." Li Bai's passion for sweet wine, the pain of lost love and his exploration of the human condition made it a natural fit with Partch's music.

The Potion Scene (1931) from *Romeo and Juliet* was dedicated to Rudolphine Radil, a vocalist who Partch had gotten to know shortly after moving to San Francisco. Interestingly, an early version of *A Dream* from his *17 Lyrics by Li Po* also contains a dedication to Rudolphine Radil. *The Potion Scene* also utilizes the flattened bridge, which allows the top three strings to be played simultaneously, that is featured in the second half of the *17 Lyrics of Li Po*. Similar to the *Two Psalms*, Partch would later explore this work again. In 1955, he arranged *The Potion Scene* for 3 Voices, Chromelodeon, Kithara, Adapted Viola/Cello, Bass Marimba and Marimba Eroica.

Special thanks to Charles Corey for rediscovering the scores for *The Potion Scene* and the *Two Psalms*, and his help putting together these works.