

presents the

CONTEMPORARY GROUP

Jonathan Pasternack, *coordinator*

May 25, 2011

7:30 PM

Meany Studio Theater

PROGRAM

PERFECT STORM for viola solo (2010)..... SHULAMIT RAN (b. 1949)

Melia Watras, *viola*

STRING QUARTET NO. 3 (1983) ALFRED SCHNITTKE (1934-1998)

I. Andante

II. Agitato

III. Pesante

Quantum String Quartet:

Kouki Tanaka, *violin*; Meeae Hong, *violin*;
David Colmenares, *viola*; Natalie Hall, *cello*

INTERMISSION

CINQ RECHANTS (1948) OLIVIER MESSIAEN (1908-1992)

UW Contemporary Chamber Choir

Giselle Wyers, *Conductor*

MADRIGALS, Books I-IV GEORGE CRUMB (b. 1929)

Maria Mannisto, *soprano*; Brian Pfeifer, *percussion*;
Megan Bledsoe, *harp*; Elizabeth Jolly, *flutes*; Stephen Schermer, *bass*

PROGRAM NOTES

SHULAMIT RAN: *PERFECT STORM* for viola solo (2010) — notes by Shulamit Ran

When violist Melia Watras approached me about composing a solo viola piece for her, she presented an idea that added an intriguing extra dimension to this commissioning project. Her hope was to have me create a work that, in some way, alluded to, or made use of, an existing work of my choice from the viola repertoire, enabling both works to be performed side by side.

As I began reviewing, in my head, an imaginary strip of “famous viola licks” (harder to do than with violin or cello...), along with some favorite 19th century music I found myself returning time and again to the central motif, played by viola, from the first song of Luciano Berio’s *Folk Songs* for singer and instruments. This gesture was playing in my mind also through another “filter”—an instrumental ensemble work composed in 1985 by my friend, the Israeli composer Betty Olivero, who was a student and protégé of Berio’s and who made recurring use of that particular fragment in her composition *Presenze*. My memory of her rendition, though quite faint now, seems to have helped etch that lovely little “viola moment” into my mind.

It is always an interesting experience, composing music that aims, from the start, in a pre-determined direction—in this case the Berio motif—yet also aspires to have its own life, quite independently from the source of the quotation.

In the resulting solo viola work I composed for Melia, *PERFECT STORM*, the Berio motif serves as a focal point that, once established, is used as a “return” moment and the point of departure for extended new elaborations. The architectural sweep of the piece may suggest to some a “ritornello” form. In addition to the lyricism and sweetness of the opening materials – mine and Berio’s – the landscape covered in the piece includes stretches of music that are intense, dance-like, ferocious, and for a while even suggesting, to its composer at least, “fiddle” playing style.

At the end, I believe that the borrowed materials, the “found object”, is thoroughly integrated into my composition, spawning music not readily suggested by the original point of inspiration, yet obviously enabled by that miraculous alchemy that is part of the process of creating music.

ALFRED SCHNITTKE: *STRING QUARTET NO. 3* (1983) — notes by Melia Watras

Alfred Schnittke, one of the foremost Russian contemporary composers, was born in the Soviet Union in 1934. He received his formal training at the Moscow Conservatory, where he would later serve on the faculty. Much of Schnittke’s career was spent under the watchful eye of the Soviet Composers Union. Unable to compromise his style to conform to political pressures, Schnittke was blacklisted in the early 1960’s, and for twenty years was rarely allowed to travel outside of the USSR. In 1990, he would settle in Hamburg, where he passed away in 1998.

Schnittke’s String Quartet No. 3 was written in 1983. Commissioned by the Mannheim Gesellschaft für Neue Musik, the piece received its premiere by the Eder Quartet in Mannheim in May 1984. The piece was composed during a time when Schnittke’s music was becoming more widely known outside of the USSR, thanks in part to the championing of his works by artists such as violinist Gidon Kremer and cellist Mstislav Rostropovich. The 1980’s was a very productive decade for Schnittke, a period where the composer wrote his second and

third string quartets, third, fourth and fifth symphonies, as well as an opera and a ballet, among other important works.

In a number of his works, Schnittke uses memorable quotes from other composers. His third string quartet includes material from three compositional giants: a phrase from a Stabat Mater by Orlando di Lasso; the principal fugue subject from Beethoven's Grosse Fugue, Op. 133; and the D-S-C-H theme of Shostakovich. Schnittke integrates these quotes into the tapestry of his quartet, giving each a new context in which to be examined.

OLIVIER MESSIAEN. CINO RECHANTS for 12 solo singers (1948)

The text below consists of French and a pseudo-Hindi language invented by the composer (without translation).

I.

<i>hayo kapritama lali ssaréno</i>	the lovers flee
<i>les amoureux s'envolent (Refrain)</i>	Brangaine in space you blow
<i>Brangien dans l'espace tu soufflés</i>	toward the stars of death
<i>vers les étoiles de la mort</i>	ha ha ha thirst
<i>ha ha ha soif</i>	the explorer Orpheus
<i>l'explorateur Orphée</i>	finds his heart in death
<i>trouve son coeur dans la mort</i>	star-mirror star-castle
<i>miroir d'étoile château d'étoile</i>	Isolde of love separated
<i>Yseult d'amour séparé</i>	crystal-bubble of the star my return
<i>bulle de cristal d'étoile mon retour</i>	Bluebeard castle of the seventh door
<i>Barbe Bleue château de la septième</i>	
<i>porte</i>	
<i>hayo kapritama lali ssaréno</i>	

II.

<i>ma première fois terre terre l'éventail</i>	my first time earth earth fan unfurled
<i>déployé</i>	
<i>ma dernière fois terre terre l'éventail</i>	my last time earth earth fan closed
<i>refermé</i>	
<i>lumineux mon rire d'ombre</i>	luminous my shady laugh
<i>ma jeune étoile sur les fleuves</i>	my young star on the rivers
<i>ha solo de flute</i>	ha solo flute
<i>berce les quatre lézards en t'éloignant</i>	the four lizards as you move away
<i>mayoma kapritama ssarimâ (Refrain)</i>	
<i>mano nadja lâma krîta makrîta mayo</i>	
<i>mayoma kapritama ssarimâ</i>	
<i>mano nadja lâma krîta makrîta mayo</i>	

IV.

<i>niokhamâ palalane soukî (Refrain)</i>	
<i>mon bouquet tout défait rayone</i>	my crumpled bouquet is radiant
<i>les volets roses oha</i>	the pink shutters <i>oha</i>
<i>amour du clair au sombre oha</i>	love from light to dark <i>oha</i>
<i>roma tama ssouka rava kali vâli</i>	
<i>ssouka nahame kassou</i>	
<i>ha mon bouquet rayone</i>	<i>ha</i> my radiant bouquet

V.

mayoma kalimolimo
tes yeux voyagent dans le passé
mélodie solaire de corbeille courbe
dans le passé
losangé ma fleur toujours
philter Yseult rameur d'amour
fée Viviane à mon chant d'amour
cercle du jour hayo hayo
foule rose bras tendu
Persée Méduse
l'abeille l'alphabet majeur
fleur du bourdon tourne à mort
(Refrain)
quatre lézards la grotte pieuvre
et la mort
Corolle qui mord deuxième
garde à manger d'abord
dans l'avenir

your eyes wander into the past
 sun-tune of curved capital into the past

 diamond-shaped my flower still
 love-potion Isolde rower of love
 fairy Vivienne to my song of love
 circle of day hayo hayo
 pink crowd outstretched
 Perseus Medusa
 the bee the main alphabet
 flower of bumble-bee turn to death

 four lizards the cave octopus and death

 Corolla that bites second
 keeps some to eat first
 into the future

GEORGE CRUMB: MADRIGALS, Books I-IV
Texts by Federico García Lorca

Notes by Donald Chittum

The four books of *Madrigals* were composed in pairs -- Books I and II in 1965 (for Jan DeGaetani, on commission from the Koussevitzky Foundation) and Books III and IV in 1969 (for Elizabeth Suderburg). Like *Night Music I*, they are based upon the beautiful poetry of Federico García Lorca. Each book is scored for mezzo-soprano and two or more instruments, and the texts consist of from one to three short sentences which dwell upon the themes of life, death, love, earth, water, and rain. The settings of the texts are subtle, atmospheric, and intimate. Crumb does not strive for any large concerted tutti effects, but rather for a relatively large number of sonorous gradations within a small frame of reference. The choice of just a few accompanimental instruments, each with its own unique timbral and idiomatic characteristics, permits the composer to explore their interaction and contrapuntal combination with a meticulousness and refinement that is disarming in its simplicity.

The *Madrigals* are devoid of any esoteric constructive devices except in two notable instances: the first madrigal of Book III contains isorhythm, and the first madrigal of Book IV contains strict retrogrades. In both cases, however, the use of these devices is not arbitrary, but rather suggested in the text itself.

In addition to the soprano soloist, the madrigals of Book I are scored for vibraphone and contrabass (with low E tuned down to E^b). In the first madrigal Crumb sets the single line "Verte desnuda es recordar la tierra" (To see you naked is to remember the earth) in two statements in freely measured time, which are separated by opening, middle, and closing passages based on the syllables "tai-o-tik". The second madrigal is divided into two main sections (Rain Death Music I and II) by three bell-like punctuating chords. And in the third madrigal he creates a clear formal design through the internal repetition of words, syllables, and phonemes rooted in discrete motivic structures.

The three madrigals of Book II are set for voice, percussion and one flutist, who successively plays alto-flute, flute in C, and piccolo. The first song consists of two statements of the text separated by short melismas on vocalic syllables,

both of which are accompanied by alto-flute, antique symbals, and glockenspiel struck with hard sticks and wire brushes. The second madrigal is a dark, slow, lamentful setting, while the last madrigal of this set is an animated response to the text "Caballito negro, ¿Dónde llevas tu jinete muerto?" (Little black horse, where are you taking your dead rider?).

The first madrigal of Book III contains an isorhythmic setting of the text. Crumb uses two different isorhythmic patterns with talea of ten measures and seven measures, respectively, for the harp and the percussion. The vocal part, however, does not participate in the isorhythmic organization. The second song of this book is one of the shortest of all the madrigals and is a slow, calm setting of the line "Quiero dormir el sueño de las manzanas para aprender un llanto que me limpie de tierra" (I want to sleep the sleep of apples, to learn a lament that will cleanse me of earth). The last, and longest, song of Book III is a lullaby that is again scored for voice, harp, and vibraphone.

The first madrigal of Book IV contains retrograded passages between sections, within sections, and as part of the motivic ideas themselves. Thus the retrogrades exist on the macrostructural, sectional, and microstructural levels, simultaneously. When using these retrogrades, however, Crumb is careful to exchange material between the voice and the instruments in order to give the madrigal both a sense of growth and unity. The following madrigal is a freely set lament, with its single line of text not uttered until near the end of the piece; the soprano is instructed to sing on a glissando, and not to dwell on given pitches. The last song is a relentless and implacable setting of the text.

Further notes: Books III and IV of the Madrigals were premiered by the University of Washington Contemporary Group in 1970. Rehearsals for tonight's performance were supervised by Dr. Jonathan Pasternack.

Madrigals, Book I

- I. Verte desnuda es recordar la tierra
To see you naked is to remember the earth
- II. No piensan en la lluvia, y se han dormido
They do not think of the rain, and they've fallen asleep
- III. Los muertos llevan alas de musgo
The dead wear mossy wings

Madrigals, Book II

- I. Bebe el agua tranquila de la canción añeja
Drink the tranquil water of the antique song
- II. La muerte entra y sale de la taberna. La muerte y sale, y sale y entra la muerte de la taberna.
Death goes in and out of the tavern. Death goes in and out, and out and in goes the death of the tavern.
- III. Caballito negro. ¿Dónde llevas tu jinete muerto? Caballito frío. ¡Que perfume de flor de cuchillo!
Little black horse. Where are you taking your dead rider? Little cold horse. What a scent of knife-blossom!

Madrigals, Book III

- I. La noche canta desnuda sobre los puentes de marzo
Night sings naked above the bridges of March
- II. Quiero dormir el sueño de las manzanas para aprender un llanto que me limpie de tierra
I want to sleep the sleep of apples, to learn a lament that will cleanse me of earth
- III. Nana, niño, nana del caballo grande que no quiso el agua. Duérmete, rosal, que el caballo se pone a llorar. Las patas heridas, las crines heladas, dentro de los ojos un puñal de plata.
Lullaby, child, lullaby of the proud horse who would not drink water. Go to sleep, rose-bush, the horse begins to cry. Wounded legs, frozen manes, and within the eyes a silver dagger.

Madrigals, Book IV

- I. ¿Por qué nací entre espejos? El día me da vueltas. Y la noche me copia en todas sus estrellas.
Why was I born surrounded by mirrors? The day turns round me. And the night reproduces me in each of her stars.
- II. Tu cuerpo, con la sombra violeta de mis manos, era un arcángel de frío
Through my hands' violet shadow, your body was an archangel, cold
- III. ¡La muerte me está mirando desde las torres de Córdoba!
Death is watching me from the towers of Córdoba!

PERFORMERS

Described as “staggeringly virtuosic” by The Strad, violist MELIA WATRAS has long been at the forefront of the American new music scene, as a soloist and co-founder of the award-winning Corigliano Quartet. Throughout her career she has championed the works of living composers: commissioning, premiering and recording numerous new works for the solo viola and for string quartet, while appearing in the nation’s leading venues including Carnegie Hall, Weill Recital Hall, Alice Tully Hall and the Kennedy Center. The 2010-11 season will include the world premiere of Pulitzer Prize-winner Shulamit Ran’s solo viola piece, *Perfect Storm*, written for Watras. As violist of the Corigliano Quartet, she has received awards such as the Grand Prize at the Fischhoff Competition and the ASCAP/CMA Award for Adventurous Programming.

Watras’ expanding discography has garnered considerable attention and praise from the media. Of her debut solo CD, *Viola Solo*, Strings remarked, “Watras is a young player in possession of stunning virtuosic talent and deserving of the growing acclaim,” while The Strad called her “excellent” and “authoritative.” For the CD, Watras adapted John Corigliano’s *Fancy on a Bach Air* for viola. Her edition of this work is published by G. Schirmer, Inc. Watras’ second solo CD, *Prestidigitation*, features world premiere recordings of five works written especially for her and was described by Strings as “astounding, and both challenging and addictive to listen to.” Her upcoming third disc will include short, stylistically diverse works from composers ranging from Henri Vieuxtemps to György Ligeti. With the Corigliano Quartet, she has

recorded for Naxos, Albany, Bayer, CRI, Riax, and Aguava and has appeared on NPR's All Things Considered and Performance Today and WFMT-Chicago's Live from Studio One. The quartet's most recent CD was named one of the Ten Best Classical Recordings of the Year by The New Yorker.

Watras studied with Atar Arad at Indiana University and served as a teaching assistant to the Juilliard String Quartet while at the Juilliard School. She is currently Associate Professor of Viola, chair of the Strings Division, and a Donald E. Petersen Fellow at the University of Washington School of Music.

First prize winners of the 2010 University of Washington Strings and Piano Chamber Ensemble Competition, the QUANTUM STRING QUARTET is comprised of violinists Kouki Tanaka and Meeae Hong, violist David Colmenares, and cellist Natalie Hall. The ensemble is coached by Melia Watras, violist of the Corigliano Quartet. In their first year together as a quartet, the Quantum has given numerous performances, including playing for the American String Project, an appearance at Café Racer's Racer Sessions, led by trumpeter Cuong Vu, a concert with San Francisco Symphony Principal Bass Scott Pingel on the Barry Lieberman and Friends series, and in violinist Gil Shaham's master class.

Conductor GISELLE WYERS is Assistant Professor of Choral Studies and Voice at the University of Washington, where she conducts the University Chorale and teaches courses in choral conducting and voice. University Chorale's 2008 performance of the Genesis Suite with Seattle Symphony was termed "brilliant" by the Seattle Times. Under her direction, University Chorale has enjoyed high profile performances for the President of Latvia as well as the Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden. The chorus tours regularly; recent trips have taken them to San Francisco as well as Estonia, Finland and Latvia.

As a guest conductor, Wyers has led high school honor choirs in New York (Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center), Georgia, Connecticut, Alaska, and Vancouver, Canada. She has been asked to guest conduct semi-professional ensembles across the United States and in Europe, including an upcoming performance with the Chamber Choir of Europe in 2011.

Wyers is a leading national figure in the application of Laban movement theory for conductors. Each summer she team-teaches choral conducting with James Jordan at Westminster Choir College, and her chapter entitled "Incorporation Laban Actions in the Rehearsal" is currently available as part of the textbook Music for Conducting Study through GIA Publications (2008). This chapter will be developed into an educational DVD currently in production by the same publisher.

As a composer, Wyers is currently preparing numerous choral works for premieres. Her works are published by Santa Barbara Music Publishing Company as part of the "Giselle Wyers Choral Series." The series will feature works by Wyers and champion the works of other emerging composers. Her work "The Waking" was recorded by Choral Arts Ensemble on Gothic Records.

Wyers' dedication to exposing audiences to the music of contemporary American composers has led to publications in various national journals. She is especially interested in exploring how modern composers use music as a form of peace-making and social justice. "Waging Peace through Intercultural Art in Kyr's Ah Nagasaki," appears as the cover article of the May 2008 Choral Journal, and discusses how the act of creating and premiering a musical work can serve as a gesture of reconciliation between cultures.

Wyers holds a D.M.A. in conducting from the University of Arizona, where she studied with Maurice Skones, and minored in historical musicology with John Brobeck. She earned a master's degree from Westminster Choir College, where she founded the Greater Princeton Youth Chamber Orchestra, and a bachelor's degree from UC Santa Cruz, where she founded the San Lorenzo Valley Community Chorus and Orchestra.

Finnish-American soprano MARIA MANNISTO has an extensive performing history as an opera singer, concert soloist, pianist, and organist. She received her M.M. in voice performance from the University of Washington in 2009, studying under renowned soprano Jane Eaglen. Maria has appeared in numerous Seattle area productions by Puget Sound Concert Opera, Seattle Experimental Opera, Puget Sound Opera, and the University of Washington, and has performed in new operas and oratorios by Seattle composers Wayne Horvitz, Bill Smith, Garrett Fisher, Brian Cobb, and Tom Baker. In 2007 she was awarded the Finlandia Foundation Performer of the Year, which provided her the opportunity to perform recitals around the United States, Canada, and Finland. Maria was a finalist in the 2010 Kangasniemi Song Competition in Kangasniemi, Finland. She is the primary organist at the Finnish Lutheran Church, and also directs the Finnish Choral Society and Svea Womens' Chorus.

STEPHEN SCHERMER, bass, received his B.A. with honors from Eastern Washington University, and his M.M. with honors from the New England Conservatory. He also spent two summers at the Tanglewood Music Center, where he was the recipient of the Koussevitsky Fellowship. Mr. Schermer is currently assistant principal bass of the Pacific Northwest Ballet orchestra, teaches at the University of Puget Sound, and performs frequently with the Seattle Symphony and Seattle Opera. He is also active in the recording industry and as a chamber musician with organizations such as the Olympic Music Festival, Simple Measures, Second City Chamber Series, Onyx Chamber Players, Icicle Creek Music Center, and the Hammond Ashley Double Bass workshop, and the Jacobsen Series at the University of Puget Sound.

UW CONTEMPORARY CHAMBER CHOIR

Dr. Giselle Wyers, *conductor* / Miah Cawley, *assistant conductor*

Melanie West	Sarah Marroquin	Henry Chan
Margo Schadt	Hyokyoung Byun	Jeremiah Selvey
Wendy Moy	Nina Alden	Ryan Hyde
Danya Clevenger	Miah Cawley	Desmond Cheng
	Kris Jenkins	

CLASSICAL

KING FM 98.1