

11-14-2012

Concert: Ithaca College Contemporary Ensemble

Ithaca College Contemporary Ensemble

Jorge Grossmann

Jeffery Meyer

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Ithaca College Contemporary Ensemble

Jorge Grossmann and Jeffery Meyer, directors

Hockett Family Recital Hall
Wednesday November 14th, 2012
8:15 pm



ITHACA COLLEGE

School of Music

Program

In Croce (1991)

Sophia Gubaidulina
(b. 1931)

Brooks Griffith, violoncello
Renato Hanriot, bandoneon

Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird (1978)

Lukas Foss
(1922-2009)

*Patrice Pastore, soprano **
Jessica Peltz, flute
*Nathan Hess, piano **
Andrew Sickmeier, percussion

Pause

Atmosphère Déroulante (2012)

Renato Hanriot
(b. 1980)

Maya Holmes, flute
Vanessa Davis, clarinet
Martiros Shakhzadyan, violin
Eric Perreault, violoncello
Kevin Jopp, piano
William Alderman and Keegan Sheehy, percussion
*Jorge Grossmann, conductor **

Dances in the Dark (1996)

David Rakowski
(b. 1958)

- I. Prelude and Bedroom Dance
- II. Things that Go Bump
- III. Crowd Scene
- IV. Bird Waltz and Exit

Maya Holmes, flute
Erik Johnson, clarinet
*Susan Waterbury, violin **
Eric Perreault, violoncello
Kevin Jopp, piano
William Alderman, percussion
*Jorge Grossmann, conductor **

Chain 1

Witold Lutosławski
(1913-1994)

Ithaca College Chamber Orchestra
*Jeffery Meyer, conductor**

* Denotes Ithaca College faculty member

Wallace Stevens, Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird

I

Among twenty snowy mountains,
The only moving thing
Was the eye of the blackbird.

II

I was of three minds,
Like a tree
In which there are three blackbirds.

III

The blackbird whirled in the autumn
winds.
It was a small part of the
pantomime.

IV

A man and a woman
Are one.
A man and a woman and a
blackbird
Are one.

V

I do not know which to prefer,
The beauty of inflections
Or the beauty of innuendoes,
The blackbird whistling
Or just after.

VI

Icicles filled the long window
With barbaric glass.
The shadow of the blackbird
Crossed it, to and fro.
The mood
Traced in the shadow
An indecipherable cause.

VII

O thin men of Haddam,
Why do you imagine golden birds?
Do you not see how the blackbird
Walks around the feet
Of the women about you?

VIII

I know noble accents
And lucid, inescapable rhythms;
But I know, too,
That the blackbird is involved
In what I know.

IX

When the blackbird flew out of
sight,
It marked the edge
Of one of many circles.

X

At the sight of blackbirds
Flying in a green light,
Even the bawds of euphony
Would cry out sharply.

XI

He rode over Connecticut
In a glass coach.
Once, a fear pierced him,
In that he mistook
The shadow of his equipage
For blackbirds.

XII

The river is moving.
The blackbird must be flying.

XIII

It was evening all afternoon.
It was snowing
And it was going to snow.
The blackbird sat
In the cedar-limbs.

David Rakowski - 2012-13 Karel Husa Visiting Professor of Composition

The Karel Husa Visiting Professor of Composition is a position awarded annually to a major figure in music composition today. The Visiting Professors come to the Ithaca College campus during the course of the academic year to lecture on their music and issues relevant to contemporary composition. In addition, during their time on campus, they hold private lessons with the School of Music's composition majors. Throughout the year of their professorship, their music is performed and examined by Ithaca College School of Music faculty and students. The Karel Husa Visiting Professor of Composition for 2012-13 is David Rakowski, whose works will also be featured at the April 15, 2013 concert of the Ithaca College Contemporary Ensemble.

David Rakowski was born and raised in St. Albans, Vermont, where he played trombone in high school and community bands. He received his musical training at New England Conservatory, Princeton, and Tanglewood, where he studied with Robert Ceely, John Heiss, Milton Babbitt, Paul Lansky, Peter Westergaard, and Luciano Berio.

Rakowski's most widely-traveled music is his collection of one hundred highly varied and high-energy piano etudes; these pieces approach the idea of etude from many different angles, be they technical, conceptual, compositional, or stylistic. He is now at work on a set of a hundred piano preludes, of which the first fifteen are written. He has also written three and three-fourths symphonies, seven concertos, three large wind ensemble pieces, a sizable collection of chamber and vocal music, as well as incidental music and music for children.

Rakowski's awards include the Rome Prize, an Academy Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the 2006 Barlow Prize, and the 2004-6 Elise L. Stoeger Prize from the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, as well as awards and fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the NEA, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Tanglewood Music Center, BMI, Columbia University, the Orleans International Piano Competition (Chevillion-Bonnaud composition prize), the International Horn Society, and various artist colonies. He has been commissioned by the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the U.S. Marine Band, Sequitur, Network for New Music, Koussevitzky Music Foundation (with Ensemble 21 in 1996 and

with Boston Modern Orchestra Project in 2006), Collage New Music, the Kaufman Center/Merkin Hall, Boston Musica Viva, the Fromm Foundation (twice), Dinosaur Annex, the Crosstown Ensemble, Speculum Musicae, the Riverside Symphony, Parnassus, The Composers Ensemble, Alea II, Alea III, Triple Helix, and others. In 1999 his *Persistent Memory*, commissioned by Orpheus, was a Finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Music, and in 2002 his *Ten of a Kind*, commissioned by "The President's Own" U.S. Marine Band, was also a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. He has been composer-in-residence at the Bowdoin Summer Music Festival, Guest Composer at the Wellesley Composers Conference, and a Master Artist at the Atlantic Center for the Arts. His music is published by C.F. Peters, is recorded on New World/CRI, BMOP/Sound, Innova, Americus, Albany, Capstone, and Bridge, and has been performed worldwide.

After his first academic appointment, a one-year position at Stanford University, he taught at Columbia University for six years before joining the faculty of Brandeis University, where he is now the Walter W. Naumburg Professor of Composition. While at Brandeis, he has also taken concurrent part-time appointments teaching at Harvard University (twice) and New England Conservatory (also twice). He lives in the Boston area and in Maine with his wife Beth Wiemann and two cats.

Program Notes

Sophia Gubaidulina - In Croce (1991)

In Croce for cello and bayan, the Russian push-button accordion was written in 1979 for Russian cellist Vladimir Toncha. First composed for cello and organ, the work was performed by Toncha and the organist Oleg Yachenko in the concert hall of Moscow Conservatory. With the accordionist Elsbeth Moser, Gubaidulina made an alternative arrangement for cello and bayan in 1992. The title *In Croce* is taken not only from the basic nature of the work but also refers to its structure. While the instruments at the beginning play in a high register (bayan) or in low register (cello), in the course of the composition they come close to each other and cross. When the two melodic lines cross, this forms the climax, an explosion of energy. The characteristic tonal and instrumental symbolism depends also on the functional use of the instruments. Although both have a common starting-point in the pedal E, they treat this in different ways. One may compare only the struggles of the cello with the shrill accents, chromaticism and micro-intervals to free itself from the pedal-point with the shimmering figuration of the pedal-point in the bayan part, where A major appears as a broken triad and also in the form of a diatonic scale. Here there is also thesis and antithesis at the same time, a union of opposites. Profound symbolism appears in the coda, when both instruments after the stormy and passionate climax come together again, the cello with its quasi-human voice making its own the ethereally illuminated figuration over the pedal-point E that was heard at the beginning from the bayan. They free themselves finally in the iridescent sound of the overtone series on the A string. *In Croce* is a true meditation on the meaning of the cross. [Tonight's bayan part is played on a bandoneon in an arrangement by Renato Hanriot.]

- Keith Anderson (adapted from Naxos CD 8.553557).

Lukas Foss - Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird (1978)

The music of Lukas Foss (1922-2009) defies any sort of classification, as he himself resisted to be categorized within a particular school or style. "We shall not confuse technique with style," Foss used to say. "Being labeled a twelve-tone composer, or a minimalist, or whatever else, would be like calling Bach 'a composer of fugues'." For Foss, these were all techniques that should be used freely by a composer--"the more techniques, the merrier." Foss's output can be divided in four style periods and, throughout his life, there was hardly one compositional technique he did not experiment with. An initial, neoclassical period influenced by Hindemith, Bartok and Stravinsky is followed by a period of experimentation. After he was appointed professor at UCLA in 1953 replacing Arnold Schoenberg, Foss founded the Improvisation Chamber Ensemble. His works from that time reflect his interest in aleatory music and extended instrumental techniques. *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird* belongs to his third period, where all previous stylistic endeavors seem to synthesize. Foss sets the famous poem by Wallace Stevens in the most colorful way, its thirteen sections ranging from the meditative to the quirky and even violent. The flute plays off stage at all times and makes use

of creative effects describing the blackbird's different actions (notice, for instance, the wonderful passage that takes place during the first minute of the piece, where the flute plays a series of B-5s as partials of different fundamental tones, which symbolize the blackbird's moving eye.) The pianist, not having a chance to even sit on the bench, plays on the piano strings as much as on the keys. The percussionist also plays inside the piano using different mallets, a cowbell and metal Japanese bowls. The soprano part, demanding as in most of Foss's vocal chamber music, shows the composer's masterful setting of the rich imagery of the text.

Renato Hanriot: Atmosphère Déroulante (2012) - 2012 ICCE Composition Competition Winner

The composer writes "*Atmosphère Déroulante* is the first of three movements that constitute the *Nuages Verts* triptych. It is a piece that juxtaposes the unstoppable forces of nature against the awkward, abusive, or even grotesque presence of men on this planet."

David Rakowski - Dances in the Dark (1996)

Dances in the Dark is a set of four excerpts from the chamber ballet *Boy in the Dark*, composed in 1996 for Boston Musica Viva. The story and words of the original were written by Lola Haskins; the first performance of the ballet took place at the Tsai Performance Center in Boston with Boston Musica Viva, conducted by Richard Pittman, the New England Conservatory Children's Chorus (Jean Melthaus, director) and the Boston Dance Collective (Martha Armstrong Gray, choreographer).

Prelude and Bedroom Dance: Slow music in front of a closed curtain; curtain rises, the boy is seen getting ready for bed, dancing, is sent to his mother, and he slowly falls asleep.

Things that Go Bump: A loud noise is heard, the scenery moves, and the boy dances with several creatures from his imagination. In the second part of the movement he dances with two masked children, one ponderous and one light-headed and hesitant. At the end of the movement, they dance together and jump into bed together.

Crowd Scene: the boy dances variously with several different characters from his imagination, tires and goes to bed.

Bird Waltz and Exit: the birds wake him up, dance with him, and he dresses and leaves. After his exit, the two masked children from the second movement dance together and get under the covers of the boy's bed. The low notes of the piano signify the church bell striking eight.

- Reprinted from David Rakowski, *Dances in the Dark*, New York and London: C.F. Peters (1996)

Lutosławski - Chain 1 (1983)

Lutosławski provided the following explanation of his concept of Chain form in a note provided for the première of Chain 1 in 1983: "In a work composed in chain-form the music is divided into two strands. Particular sections do not begin at the same moment in each strand, nor do they end together. In other words, in the middle of a section in one strand a new section begins in another. This principle has already been used in my previous compositions as a base for particular stages of the form or in whole movements, as in the 'Passacaglia' of my Concerto for Orchestra."

Chain 1 was composed for the fourteen instrumentalists of Michael Vyner's London Sinfonietta in 1983. Opening with a unison on the note 'A', it dramatically unfurls its wings only to retract them immediately to a stuttering unison on the note 'B'. This gesture becomes a refrain that grows more complex with each return. Throughout the work certain themes also undergo a process of transformation, notably the initial clarinet solo with its characteristic upbeat figures, the insistent repeated notes of the winds, and the steady chromatic tread of the plucked strings. The texture of the ensemble achieves its maximum density in a terminal network of twelve cantabile melodies that are performed ad libitum. Propelled by an ever-increasing kinetic energy, Chain 1 eventually meets its destiny in a massive twelve-note chord. A detonation from the percussion brings the piece to a sputtering close.

- Daniel Foley (reprinted from Naxos CD 8.572450).

Personnel "Chain 1" - Witold Lutoslawski

Flute

Maya Holmes

Oboe

Elizabeth Schmitt

Clarinet

Christopher Peña

Bassoon

Sean Harkin

Horn

Colin Speirs

Trumpet

Keli Price

Trombone

Timothy Taylor

Percussion

Daniel Pessalano

Violin I

Laura Sciavolino

Violin II

Natalie Brandt

Viola

Kelly Ralston

Cello

Erin Snedecor

Bass

Samuel Verneuille

Harpsichord

Jessica Mackey