University of Washington
THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC
presents

THE CONTEMPORARY GROUP

Stuart Dempster and William O. Smith, 
Co-Directors

8:00 PM, April 26, 1993

 SPECIAL THANKS TO RICHARD KARPEN for organizing the sound system.

PROGRAM

2. SEA OF SOULS (1993) ......... John Rahn
for computer generated tape
(b. 1944)

John Rahn, technician

for voice and chamber ensemble
(b. 1930)

Emilie Berendseu, voice; Libby Gray, flute, alto flute;
Kevin Johnson, piano; Jonathan Graber, violin / viola;
Loren Dempster, cello

4. THE SILENCE OF TIME (1993) ... Richard Karpen
for percussion and computer-realized sound
(b. 1957)

Gunnar Folsom, Stuart McLeod, Patrick Roulet, percussion;
Richard Karpen, technician; Tom Collier, conductor

INTERMISSION
WOODWIND QUINTET, Op. 48 (1990) ... James Beale

Allegro (b. 1924)

Adagio

Allegro Scherzando

EPILOGUE: Molto adagio

Andrea Mogill, flute; Taina Karr, oboe; Joel Barbosa, clarinet;
Lorraine Fader, horn; Francine Peterson, bassoon


for chamber orchestra and tape

Sabra Weber, flute; Taina Karr, oboe; Joel Barbosa, clarinet;
Francine Peterson, bassoon; Lorraine Fader, horn; Karl Seeley, trumpet;
Chad Kirby, trombone; Melissa Walsh, harp; Tina Lee, piano;
Stuart McLeod and Mark Wilbert, percussion; Donna Fogle, viola;
Dan Perry and Geoff Johnson, violins; Nora Engebretsen, 'cello;
Mark Jasper, contrabass; Ron Averill, technician; David Kappy, conductor

SEA OF SOULS is named after the title of an exhibition of sculpture by my sister, Cherry Rahn, an exhibition which it is meant to accompany. Her work consists of "face fragments" to be hung on the walls, portraits and partly stylized likenesses of people in her home town of Geneva, New York, which convey to me a sense of great lyricism and intimacy with an almost disturbing intensity. I am trying to combine these qualities with a counterpoint of aesthetic independence, and to mix the Jungian connotations of her title with a more literal saltiness inspired by my love of sailing, the rhythms and state of mind induced by prolonged contact with the surface of the ocean, and heightened awareness of the winds and of the contours of the earth around and below the sea.

This is approximately the first quarter of a longer work in progress, whose later parts will work with sonic materials recorded by Cherry in her home community. For this first and most abstract part of Sea of Souls, the sounds have been generated on a computer, using my Lisp Kernel software to control massive additive synthesis. Each component sine tone is controlled by 22 parameters, and there may be hundreds or thousands of these partials at any moment of the piece. To handle control information of this magnitude, I am using a graphics interface to the Lisp Kernel to which I can hand-draw figures that become sound. The Lisp software also generates graphics algorithmically, using an algorithm for the compression of video information called "iterative function systems," but running this algorithm in reverse—that is, directly specifying the coefficients of the affine transformations and probabilities comprising the iterative function system, and decompressing this device into a complex graphical figure. Both the hand-drawn and generated figures are then subjected to variations by a second layer of affine transformations. These various figures are then expanded again and re-transformed within Lisp as they turn into audio control information for digital sound synthesis. All this seems necessary to achieve the kind of complexity and control that make interesting sounds.
LEAH

...but Rachel was beautiful... (Genesis 29:17)

I do what I have to
like an obedient daughter
or a dog. Not for your fingers
in my flesh. I watch you
every day as you watch her.
Since I'm the ugly one,
the one pushed into your bed
at night when you can't
tell the difference.

I've got another son
inside me, and still
you watch her. She doesn't
sag as I do after each birth
until you fill me again.

Why can't you look at me
in daylight, or take
my hand and press it
against your mouth?
I'm not a stone, a shell
your foot rolls over
in the sand. The life
gone out of it
Maybe I am.
Your sons have sucked me
empty and dull.

LEAH was written in 1984. The text uses a poem by the American-Israeli poet, Shirley Kaufman. The poem, based on Genesis: 29:17, describes the feelings of Leah when Jacob exploits her. The piece opens with a violin solo which is gradually augmented by the sounds of the cello, piano, voice and flute. This first section ends with the piano solo which leads to a very soft tutti. Leah urges Jacob to take her hand, "I am not a stone." The violin and cello play on the wood of their bows (col legno battuti) while the flute rattles the keys and the piano plays on the strings. Leah complains that Jacob's sons have sucked her empty and dull. An alto flute cadenza leads to a dramatic section in which Leah swims "...raging against the stream."

TEXIS by Shirley Kaufman

"Why is it so difficult—to degrading—difficult—to bring the notion of Time into mental focus and keep it there for inspection? What an effort, what fumbling, what irritating fatigue! It's like rummaging with one hand in the glove compartment for the road map—fishing out Montenegro, the Dolomites, paper money, a telegram—everything except the stretch of chaotic country between Ardez and Somethingsoprano, in the dark, in the rain, while trying to take advantage of a red light in the coal black, with
the wipers functioning metronomically, chronometrically: the blind finger 
of space poking and tearing the texture of time.”

From “Ada,” by Vladimir Nabokov

I spent six months in Scotland in 1992, six luxurious months simply to com­
pose, think, and travel the country. I visited the isolated northwest area of Scot­
land, wind- and water-swept Wester Ross, where the silence of time weighs heavily 
on the hills and around the lochs.

THE SILENCE OF TIME was composed for the University of Washington Percus­
sion Ensemble during 1992-1993. The group is directed by Tom Collier, to whom 
I give many thanks for asking that I compose this work for them. The comput­
eralized part was composed mainly at the studios of the University of Glasgow in 
Scotland and completed in the School of Music Computer Center at the University 
of Washington using new computer software for sound processing which I devel­
oped in 1992 while in residence at the Music Department of the University of 
Glasgow as a Leverhulme Trust Fellow.

RICHARD KARPEN

In the 16th century a Jesuit priest, Matteo Ricci, brought to China a wonderful 
memory system that had been used in the West since the days of ancient Greece. 
To improve their powers of retention, people would build memory palaces, huge 
imaginary buildings they kept inside their heads. “To everything that we wish to 
remember,” wrote Ricci, “we should give an image; and to every one of these 
images we should assign a position where it can repose peacefully until we are 
ready to claim it by an act of memory.”

What intrigued me about this story was the recognition that one of the powers 
which music possesses for me is the capacity to evoke and capture images of feel­
ing, being, and knowing and to crystallize these images into sonorous forms. As 
we move through the world of a musical work, our experience is transformed into 
memory.

The form of THE PALACES OF MEMOIRY is unfolded through polarities of sec­
tions and interludes. Initially it is the synthesized music which functions as 
accompaniment to or interlude between sections of live music. Increasingly, how­
ever, this role is reversed as the instrumental music becomes more and more the 
delineator of temporal space between solo sections of tape music. As the work 
proceeds, the boundaries between the two domains are gradually dissolved as they 
are intermeshed in a complex net of sonorous images created through the counter­
point of distinct textural and temporal strands.

Equipment used in the creation of the tape music included a Kurzweil 2000 digi­
tal synthesizer and a Peavy SX-stereo 16 bit sampler. The sections were digitally 
mixed, using the MTU Microsound Digital/Audio System. I wish to thank Robert 
Austin who was my collaborator in the production of the tape.

THE PALACES OF MEMORY was commissioned by the Pittsburgh New Music 
Ensemble and premiered on March 29, 1993.

Diane Thome