

The School of Music
presents the 7th program of the 1989-90 season



School
of
Music
University
of
Washington

Contemporary Group

William O. Smith

Directors

Stuart Dempster

CG7

1989

11-20

Works By
UW Composer

Richard Karpen

And

Roger Sessions

Greg Tucker

Harry Somers

Jon Deak



Faculty Guest Artists

Felix Skowronek, *flute*

Emilie Berendsen, *soprano*

November 20, 1989
8:00 PM, Meany Theater

Program

Pages from a Diary for Solo Piano (1940) ROGER SESSIONS
(1896-1984)

Poco adagio
Allegro con brio
Largissimo e misterioso
Allegro pesante

Anne Marie Scotto, *piano*

Idle Conversation for Two Flutes (1986) GREG TUCKER
(b. 1953)

Felix Skowronek and Pamela Butler Ryker, *flutes*

Shaman's Song for Voice and Prepared Piano (1983) HARRY SOMERS
(b. 1957)

Emilie Berendsen, *mezzo-soprano*
Irene Senedak, *prepared piano*

CASS SIDE A _____ **Intermission** _____
SIDE B

B. B. Wolf - an apologia for Solo Contabass (1986) JON DEAK
(Text by Richard Hartshorne) (b. 1943)

Todd Gowers, *contrabass*

Pour la Terre for Computer-generated Sounds (1988-89) RICHARD KARPEN
(b. 1957)

Program Notes

Roger Sessions, American composer and teacher, wrote relatively few small works or occasional pieces. *Pages from a Diary* is unusual because the bulk of Roger Sessions compositions are large scale works, such as symphonies, cantatas, operas, piano sonatas, and string quartets. *Pages from a Diary* was completed in 1940, following three years which were, by Session's own account, one of his most difficult creative episodes. In these short pieces he faced the chromatic implications of the violin concerto's (1935) linear freedom. For instance, in the second piece, he started more consistently to use voice-leading as the basis for his harmony. Each of the four movements of the composition are dedicated to a different student of Roger Sessions — Milton Babbitt, Edward T. Cone, Carter Harman, and Vivian Fine — not so much because of any emotional affinity, but rather with each individual's performing skill in mind. — *Anne Marie Scotto and Stuart Dempster*

Greg Tucker, composer, holds a Bachelor of Music in Composition from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst (1983) and a Master of Music in Composition from Boston University (1987). He has studied composition with Robert Stern and Charles Fussell. He is currently Audio Engineer and Technical Director for the Experimental Media Facility at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Media Laboratory in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Mr. Tucker was a member of the Underground Composers of Boston from 1984 through early 1987, with whom he had numerous performances in the Boston area. Recent works include *In the Fading Light*, a 1988 commission for the Boston-based Metropolitan Wind Symphony, a wind trio *Three Scenes* for the Arcadian Winds of Boston, and *Idle Conversations*, a flute duet that has had a number of performances across the country including the 1987 National Flute Association Convention in St. Louis. He writes:

"While it is not always clear to me that the inflections and momentum of human conversation can be prevailed upon to provide a useful musical structure, I find myself powerfully drawn to it anyway. *Idle Conversations* is an attempt to rely on my experience of the ebb and flow of conversation as the imaginative basis for a piece of music. As such it is generalized to an extent, at times a reflection upon conversation as much as a model of any particular one. The attractiveness of the idea comes, I think, from its great value as a human activity — it fills daily life with a kind of interpersonal contact that is enjoyable if not indispensable.

The pitch materials for *Idle Conversations* are arbitrarily derived from a row matrix in such a way as to provide recurring pitch groups with similar but varying intervallic content. An arbitrary pair of pitches (an interval) is chosen as a starting point. All occurrences of that pair of pitches in any forms of the row are extracted, along with any subsequent row members, from the row matrix and put together as below to form a new, but simpler matrix. These new matrices are arbitrarily chained together and read from left to right to produce sketches for the piece. As the sketches are filled out and expanded, new material is drawn from both the new matrices

and the sketches themselves. Movement through these chains of matrices is rather improvised, but the directionality (left to right) is generally preserved."

C C# F B F# E D# A A# G# D G
 C C# G F# E B F A A#
 C C# G F# G# D A
 C C# D# G# D A# A
 C C# B F A#
 C C#

A A# D G# D# C# C F# G F B E
 A A# E D# C# G# D F# G
 A A# E D# F B F#
 A A# C F B G F#

F# G B F C etc.

— Greg Tucker

Harry Sommers (b. 1925) is one of Canada's few internationally respected composers. He is a founding member of the Canadian League of Composers and in 1971, he was named a Companion of the Order of Canada. Although he has written chamber, orchestral, and piano music, since the mid-1960s Somers has been chiefly concerned with new vocal techniques. *Voiceplay* (1971), commissioned by the CBC for the late vocal virtuoso Cathy Berberian, consists largely of voiced and unvoiced phonetic sounds. For three decades, Harry Somers has composed almost exclusively on commissions from such organizations as the National Ballet of Canada, the Koussevitsky Music Foundation, the Pittsburgh Wind Symphony, and the CBG.

Shaman's Song, for voice and prepared piano, was commissioned by the S. C. Eckhardt-Gramatte National Competition for the performance of Canadian music. The text consists of words of Uvavruk, a Netsilik Inuit woman:

The great sea has set me in motion
 Set me adrift,
 Moving me as the reed moves in a river.
 The arch of sky and mightiness of storms
 Have moved the spirit within me,
 Till I am carried away
 Trembling with joy.

— Robert Priest

Jon Deak studied contrabass at the Julliard School and at the University of Illinois. He studied composition in New York with Alcides Lanza and has several compositions to his credit, mostly for small ensembles. He has been in the New York Philharmonic since 1969, most recently as

assistant principal contrabassist. *B. B. Wolf* — an apologia was written for Richard Hartshorne and is tailored to his needs and remarkable abilities.

— Stuart Dempster

Richard Karpen received his DMA in composition from Stanford University. He has received many grants including Fullbright, ASCAP Foundation, and NEA. Karpen joined the University of Washington School of Music Faculty this Autumn.

Pour la Terre, for computer-generated sounds, was composed and realized at IRCAM in Paris during 1988-89. It is the first piece to be realized using the Sun/Mercury music work-station, an environment based on a Sun computer and a Mercury ZIP array processor. The work station was developed by Xavier Rodet at IRCAM. A goal of the work-station project at IRCAM was to make a computer music system with which one could implement complex synthesis and compositional algorithms and produce, process and control many parameters in real-time at best or in the case of very complex or dense polyphony, still significantly faster than what has been possible so far on a relatively small system which is portable and not prohibitively expensive. I think it was an extremely successful effort. After having composed on a wide variety of computers, (big, small, fast, slow, and in between), I immediately felt liberated from many of the time consuming constraints of other software synthesis based systems without the loss of flexibility and generality, which is often the case when using real-time computer music systems.

The sounds in *Pour la Terre* were made through a wide variety of techniques including filtering, sampling, additive synthesis and analysis based synthesis, all of which can be easily combined in this system. For example, sampled sounds can easily be loaded into oscillator's or transfer function's tables and used in FM setups or as input signals to filters, etc... Analysis based synthesis, usually a slow process, is also much faster and more flexible. The object-oriented language, PreForm, (written in Lelisp), which serves as the software front-end to the Sun/Mercury system, made possible a flexible interrelation between the "scores" and the "orchestras." I was able to create a score-handling environment in PreForm and Lelisp to make and process data, and it was in the same languages that the synthesis algorithms were written. There was no need for the common intermediate step of creating note-lists. I would like to thank Xavier Rodet and his team at IRCAM for their kind and valuable help during my work on *Pour la Terre*.

— Richard Karpen

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Upcoming Concerts

University Singers; November 27, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater

Percussion Ensemble; November 27, 8:00 PM, Meany Studio Theater

Faculty Recital, Eric Shumsky, viola; November 28, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater

University Wind Ensemble & Symphonic Band; November 29, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater

University Jazz Combo; November 30, 8:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium

University Symphony; December 1, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater

University Madrigal Singers & Collegium Musicum; December 2 & 3; 8:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium

Studio Jazz Ensemble; December 4, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater

New Music by Young Composers; December 5, 8:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium

University Chorale; December 6, 8:00 PM, Meany Theater

Soni Ventorum; December 8, 8:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium

Rachelle McCabe, piano; December 10, 8:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium

Keyboard Debut Series; December 14, 8:00 PM, Brechemin Auditorium