4-9-2000

Concert: David Weiss, oboe, English horn, saw

David Weiss

Alpha Hockett Walker

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"It is my plan to build a school of music second to none."

—William Grant Egbert (1867-1928)  
Founder, Ithaca Conservatory  
Music

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

ITHACA
VISITING ARTISTS SERIES

D n A
David Weiss, oboe, English horn, saw*
Alpha Hockett Walker, piano

Five Pieces for Oboe and Piano

Conversation
Englisches Volkslied
Contretemps, Contre Murs
Maze
Capriccio

The Ash Grove
Sonata in F minor (originally for recorder)

Vivace

Ave Maria
Habañera
Kojo No Tsuki

Barcarolle
Toccata Ostinata

Sonata for Oboe and Piano

Allegro ma non troppo
Larghetto
Allegro

INTERMISSION
The Quest for the Waters of Lethe

Charles F. Hockett

The souls of the damned in Hades search eternally for the River Lethe, knowing that if they can drink of its waters they will forget their sins and find peace. Again and again they set out, but each path leads them back to whence they started.

To A Wild Rose
Estrellita
Wave

Edward MacDowell
Manuel Ponce/Heifetz
Carlos Jobim

Tunis from Escales (Ports of Call)
Troublesome Freylakh

Jacques Ibert
Dave Leslie

* Mr. Weiss performs almost exclusively on a Stanley Handyman Saw.

New Recital Hall
Sunday, April 9, 2000
7:00 p.m.
C. F. Hockett

C. F. Hockett is Goldwin Smith Professor Emeritus of Anthropology and Linguistics at Cornell University from which he retired in 1982. Alongside his academic career, he has been listening to, performing, and composing music since early childhood. His taste is broad, from Bach to the Beatles, but stops short of such recent fads as minimalism. His performing began with flute and piccolo, but in 1978 his voice changed to bass clarinet, which he plays in the Ithaca Concert Band alongside his wife, Shirley, a clarinetist, and Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at Ithaca College. His compositions, based on early thorough training in harmony, counterpoint, musical form, and orchestration, are mainly chamber music, especially for woodwinds or the cello, but also include a concerto for cello and wind ensemble, three marches for band, songs, and an opera, "Dona Rosita."

Program Notes

Oboe and English Horn Music

In college in the early 1930's I knew an oboist named Ellis Waldron; his playing was probably what got me to compose for oboe rather than for my own instruments (at that time, flute and piccolo), and conceivably had some bearing on the fact that, later on, our oldest child (our pianist for this concert) took up the oboe.

The opening theme of the Sonata for Oboe and Piano was jotted down at the National Music Camp at Interlochen, in the summer of 1934, and the sonata was finished before the end of that decade.

During her sophomore year as an oboe major at Eastman, Alpha was lent an English Horn as part of her training. She phoned me and said "Daddy, write me something!" I worked out the piece you will hear today. At first it had no title. But then, late one night while driving home from Buffalo with the radio on, I heard the legend of the waters of Lethe, and immediately realized that this was the myth my music explains. Let's get this straight—the "program" of program music does not tell you what the music is about. It is the music that explains, in straightforward terms, what is obscured in the verbal form by irrelevant personalities and actions.

The four short pieces for oboe and piano were composed for Alpha in 1956, as she was just getting started on the instrument. The Capriccio came a few years later.
Piano Music

The Barcarolle was composed some time before 1942, which means while sitting at my mother's Starr Baby Grand in Worthington, Ohio. The Toccata Ostinata was worked out in the autumn of 1955, on our own Steinway Baby Grand, in the house in Ithaca where we still live. In those days I could still actually perform what I composed for piano.

C. F. Hockett

The Performers

David Weiss and Alpha Hockett Walker, who are husband and wife, began performing together as a duo in 1982—David on oboe, English horn, and musical saw (occasionally oboe d' amoré and bass oboe) and Alpha on piano and electronic keyboard (occasionally oboe). They have developed a repertoire of great variety, and have performed in Japan, Western Europe, Israel, Alaska, Hawaii, Costa Rica, continental United States, and on several cruises.

David, who has been principal oboe of the Los Angeles Philharmonic since 1973, previously held first chair posts with the Metropolitan Opera National Company, Pittsburgh Symphony, National Symphony, and West Point Military Academy Band. As an oboe soloist, he has played at New York's Caramoor Festival, Lincoln Center, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Hollywood Bowl, Carnegie Recital Hall, and at the Los Angeles Music Center. His first of many solo performances with the Philharmonic was in 1962 when he was fifteen years old. David is a faculty member at the University of Southern California, and has also taught at Vassar College, Duquesne University, and the Sarasota Music Festival. He is in demand as a clinician and judge for such notable events as the American Oboist, New York Oboe International Competition, Gillet Competition, and has given master classes at the Manhattan School of Music and New England Conservatory. David is also a world-renown musical saw player. He has been featured on the "Tonight Show," "Prairie Home Companion," at the Hollywood Bowl, and in television commercials and movies. His album Virtuoso Saw met with high critical acclaim, and is distributed world-wide. In addition, he is an accomplished photographer whose work has been exhibited and published internationally.

Alpha has performed as soloist and chamber player on the oboe and piano with musicians in the United States and abroad, including
members of the Cleveland Orchestra, Boston Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, Sequoia String Quartet, Vermeer String Quartet, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. She performed as an oboist and/or keyboardist with the philharmonic numerous times at the Music Center, and during each of the 1991 through 1997 Hollywood Bowl seasons. She also performed on several foreign and domestic tours under Esa-Pekka Salonen and Kurt Sanderling, and participated in a number of Philharmonic Chamber Music Series concerts. Alpha is the composer of the 1977 Off-Broadway Musical *The Great America Singing Commercial*. In great demand as a teacher, she maintains a full schedule at her music studio in West Los Angeles. She is well known for her innovative teaching methods effective for both children and adults, as well as her practical course for piano teachers.