

DAT 13,066
CASS 13,067

University of Washington
THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

C67
1997
6-2

presents



School
of
Music
University
of
Washington

TRADITION AND MODERNITY

90 Years of Music in the
Twentieth Century

CONTEMPORARY GROUP

Joël-François Durand, *guest director*

June 2, 1997

8:00 PM

Meany Theater

PROGRAM

AT
1
Six Bagatelles for wind quintet (1953) ^{13.35} György Ligeti
(b. 1924)

- I. *Allegro con spirito*
- II. *Rubato. Lamentoso*
- III. *Allegro grazioso*
- IV. *Presto ruvido*
- V. *Béla Bartók in memoriam. Adagio. Mesto*
- VI. *Molto vivace. Capriccioso*

Shari Muller-Ho, *flute*
Darlene Franz, *oboe*
Kathryn Labiak, *clarinet*
Tony Miller, *horn*
Ryan Hare, *bassoon*

10
2 Excerpts from the Fourteen Bagatelles Op. 6 (1908).....13:20 Béla Bartók
 V. *Vivo*
 VI. *Lento*
 VII. *Allegretto molto capriccioso*
 II. *Allegro giocoso*
 XII. *Rubato*
 XIII. (*Elle est morte...*) *Lento funebre*
 XIV. *Valse (Ma mie qui danse...) Presto*
 Kandis Griff, piano cass side A
side B

10
3 Infinite Regress, for solo cello (1996)7:00 Elizabeth Hoffman
first performance
 Loren Dempster, cello

10
4 String Quartet Op. 3 (1908)20:50 Alban Berg (1885-1935)
 Scholarship String Quartet
 Kevin He, *violin I*
 Lorentz Gamma, *violin II*
 Nathan Medina, *viola*
 Ching-Tzy Ko, *cello*

This short program presents a cross section of some important musical tendencies of our finishing century: the oldest pieces of the program were both written in 1908 (Bartók and Berg) and the most recent one is from last year (Hoffman.)

An interesting link between all these works is that they show composers in the early stage of their development. It is easy to recognize Bartók's style in these Bagatelles for piano, written when he was 26. A number of the familiar techniques are already here: use of folk elements, mixture of non-tonal scales (such as the whole-tone and the octatonic scales), with diatonicism and chromaticism, symmetrical constructions.

Berg's String Quartet, which he wrote at the age of 22 while finishing his studies with Arnold Schoenberg, is still very close to the music of his teacher. But its affective content, its *tone*, is already highly personal. The piece also demonstrates, particularly in its second movement, a remarkable maturity and boldness in its formal construction. The program notes to this piece show the emotional climate surrounding its composition and first performances.

The relation between Bartók and Ligeti's early music is, as mentioned by Jonathan Bernard, quite apparent in the Six Bagatelles for Wind Quintet. One can even notice some quasi motivic relations between both composers' pieces: the most striking one is probably the descending third motif of both "funeral marches:" Ligeti's "Béla Bartók in memoriam. Adagio. Mesto," and Bartók's ("Elle est morte...") *Lento funebre*.

György Ligeti: Six Bagatelles for Wind Quintet (1953)

The Six Bagatelles date from the years before Ligeti's emigration from Hungary to the West and are written in a style firmly Bartókian in foundation, much more conservative than the music he would begin composing less than four years later—although by the official standards of acceptable artistic expression that prevailed in most of Eastern Europe at that time these Bagatelles were still too radical to be automatically granted a public hearing. They are actually a derivative work: from his Musica Ricercata (1951-53), a set of eleven short pieces for piano, Ligeti extracted six—Nos. 3, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10, in that order—and set them for wind quintet. The Musica Ricercata was based upon a kind of augmentative idea, with the first piece employing just two notes, the second piece three, and so on up to the eleventh, in which all twelve notes of the chromatic scale appear. The Bagatelles thus consist of an abbreviated tour through the same material, in the same order, with most of the middle intact but with beginning and end omitted.

Contrary to what the listener might expect, given this description, the pieces do not become predictably more chromatic or dissonant as the work advances. The second of the Bagatelles (Rubato, Lamentoso), for example, is quite chromatic by comparison to the Allegro grazioso and the Presto ruvido that follow it. Likewise, the sixth and final Bagatelle (Molto vivace, Capriccioso) is less overtly dissonant than the fifth, "Béla Bartók in memoriam. Adagio. Mesto."

It took a decided liberalization of the political climate in Hungary, just before the revolution of 1956, to allow Ligeti to arrange a first performance of the Bagatelles. Still, owing to the fact that (as a composer has dryly observed) "totalitarian systems do not like dissonances," one of the six had to be left off the program (accounts differ as to just which one it was.) The first complete performance of the Bagatelles took place in Stockholm in 1969.

Jonathan Bernard

Elizabeth Hoffman: Infinite Regress for Solo Cello (1996)

This piece was written for and inspired by Loren Dempster. It is a single movement work with sectional divisions. The title refers to persistent formal aspects of the piece which traverse these divisions: at any moment the musical ideas are simultaneously moving forward and referring back to something earlier. Almost everything is meant to be heard as a development of something else in the piece, including the beginning. There is thus an in-time and an out-of-time dimension to the work.

Hoffman completed her doctorate last year at the University of Washington where she studied composition with Diane Thome and Richard Karpen. A composer of acoustic and electronic music, Hoffman has received local and international recognition for her music including awards from the Seattle Arts Commission, and the Bourges and Prix Ars Electronica competitions. She has written two commissioned works for the local cappella choral group, The Esoterics.

Alban Berg: String Quartet Op. 3 (1908, completed at the end of Berg's studies with Arnold Schoenberg)

Letter from Berg to Helene Nahowski, Vienna, 8 July 1910 (Helene and Berg were married on 3 May 1911): 'Oh, may one thought be in your mind from the first moment on: "For utter bliss I lack only—Alban!" Just the way I think at every happy moment of my life that all beautiful things only become truly lovely when you are there (which is why I asked you to come to the rehearsals of my quartet.)'

Berg to Schoenberg, Trahütten, 8 September 1914 (Berg studied composition with Arnold Schoenberg between 1904 and 1908): "For four years I have wanted very much to dedicate something to you. The pieces I wrote under your supervision, Mr. Schoenberg, the sonata, songs, and string quartet, were ruled out because they came directly from you." (Berg eventually dedicated his Orchestra Pieces, Op. 6 to Schoenberg in 1914.)

Berg to his wife (Helen), 20 February 1920: "...a letter from Webern, full of interesting news!... Webern also writes, 'Recently I had the first rehearsal of your string quartet with Feist; I can only tell you it was marvelous! How I like your music! But it is difficult. I long to bring out everything perfectly and clearly.' You can just imagine how I feel."

Berg to Webern, Vienna, 16 March 1920 (Anton Webern studied composition with Schoenberg at the same time as Berg; they remained close friends all their lives): "Well, so you have started rehearsing my quartet. That bit of news has come as a very pleasant surprise. Not only do I have an unaccountable weakness for the quartet, which I am not ashamed to admit to you (but only you), I long to hear it played well, which it will be if the quartet that played the Zemlinsky so excellently is going to play mine, with no one other than you, who have the ability like no one else, to study it with them. If it really comes about, I will be overjoyed."

Berg to his wife, Hallein near Salzburg, 3 August 1923 (the day after a performance by the Havemann Quartet): "I have just sent off the telegram. But I cannot tell you how wonderful it was! Artistically it was the most glorious evening of my life and I am terribly sorry you could not be here for it, you who have shared the many bleak years of an artist's life with me, who are as much involved in the quartet as I am, to whom it belongs completely!!! ... Then the quartet began, in a mood of general anticipation. They played it indescribably beautifully. I tell you—and I can tell only you—that despite my great agitation I reveled in the sound and the solemn sweetness and ecstasy of my own music. ... The first movement ended in an atmosphere of great exaltation. Audience quiet as a mouse, a short breathing space for the quartet, and on we went. At the end of the applause was general and downright frenetic. ... A really remarkable success for Salzburg and for such a little chamber-music piece. ... Havemann was engaged on the spot for Copenhagen and Stockholm, and he is going to play it everywhere in Germany next season, he likes it so much. Everyone is flabbergasted that the quartet is 13-1/2 years old! ... Wouldn't you like to come for a few days? Two or three concerts, a lot of nice people, and the most marvelous city and region!! People should see what the woman looks like to whom the quartet belongs, who gave it birth."