

4-6-2009

Concert: Ithaca Contemporary Chamber Ensemble

Ithaca Contemporary Chamber Ensemble

Jeffery Meyer

Charis Dimaras

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ITHACA COLLEGE

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

ITHACA CONTEMPORARY CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

Jeffery Meyer, Richard Faria, directors

Hockett Family Recital Hall
Tuesday, April 6, 2009
8:15 p.m.

ITHACA

PROGRAM

Cheating, Lying, Stealing (1993)

David Lang
(b. 1957)

Jeffery Meyer, conductor

Two Old Postcards from Formosa (2007)

Ming-Hsiu Yen
(b. 1980)

- I. *Crying Bird*
- II. *Plowing Song*

Jennifer Hayghe, piano

Love Beyond Time, Beyond Place (1993)

Dana Wilson
(b. 1946)

- I. *From China (c. 500 B.C.E.)*
- II. *From Greece (c. 500 B.C.E.)*
- III. *From Japan (9th Century)*
- IV. *From Arabia (13th Century)*
- V. *From Italy (14th Century)*
- VI. *From Madagascar (20th Century)*

Deborah Lifton, soprano
Charis Dimaras, conductor

INTERMISSION

In C (1964)

Terry Riley
(b. 1935)

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PROGRAM NOTES

Cheating, Lying, Stealing A couple of years ago, I started thinking about how so often when classical composers write a piece of music, they are trying to tell you something that they are proud of and like about themselves--Here's this big gushing melody, see how emotional I am. Or, here's this abstract hard-to-figure-out piece, see how complicated I am, see my really big brain. I am more noble, more sensitive, I am so happy. The composer really believes he or she is exemplary in this or that area. It's interesting, but it's not very humble. So I thought, What would it be like if composers based pieces on what they thought was wrong with them? Like, here's a piece that shows you how miserable I am. Or, here's a piece that shows you what a liar I am, what a cheater I am. I wanted to make a piece that was about something disreputable. It's a hard line to cross. You have to work against all your training. You are not taught to find the dirty seams in music. You are not taught to be low-down, clumsy, sly and underhanded. In *Cheating, Lying, Stealing*, although phrased in a comic way, I am trying to look at something dark. There is a swagger, but it is not trustworthy. In fact, the instruction on the score for how to play it says: Ominous funk. – David Lang

Two Old Postcards from Formosa contains two movements. Each is based on a different Taiwanese folk song, and each captures an image of Taiwanese history. To me, folk songs are the authentic “diaries” that preserve the memories of the life and experiences of the people. As the composition unfolds, I hope the music will transport the audience to the world that inspired these poignant songs.

The first movement, “Crying Bird” is based on the folk song, “A Chu-Chu Crying Bird” (一隻鳥仔啼啾啾). The song was created during the period of Japanese colonialism in Taiwan. “Who broke and stole my nest [country]? If I catch you, I will not let you go.” Its text uses symbolism to refer to the suffering of Taiwanese people under the Japanese occupation. Unlike many Taiwanese folk songs that are based on the pentatonic scale, this song is unique in its use of the minor triad, which expresses the mood of hopeless very well.

The second movement, “Plowing Song” (駛犁歌) is the title of a song, whose origin can be traced back to the local dance-theater music. The song describes a farmer who is plowing the field by pushing an ox under the burning sun, and it also sends a message of “no pain, no gain,” encouraging people to work hard. To me, because of Taiwan’s current political struggle in achieving recognition with the United Nations and many other

international organizations, Taiwanese people can be symbolized by the farmer in the song. I hope this piece will encourage Taiwanese people to continue fighting and never give up.

"Two Old Postcards from Formosa" was commissioned by the Hanson Institute for American Music of the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester for pianist, Susan Tang, and is the 2009 Ithaca College Heckscher Composition Competition winner - Ming-Hsiu Yen

Love Beyond Time, Beyond Place

- I. **From China (c. 500 B.C.E.):**
The Morning Glory (from the *Shi King* compiled by Confucius; translated by Helen Waddell).

The morning glory climbs above my head,
Pale flowers of white and purple, blue and red.
I am disquieted.

Down in the withered grasses something stirred;
I thought it was his footfall that I heard.
Then a grasshopper chirred.

I climbed the hill just as the new moon showed,
I saw him coming on the southern road.
My heart lays down its load.

- II. **From Greece (c. 500 B.C.E.):**
Excerpt from a poem by Sappho
(translated by Mary Bernard)

...the sweet murmur of
your voice, the enticing

laughter that makes my own
heart beat fast. If I meet
you suddenly, I can't

speak - my tongue is broken;
a thin flame runs under
my skin; seeing nothing,

hearing only my own ears
drumming, I drip with sweat;
trembling shakes my body

and I turn paler than
dry grass. At such times
death isn't far from me.

III. **From Japan (9th Century):** Anonymous
(translated by Arthur Waley)

When the dawn comes
With the flicker flicker
Of sunrise,
How sad the helping each other to put on
our clothes!

IV. **From Arabia (13th Century):**
From the *Thousand and One Nights* (translated by
E. Powys Mathers).

Tell Him, O night,
How your black sword has killed my golden days
And your black brush obscured the smooth delight
About my eyes' dim ways.
The breasts of my distress
Are pressed against the thorns of appetite,
Desire my food and my drink sleeplessness;
Tell him, O night.

V. **From Italy (14th Century):**
Sonnet (adapted) by Cecco Angiolieri, da Siena
(translated by D. G. Rosetti)

I am enamored, and yet not so much
But that I'd do without it easily;
And my own mind thinks all the more of me
That Love has not quite penned me in her hutch.
Enough if for her sake I dance and touch
The lute, and serve her servants cheerfully:
An overdose is worse than none would be:
Love is no lord of mine, I'm proud to vouch.
So let no man who is born conceive
That I'll be his liege slave, as I see some,
be he as strong and handsome as he will.
Too much of love makes idiots, I believe;
I like not any fashion that turns glum
The heart and makes the visage sick and ill.

VI. From Madagascar (20th Century):
Song of the Common Lover by Flaven Ranaivo
(translated by Alan Ryder)

Don't love me, my sweet,
like your shadow
for shadows fade in evening
and I want to keep you
right up to the cockcrow;
nor like pepper
which makes the belly hot
for then I couldn't take you
when I'm hungry;
nor like a pillow
for we'd be together in the hours of sleep
but scarcely meet by day;
nor like rice
for once swallowed you think no more of it;
nor like soft speeches
for they quickly vanish;
nor like honey,
sweet indeed but too common.

Love me like a beautiful dream,
your life in the night,
my hope in the day;
like a piece of money,
even with me on earth,
and for the great journey
a faithful comrade;
like a calabash,
intact, for drawing water;
in pieces, bridges for my guitar.

In C

Terry Riley's piece **In C** is one of the seminal works of the late 20th century. Premiered in 1964, it was the work that introduced the musical style now known as Minimalism to a mainstream audience. Full of repeating cells, insistent rhythms, and high energy, **In C** is a work that can also be endlessly colorful. It is an "open score," meaning that it can be played by any combination of instruments. Over the decades, it has been played by percussion ensembles, guitar groups, a Chinese traditional orchestra, and a microtonal band, among hundreds of others. **In C** had a deep and lasting impact on contemporary classical composers like Steve Reich and John Adams; but it also affected the rock world, influencing artists like John Cale and Brian Eno. - John Schaefer

TERRY RILEY *In C* (1964)

Performing Directions

All performers play from the same page of 53 melodic patterns played in sequence.

Any number of any kind of instruments can play. A group of about 35 is desired, if possible, but smaller or larger groups will work. If vocalist(s) join in, they can use any vowel and consonant sounds they like.

Patterns are to be played consecutively with each performer having the freedom to determine how many times he or she will repeat each pattern before moving on to the next. There is no fixed rule as to the number of repetitions a pattern may have; however, since performances normally average between 45 minutes and one and a half hours, it can be assumed that one would repeat each pattern from somewhere between 45 seconds and one and a half minutes or longer.

It is very important that performers listen very carefully to one another, and this means occasionally to drop out and listen. As an ensemble, it is very desirable to play very softly, as well as very loudly, and to try to diminuendo and crescendo together.

Each pattern can be played in unison or canonically in any alignment with itself or with its neighboring patterns. One of the joys of *In C* is the interaction of the players in polyrhythmic combinations that spontaneously arise between patterns. Some quite fantastic shapes will arise and disintegrate as the group moves through the piece when it is properly played.

It is important not to hurry from pattern to pattern but to stay on a pattern long enough to interlock with other patterns being played. As the performance progresses, performers should stay within two or three patterns of each other. It is important not to race too far ahead or to lag too far behind.

The ensemble can be aided by the means of an eighth-note pulse played on the high C's of the piano or on a mallet instrument. It is also possible to use improvised percussion in strict rhythm (drum set, cymbals, bells), if it is carefully done and does not overpower the ensemble. All performers must play strictly in rhythm, and it is essential that everyone play each pattern carefully. It is advised to rehearse patterns in unison before attempting to play the piece, to determine that everyone is playing correctly.

The tempo is left to the discretion of the performers, obviously not too slow, but not faster than performers can comfortably play.

It is important to think of patterns periodically, so that when you are resting, you are conscious of the larger periodic composite accents that are sounding, and when you re-enter you are aware of what effect your entrance will have on the music's flow.

The group should aim to merge into unison at least once or twice during the performance. At the same time, if the players seem to be consistently too much in the same alignment of a pattern, they should try shifting their alignment by an eighth note or a quarter note with what is going on in the rest of the ensemble.

It is okay to transpose patterns by an octave, especially to transpose up. Transposing down by octaves works best on the patterns containing notes of long durations. Augmentation of rhythmic values can also be effective.

If for some reason a pattern cannot be played, the performer should omit it and go on.

Instruments can be amplified if desired. Electronic keyboards are also welcome.

In C ends in this way: When each performer arrives at figure #53, he or she stays on it until the entire ensemble has arrived there. The group then makes a large crescendo and diminuendo a few times and each player drops out as he or she wishes. - Terry Riley

Performers:

Lang – Cheating, Lying, Stealing

Daniel Frankhuizen, cello
Richard Faria, bass clarinet
Julia Ross, brake drum I
Josh Oxford, drum set
Anthony DiBartolo, brake drum II
Matt Holehan, piano
Jeffery Meyer, conductor

Wilson – Love Beyond Time, Beyond Place

Deborah Lifton, soprano
Mira Shifrin, flute
Nicholas DiEugenio, violin
Sarah Koop, clarinet
Tristan Rais-Sherman, cello
Bethany Dixon, piano
Josh Oxford, percussion
Charis Dimaras, conductor

Riley – In C

Jeffery Meyer, piano
Josh Oxford, minimoog
Robin Alfieri, violin
Kyle Kresge, bass
Jordan Morton, bass
Sara Koop, clarinet
Tristan Rais-Sherman, cello
Daniel Frankhuizen, cello
Julia Ross, percussion
Tyler Borden, cello
Sarah Plunkett, flute
Richard Faria, bass clarinet

Concert Calendar

April

- | | | |
|----|------|--|
| 7 | 7:00 | Tuba Ensemble; David Unland, director |
| 8 | 8:15 | Ithaca Wind Quintet and The Pennsylvania Quintet |
| 9 | 8:15 | The Louis K. Thaler Concert Violinist Series
Jennifer Koh, violin and Shai Wosner, piano |
| 10 | 9:00 | Master Classes: Jennifer Koh, violin and Shai Wosner, piano |
| | 4:00 | Faculty Recital: Harold Reynolds, trombone |
| | 7:00 | Faculty Recital: Patrice Pastore, soprano |
| 11 | 4:00 | Faculty Recital: Kelly Covert, flute |
| 12 | 7:00 | Flute Ensemble; Sarah Plunkett, graduate conductor |
| 13 | 7:00 | Sinfonietta; Jesse Livingston and chung-Min Chen,
graduate conductors |
| | 8:15 | Faculty Recital: Deborah Lifton, soprano |
| 15 | 7:00 | Faculty Recital: Dawn Pierce, mezzo-soprano and
Anna Steenerson, soprano |
| 17 | 7:00 | High School Gospel Invitational Festival Concert;
Baruch Whitehead, coordinator |
| 18 | 4:00 | Faculty Recital: Nicholas DiEugenio, violin |
| | 4:00 | Klezmer Ensemble; Peter Rothbart, director |
| | 8:15 | Jazz Ensemble; Michael Titlebaum, musical director |
| 22 | 7:00 | Campus Choral Ensemble; Jennifer Haywood, conductor
and Jennifer Sengin and Lee Wright, graduate conductors |
| 23 | 8:15 | Opera Workshop; Brian DeMaris, music director |
| 24 | Noon | All-Campus Band; Dan Isbell, conductor |
| 25 | 3:00 | Chorus; Janet Galván, conductor |
| | 8:15 | Jazz Lab Ensembles; Michael Titlebaum and
Tom Killian, musical directors |
| 27 | 8:15 | Percussion Ensemble; Conrad Alexander, director |
| 28 | 8:15 | Concert Band; Mark Fonder, conductor |
| 29 | 8:15 | Symphonic Band; Elizabeth Peterson, conductor |
| 30 | 8:15 | Chamber Orchestra; Jeffery Meyer, conductor |

May

- | | | |
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| 1 | 8:15 | Madrilal Singers; Lawrence Doebler, conductor and
Choir, Jennifer Sengin, graduate conductor |
| 2 | 8:15 | Symphony Orchestra; Jeffery Meyer, conductor |
| 3 | 8:15 | Vocal Jazz Ensemble; Lauri Keegan, musical director |
| 4 | 8:15 | Percussion Ensemble; Gordon Stout, director |
| 5 | 8:15 | Brass Choir; Keith Kaiser, conductor and
Women's Chorale, Janet Galván, conductor |
| 6 | 7:00 | Early Music Period Instrument Performance Ensemble;
Nicholas Walker, director |
| | 8:15 | Wind Ensemble; Stephen Peterson, conductor |

Ithaca College Concerts 2009-10 (admission charge)

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| September 11 | Zuill Bailey, violoncello and Awadagin Pratt, piano |
| February 13 | Theodora Hanslowe, mezzo-soprano |
| March 26 | Cameron Carpenter, organ |