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Concert: Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

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Kevin Peters

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Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

Kevin Peters, graduate conductor

Ford Hall
Wednesday April 3rd, 2013
8:15 pm
Program

Notturno, op.24 (1824) Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809-1847) arr. John Boyd 9'

Contre Qui, Rose (1993) Morten Lauridsen (b.1943) arr. H. Robert Reynolds 5'

Three City Blocks (1991) John Harbison (b.1938) 15'
   I. Fervent and resolute
   II. Tough, driving
   III. With relentless energy

Intermission

Fascinating Ribbons (2001) Joan Tower (b.1938) 6'

Prelude No.2 in C-Sharp Minor (1926) George Gershwin (1898-1937) 4'
   *Josh Condon, piano*

Fantasy Variations on George Gershwin's Prelude II for Piano (1997) Donald Grantham (b.1947) 14'
Notturno, Op. 24 by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy was composed in July of 1824 for the court orchestra of Bad Doberan near Rostock, where the young musician was accompanying his father. Writing for the Boston Symphony, George Marke remarks, "Some artists develop their craft slowly, others seem to being at the top. There is little difference between Mendelssohn's early and his mature works."

The original score was lost but recopied by Mendelssohn in July of 1826. These two scores were entitled "Notturno" and were written for the instrumentation of one flute, two clarinets, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, one trumpet, and one English bass horn (a conical bore upright serpent in the shape of a bassoon).

In his correspondence to the publisher Simrock, Mendelssohn mentions his desire to have this eleven instrument version published, but apparently could not locate the score as he never mentions it again to Simrock after March 4, 1839. Mendelssohn did send Simrock and Ouverture fur Harmoniemusik (Overture for Wind Band) scored for twenty-three winds and percussion along with a four-hand piano score on November 30, 1838. The 1838 composition is a re-scoring of the Nocturno for German Band of that era and was not published until 1852 following the death of Mendelssohn.

It has been suggested by musicologists that the 1838 re-scoring was an effort to imitate the orchestral color of Weber's Preciousa Overture. In Weber's overture, a gypsy melody is introduced by a small wind band with percussion accompaniment. At this time, however, Mendelssohn was also negotiating for the publication of the overture by Mori in London. It is quite possible that the re-scoring was an attempt to acquire greater performance opportunities for his work by making it available in settings for British and German band along with a proposed edition for orchestra.

Several editions for modern instrumentation have appeared, all using the 1838 score as their source. However, the rediscovery of the 1826 autograph makes possible this edition based on the most authentic source known to date.
Morten Lauridsen is most noted for his vocal song cycles and a capella motets which are regularly performed by distinguished ensembles and artists throughout the world. Lauridsen has been a professor of composition at University of Southern California for over 40 years and he chaired the composition department from 1990-2002. Lauridsen writes, "Contre Qui, Rose" is the second movement of my choral cycle, Les Chansons des Roses, on poems by Rainer Maria Rilke, a poet whose texts were also used for my Nocturnes and Chanson Éloignée. Rilke’s poetry is often multi-layered and frequently ambiguous, forcing his reader to use his or her own imagination to grasp the text. This wonderful little poem poses a series of questions and the corresponding musical phrases all end with unresolved harmonies as the questions remain unanswered. We have all been in situations where we have given affection and not had it returned, where attempts at communication have been unsuccessful, met by resistance or defenses of some kind. A sense of quiet resignation begins the setting as the stark harmony and melodic line, filled with unresolved suspensions and appoggiaturas, gradually build to a nine-part chord on “au contraire” and then the music folds back on itself, ending on a cluster that simply fades away as does the hope of understanding the reasons for the rose’s thorny protection."

Program note taken from letter by composer, 2009

Citing his most important influences as the Bach Cantatas, Stravinsky (whom he met in Santa Fe in 1963) and jazz, John Harbison's music is distinguished by its exceptional invention and deeply expressive range. He has written for every conceivable type of concert genre, ranging from the grand opera to the most intimate; pieces that embrace jazz along with the classical forms. His prolific, personal and greatly admired music written for the voice encompasses a catalogue of over 70 works including opera, choral, voice with orchestra and chamber/solo works. The composer states that "Over the radio, in the early fifties, came sounds played by bands in hotels and ballrooms; now distant memories that seemed to a seventh-grade, small-town, late-night, listener like the true pulse of giant imagined cities.

Years later, these sounds - layered with real experience of some of their places of origin; magnified, distorted, idealized and destabilized - came into contact with other sounds, some of recent origin, and resulted in these celebratory, menacing, Three City Blocks, completed in the fall of 1991 at Nervi, near Genoa, on the Mediterranean coast of Italy."

Program note by the composer
Joan Tower is widely regarded as one of the most important American composers living today. During a career spanning more than fifty years, she has made lasting contributions to musical life in the United States as composer, performer, conductor, and educator. Tower studied piano and composition at Bennington College and Columbia University and is currently Asher Edelman Professor of Music at Bard College, where she has taught since 1972. Her earliest works were serial in concept, but her music soon developed the lyricism, rhythmic drive, and colorful orchestration that characterize her subsequent works.

She writes "with Fascinating Ribbons, I am happy to be finally entering the band world—a generous and hard-working world that has generated so many excellent wind, brass, and percussion players. It seems also to be a place of people that actually love living composers! Since this was my first foray into the band world, I decided that a short piece would be the wisest course. In naming the piece, I noticed that there are many contours of motives that are shaped in curved “ribbon” patterns. I immediately thought of the word “fascinating.” And the ending dotted-rhythm reminded me of Gershwin’s Fascinating Rhythms—hence the title. It is dedicated to Jack Stamp, that intrepid “stalker” of composers who will not give up until he gets a band piece from them. (I should know; it took him five years to get me to write one!)"

*Program note by the composer*

Donald Grantham was born in Duncan, Oklahoma. After receiving a bachelor of music degree from the University of Oklahoma, he went on to receive his MM and DMA degrees from the University of Southern California. For two summers he studied under famed French composer and pedagogue Nadia Boulanger at the American Conservatory in France. His music has won many prestigious awards and he has been the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and three separate grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. Grantham currently teaches music composition at the Austin Butler School of Music at the University of Texas.

In Donald Grantham’s composition *Fantasy Variations*, both of Gershwin’s main themes are fully exploited, but they do not appear in recognizable form until near the end. The work begins with obscure fragments drawn from the introduction, accompaniment, transitions and cadences. These eventually give way to more familiar motives derived from the themes themselves. All of these elements are gradually assembled over the last half of the piece until the themes finally appear in their original form.

*Program note by Norman E. Smith*
Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

**Piccolo**
- Sandi O’Hare

**Flute**
- Savannah Clayton
- Stephanie Dumais
- Sophia Ennocenti*
- Jessica Peltz

**Oboe**
- Julia Perry
- Phoebe Ritrovato
- Chloe Washington*

**E-flat Soprano Clarinet**
- Michael Reinemann

**Clarinet**
- Megan Belansky
- Justine Call
- Emily Dobmeier
- Stephen Fasteau
- Kyle McKay
- Kelsey Paquin
- Christopher Peña*

**Bass Clarinet**
- Anna Goebel

**Contrabass Clarinet**
- Vanessa Davis

**Bassoon**
- Tommy Conners*
- Kailey Schnurman
- Ross Triner

**Alto Saxophone**
- Rachael Rushing*
- Erika St. Denis

**Tenor Saxophone**
- Richard Rose

**Baritone Saxophone**
- Andrew Horwitz

**Trumpet**
- Tom Pang
- Paul Schwartz
- Aaron Scocca
- Sam Thurston*
- Danny Venora
- Jenna Veverka

**Trombone**
- Tim Taylor
- Josh Zimmer*
- Ethan Zawisza

**Bass Trombone**
- Jeff Chilton
- Justin Oswald

**Euphonium**
- Peter Best-Hall*
- Katie Pfeiffer

**Tuba**
- Bill Connors*
- Joe Sastic

**Percussion**
- Eric Brown
- Taylor Eddinger
- Sean Harvey*
- Dennis O’Keefe
- Aaron Walters

**Timpani**
- Heather Hill

**Double Bass**
- Alex Toth*
- John DiCarlo

**Piano**
- Josh Condon
- Meicen Guo*

**Graduate Assistants**
- Kevin Peters
- Corey Seapy

* denotes principal player