

11-17-2005

Concert: Contemporary Chamber Ensemble

Ithaca College Contemporary Chamber Ensemble

Benjamin Aneff

Devin Hughes

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ITHACA COLLEGE

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

CONTEMPORARY CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

Ford Hall
Thursday, November 17, 2005
8:15 p.m.

ITHACA

PROGRAM

Rain Coming (1982)

Toru Takamitsu
(1930-1996)

Benjamin Aneff, conductor

Raga (1992)

Christopher Theofanidis
(b. 1967)

Devin Hughes, conductor

Cayuga Lake (Memories) (1992)

Karel Husa
(b. 1921)

- I. *Maestoso - Recitativo*
- II. *Moderato - Interlude*
- III. *Allegro non Troppo*
- IV. *Misterioso-Maestoso*

Benjamin Aneff, conductor

Program Notes

Toru Takemitsu (1931-96) was a self-taught Japanese composer who combined elements of Eastern and Western music and philosophy to create a unique sound world. Some of his early influences were the sonorities of Debussy, and Messiaen's use of nature imagery and modal scales. There is a certain influence of Webern in Takemitsu's use of silence, and Cage in his compositional philosophy, but his overall style is uniquely his own. Takemitsu believed in music as a means of ordering or contextualizing everyday sound in order to make it meaningful or comprehensible. His philosophy of "sound as life" lay behind his incorporation of natural sounds, as well as his desire to juxtapose and reconcile opposing elements such as Orient and Occident, sound and silence, and tradition and innovation. From the beginning, Takemitsu wrote highly experimental music involving improvisation, graphic notation, unusual combinations of instruments and recorded sounds. The result is music of great beauty and originality. It is usually slowly paced and quiet, but also capable of great intensity. The variety, quantity and consistency of Takemitsu's output are remarkable considering that he never worked within any kind of conventional framework or genre. In addition to the several hundred independent works of music, he scored over ninety films and published twenty books.

Rain Coming, composed in 1982, for chamber orchestra, was commissioned by the London Sinfonietta. It is part of the composer's Rain series. Takemitsu describes them as "works that pass through various metamorphoses aiming at the sea of tonality, just like water which circulates in the universe." The entire piece grows out of the opening phrase on the alto flute with a musical sense and logic that is unique to the composer. The sounds are highly evocative of the sense of rain about to fall—flutterings like the gentle breeze picking up, gentle bell sounds with high harmonics on the strings like that heightened sense of ozone in the air, or tiny drops just beginning to patter against harder surfaces. A romantic tone poem with a haiku-like sparseness, a unique creation of a composer with the sensibility to make something poetic out of the advanced European tonal systems, rather than the usual agonized drama. For musicians, Takemitsu's use of constantly changing time signatures (for example, 13/32 to 4.5/8 to 2/8 to 2.5/8 on just one page of the score) to create orchestral gestures free from a constant pulse (the piece is also marked "rubato" throughout) is especially fascinating.

Christopher Theofanidis has had performances by many leading orchestras from around the world, including the National Symphony, the London Symphony, the Oslo Philharmonic, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo, the Moscow Soloists, the Atlanta and Houston Symphonies, the California Symphony (for which he was composer-in-residence from 1994 to 1996), the Oregon Symphony, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, and the Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra, among others. He will serve as Composer of the Year for the Pittsburgh Symphony for their 2005-2006 Season. Mr. Theofanidis holds degrees from Yale, the Eastman School of Music, and the University of Houston, and has been the recipient of the Masterprize, the Rome Prize, a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Barlow Prize, six ASCAP Gould Prizes, a Fulbright Fellowship to France, a Tanglewood Fellowship, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters' Charles Ives Fellowship.

Mr. Theofanidis' recent projects include an opera for the Houston Grand Opera, a ballet for the American Ballet Theatre, and a work for the Atlanta Symphony and Chorus based on the poetry of Rumi. He has served as a delegate to the United States-Japan Foundation's Leadership Program and currently teaches at the Peabody Conservatory at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and the Juilliard School in New York City. His work *Raga* was composed in 1992 for flute, clarinet, violin, piano, and two percussionists.

One of Ithaca's own, Pulitzer-Prize winning composer **Karel Husa** composed his work *Cayuga Lake (Memories)* for the 100th anniversary of Ithaca College. The work is composed for three quartets (woodwind, brass, string), piano, and percussion. About the work the composer writes:

"I have lived in this region for over 30 years and this lake has become part of my life as a composer. Since 1964 I have written practically all my music in my summer home, a few feet from its gentle or storming waters. I am fascinated by the changes of the lake's colors, which happen not only every season, but every day or hour and even within minutes. It is a beautiful palette of blue, yellow, green grey, orange and red in so many combinations and shades, reaching sometimes a complete darkness. The singing of birds, winds and colorful fish bring the lake to life every day and you can actually hear in these waters the flutes, drums and bells, and imagine the habitants of the surrounding territories so unjustly silenced. And the fossils released regularly by the lake to its shores remind us of its mysterious deepness as well as its glacial lake."

Personnel

Rain Coming

Elizabeth Golden, Flute
Emily Di Angelo, Oboe
Anne Woodard, Clarinet
Jeffrey Ward, Bassoon
Daniel Carter, Horn
Joseph Brown, Trumpet
Mark Lalumia, Trombone
Joshua Modney, Violin
Megan Atchley, Violin
Annebelle Terbetski, Viola
Diana Geiger, Cello
Patrick O'Connell, Bass
Joshua Oxford, Percussion
Russell Posegate, Piano

Raga

Joshua Modney, Violin
Diana Geiger, Cello
Amy Thiemann, Flute
Meggan Frost, Clarinet
Russell Posegate, Piano
Matt Donello, Congas
Jason Hunt, percussion

Cayuga Lake (Memories)

Elizabeth Golden, Flute
Emily Di Angelo, Oboe
Wolcott Humphrey, Clarinet
Jeffrey Ward, Bassoon
Daniel Carter, Horn
Joseph Brown, Trumpet
Mark Lalumia, Trombone
William Plenk, Tuba
Joshua Modney, Violin
Megan Atchley, Violin
Annebelle Terbetski, Viola
Samuel Boase-Miller, Cello
Joshua Oxford, Percussion
Russell Posegate, Piano