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Guest Artist Recital: Tarab Cello Ensemble

Tarab Cello Ensemble

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ITHACA COLLEGE

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

VISITING ARTISTS SERIES 2008-9

TARAB CELLO ENSEMBLE

Elizabeth Brown, Alex Greenbaum,
Kevin MacFarland, Laura Metcalf, Mike Midlarsky,
and Florent Renard-Payen, founder

with guests:

Michael Haas, cello
Jane Cords-O'Hara, cello
Elizabeth Simkin*, cello

Ford Hall
Friday, March 20, 2009
8:15 p.m.

ITHACA

PROGRAM

The Things Left Unsaid (2006)

Caleb Burhans
(b. 1980)

The Only Tired (2008)

Jason Treuting
(b. 1981)

Lover Calls (2001)

Gregory Mertl
(b. 1969)

Wake Up...and Die (1996)

John Tavener
(b. 1944)

Elizabeth Simkin*, cello soloist

INTERMISSION

Cello Lines (2007)

Bill Ryan
(b. 1968)

Rain (2008)

Michael Midlarsky
(b. 1981)

8 (2008)

Nicolas Scherzinger
(b. 1968)

Cog (2001)

Dennis DeSantis
(b. 1973)

* Ithaca College faculty

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PROGRAM NOTES

The Things Left Unsaid

In relationships people often imply things without having to say them aloud. This can lead to a deeper understanding of ones background and intent, thus bringing both parties closer together. However it can also lead to confusion and misunderstanding between both parties, pushing the two further apart. It was with both these thoughts in mind that I wrote "The Things Left Unsaid" for the members of Tarab, with whom I've had the great pleasure of working with for the past eight years.

Caleb Burhans

The Only Tired

I like games. I like sound. I like organization. And I like Tarab. This piece organizes the sound of Tarab by playing games and toying structures from a quote that has been on my mind. In playing these games over the past few years, it has become clear that the stronger the words, the stronger the music that finds its way out of them. In this case, I owe a debt to Rosa Parks, who said, "the only tired I was, was tired of giving in."

Jason Treuting

Lover Calls

Attracted to the inherent sensuality of several cellos playing together and the fine musicianship of the performers, I was thrilled to write Lover Calls for Florent Renard-Payen and the Tarab Cello Ensemble. Although the composition of the piece took a particularly long time, with many sojourns in the quiet of Connecticut to stimulate the process, the piece itself has a tight, confident character, rising from a quiet, sensual beginning and falling back again from a more buoyant middle. Each particular passage, as it were, yearns and calls out in a different manner, sometimes delicately, sometimes tinged with melancholy. Unlike most other works that use soloists or deconstruct the ensemble, the body of cellos must play as one entity, reflecting, perhaps, a view primarily from a single source as in a first-person narration. By using the word narration, I do not mean to suggest a story line, for the music evokes rather than consciously depicts.

Gregory Mertl

Wake Up...and Die

During the last several decades, much of John Tavener's work has been directly influenced by his spiritual connections and his commitment to the Russia Orthodox Church, which he joined in 1977. Increasingly, his influences look back to ancient tradition as he works toward the creation of an icon in sound. Wake Up...and

Die represents the course of human life from birth to death. In that respect, the structure of the work is a palindrome with no true structure of movements.

Michael Prevost

Cello Lines

Cello Lines is an arrangement of my work Simple Lines (2006), which was written for bass clarinetist Michael Lowenstern for soloist and electronics. This arrangement was done specifically for Florent and the Tarab Cello Ensemble. I wrote the work in response to my father's death in 2005 from cancer.

Bill Ryan

Rain

"Rain" is, as the title suggests, music designed to echo the experience of standing in a rainstorm. Those who have stood in torrential rain have witnessed an unexpected yet affecting beauty. Seemingly random forces-- rain, wind, thunder-- combine to form dancing silhouettes against momentary illuminations. The driving force of the rain itself becomes a kind of rhythm, an energy, which suffuses the air with crackling intensity. This is the goal of "Rain"-- to capture this moving energy with the sound of eight cellos. Repeating patterns, in the minimalist style, work against one another while an omnipresent A-- first in stillness, then in repetition-- offers the rhythm of each moment. A melody arises from the friction of the patterns until finally the energy exhausts itself and the moment passes. The narrative ends where it begins, with stillness. The "Rain" has ended.

Michael Midlarsky

8

Since the birth of my son about a year ago, I have, like most parents, become much more knowledgeable about children's lullaby repertoire. 8 began as a simple set of variations that explore the vast catalog of color available with eight cellos. Perhaps because I was working on a set of variations, or because my wife and I sing a great deal to our son, the lullaby, "Ah vous dirai-je, maman," crept into my mind while working on this piece. Thus, to me, 8 is a coming together of two worlds, the coexistence of the calm, serene world of a set of variations on a children's lullaby by Mozart, with that of my own harmonic, rhythmic, and textural musical language. 8 was composed for and premiered by the Tarab Cello Ensemble, and the piece is dedicated to them with sincerest thanks and admiration.

Nicolas Scherzinger

Cog

Cog is a piece in which a timbrally homogeneous ensemble is asked to become even more homogeneous by having each cellist play the same kind of material. It's a study in teamwork, in making a whole greater than the sum of its parts. There is very little in the way of a traditional "melody-and-accompaniment" hierarchy here- when players have "solos" they are quickly echoed by other members of the ensemble and then subsumed by the texture. My interest in writing this piece came from my fascination with the way machines make music.

Dennis DeSantis

Biographies

Recognized for its artistic creativity, **Tarab Cello Ensemble** is dedicated to the commissioning and performance of twenty-first century American music for eight cellos, with the goal of establishing a vital contemporary repertoire for this instrumentation. Since its inception in 2000, the ensemble has premiered more than twenty works. Its repertoire also includes such compositions as Pierre Boulez' *Messagesquise*, Arvo Pärt's *Fratres*, Augusta Read Thomas' *Blizzard in Paradise* and Luciano Berio's *Korot*.

Tarab Cello Ensemble has presented concerts in Michigan, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Florida, Mexico, and France, with broadcast performances on public radio stations WMUK (Kalamazoo, MI), WMBR (Cambridge, MA), WXXI (Rochester, NY), WCNY (Syracuse, NY) and WGDR (Plainfield, VT). Tarab has appeared as guest ensemble in residence at Princeton University, Patel Conservatory in Florida and the University of South Florida. Recently the ensemble premiered Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon's *Silueta como Sirena* for voice, eight cellos, and orchestra in New York City with the Riverside Symphony Orchestra and additional performances in Mazatlán and Culiacán (Mexico) with the Orquesta Sinfonia Sinaloa de las Artes.

The Ensemble has received grants from the Howard Hanson Institute for American Music, the Foreman Institute for the Creative and Performing Arts, and the Fromm Foundation. Tarab Cello Ensemble has recorded on Bridge Records and Albany Records.

"If you don't experience tarab, how do you claim to be alive?"

- Rumi

Elizabeth Brown was born in San Diego, California, and began playing the cello at the age of four. Ms. Brown has performed with the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra, Canton Symphony Orchestra, Aspen Festival Orchestra, National Repertory Orchestra and others. Ms. Brown received her Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the Eastman School of Music, where she studied with Alan Harris. Ms. Brown is currently in her fourth season as the principal cellist of La Orquesta Sinfonica Sinaloa de las Artes, in Sinaloa, Mexico.

Alex Greenbaum began playing the cello at age three. In the past few years he has performed as soloist or collaborator at venues throughout New York City, including Bargemusic, Merkin Hall, Makor, Tonic, The Cutting Room, Rockwood Music Hall, the Brooklyn Lyceum and at Lincoln Center. An avid chamber musician, Alex is a member of the Knights chamber ensemble and the new music group Signal and Noise. Alex has appeared as a soloist with the National Repertory Orchestra, and this season will solo with the Chelsea Symphony. He has attended the Eastman School of Music, the Royal Northern College of Music, the University of Miami and the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College. His teachers have included Steven Doane, Marcy Rosen, Ross Harbaugh and Andre Emelianoff. Alex plays a cello crafted in 2006 by Michele Ashley.

Kevin McFarland received a Bachelor's Degree in Composition from the Eastman School of Music. While a student there he was a highly active performer of contemporary music, including frequent concerts with the school's Ossia New Music and Musica Nova ensembles, and over one hundred premieres of works by faculty and students. He is also a member of the JACK quartet, a group dedicated to the performance of modern and contemporary works for string quartet based in New York City. He has collaborated with a diverse array of composers, including Pierre Boulez, Helmut Lachenmann, Wolfgang Rihm, La Monte Young, and John Zorn. He currently lives in Pennsylvania where he works as a math tutor and makes electronic music in his spare time.

Laura Metcalf is an active performer in New York City, where she has been heard recently in Weill Hall and Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall, Merkin Hall, the Consulate General of France, the J.P Morgan Library, the Tenri Cultural Institute, and many others. She has attended the International Musician's Seminar at Prussia Cove, and the Taos, Aspen, Sarasota, and Round Top Music Festivals. She is currently a member of the Sybarite Chamber Players, and was a founding member of the Stella Trio from 2005-2007. She was a semi-finalist in the 2007 Hudson Valley Philharmonic Competition, and gave her New York concerto debut in 2007 with the Ensemble 212 Orchestra. Laura has studied with Timothy Eddy and Mike

Reynolds, and has played in masterclasses for Bernard Greenhouse, Ron Leonard, Pamela Frank, and others.

Michael Midlarsky, currently a student of Uri Vardi and Collins Distinguished Fellow at the University of Wisconsin, has performed extensively as a chamber musician and soloist during his formative years. He has won numerous awards and distinctions including the National School Orchestra Soloist Award, Queen's College Cultural Heritage Competition, New Jersey American String Teacher's Association Competition, East Brunswick Orchestra Competition, and prizewinner in the Juilliard Pre-College Orchestra Competition and Woodmere String Competition. Recent festivals include the Taos School of Music and Roundtop International Institute. As a chamber musician he has performed in over 15 states, 4 countries, and on the radio program *From the Top*, after which he won the ensuing competition. Known for a "remarkable warmth of sound" and "lilting lyricism" (competition judges), Michael is looking forward to many premier performances as his career continues to blossom.

Florent Renard-Payen was born in Paris to a family of professional musicians; his parents were both harpists. At twenty, he moved to Boston to pursue five years of graduate studies, culminating in 1996 in a Master's degree and the Pi Kappa Lambda award for musical achievement from Boston University. He completed his musical studies in 2004, earning a Doctor of Musical Arts in Cello Performance from the Eastman School of Music. A champion of music of the 20th and 21st centuries, Florent is the founder of Tarab Cello Ensemble and he has worked with such eclectic ensembles as So Percussion, Syracuse Society for New Music, and Open Gate. In addition, he has commissioned and premiered solo cello works by Randall Bauer, Garrett Byrnes, Todd Coleman, Gregory Mertl, Aaron Travers, and Dan Trueman. Since 1999, Florent has been teaching cello at Colgate University and chamber music at Hamilton College, New York.

Guests:

Michael Haas has established himself as an accomplished and exciting young cellist, performing in New York and around the country. A founding member of the Tessera Quartet, Mr. Haas has collaborated with pianists Claude Frank, Joyce Yang, and composer/pianist Lowell Liebermann, performing at Connecticut College, Rockefeller University, and the Music a la Mode series in Manhattan. He has recently appeared performing chamber music at Alice Tully Hall, the Kennedy Center, and as a guest at the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society. Mr. Haas is also a member of the New Haven Symphony Orchestra and performs regularly in New York with the Chelsea Symphony. In recent summers Michael has

attended the Yellow Barn and Taos Chamber Music Festivals and held fellowships to the Tanglewood Music Center and Aspen Music Festival. Mr. Haas holds degrees from the Curtis Institute of Music and the Juilliard School.

Brooklyn-based cellist **Jane Cords-O'Hara** has performed extensively in the United States, Ireland, the UK and Europe. In recent seasons she has performed with The Knights, Wet Ink, Columbia Composers, Argento, SONYC, Sufjan Stevens, Allsar Quartet and American Composers Alliance, in such venues as Weill and Zankel Hall at Carnegie, Bargemusic, Brooklyn Lyceum (MATA festival), The Stone, Symphony Space, MOBIA, BAM and Merkin Hall. As cellist of the Syrius Trio, she tours regularly in Ireland and the UK, and has recently returned from the Musica Nova festival in Sao Paulo, Brazil. She recently recorded with The Knights on the Sony Classical label, and with Syrius Trio for Toccatta Classics.