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Currents: La Canterina and Gertie's Head

Department of Music, University of Richmond

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The University of Richmond
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
and
CURRENTS

The ensemble for new-music at the University of Richmond
Fred Cohen *Artistic Director*

present

LA CANTERINA
an opera buffa in two acts by Joseph Haydn

and

GERTIE'S HEAD
by Richard Pearson Thomas



March 20 and 21, 1998
8:00 pm
Alice Jepson Theatre

La Canterina

an *opera buffa* in two acts by Joseph Haydn

La Canterina Act I

****brief intermission****

Gertie's Head

by Richard Pearson Thomas

****brief intermission****

La Canterina Act II

Dramatis Personae

La Canterina

Don Pelagio, a singing master Keith Jameson *tenor*
Gasparina, a virtuosa Jennifer Cable *soprano*
Apollonia, stage mother of Gasparina Jeanette Thompson *soprano*
Don Ettore, son of a merchant Suzanne Stevens *mezzo-soprano*
a Porter Homer Rudolf

Gertie's Head

Jeanette Thompson *soprano*
Charles West *clarinet*
Kendra Kulik *cello*
Paul Hanson *piano*
Fred Cohen *conductor*

Orchestra

Flute

Patricia Werrell
Mary Beth Indelicato

Oboe/English Horn

Sharon Flingner-Linquist
Daniel L. Edwards

French Horn

Mary Beth Hall
Charlotte King

Bassoon

Matthew Harvell

Harpichord

Joanne Kong

Violin

Loretta Spicer Carreras
Jane Hoffmann
Julie Hayes
Kimberly Forquer
Jessica Gilmore

Viola

Judy Cohen

Cello

Anne Bakker
Kendra Kulik

Fred Cohen *Music Director and Stage Director*

Katie Porter *Light Designer*

Joanne Kong *Rehearsal Pianist*

Gertie's Head

Richard Pearson Thomas (composer and lyricist)

There used to be a heartless cad who rode up and down
From Billings to Missoula, getting off at each town,
He'd woo some wealthy spinster out of every last dime
Then change his name, board the train and move down the line.
Right here he met Ol' Gert who was the richest of all
She wasn't much a looker, being wider than tall
His sugar-coated coaxing made her quick to decide
To offer up her fortune and become his bride
Late one night she went to find him just before they were wed
Instead she found his suitcase open there on the bed
Inside were cash and jewels souvenirs of the lives
Of his dozens and dozens of other wives!
She met him on the stairs and vowed to send him to jail
He panicked and he slung her up against the rail
Then he grabbed the fire ax and he hacked off her head.

But that gal was really mad, she wouldn't settle for dead.
In fact her head said:
"Do not think that you are rid of me for eternity.
I make this vow: You can run but you can't hide from me.
You're inside of me. You're all mine now.
Everytime you hear this tune begin,
you'll know that once again I've found you
no matter how you've covered your tracks.
This song'll be played for your sake. I'm afraid
to remind you of the factual mistake that you made
when you cut off Gertie's Head with that fire ax"!!!

Now Gertie was an opera singer, so the tale goes,
Especially fond of Massenets and Charles Gounods
Each year she sang a concert for the Episcopal wives
(They wouldn't dare miss that affair, no not on their lives!)
So that head began to sing where it had dropped on the stair.
Severed from the body, hell, that Head didn't care!
It warbled with a vengeance. Yes the paint did peel.
And as the killer fled, Gertie's voice was red hot on its heel:

"Do not think that you are rid of me
For eternity, I make this vow
You can run, but ah no, you are part of me now.
I'll find you no matter how you've covered your tracks."

From coast to coast that dirty dog was eagerly sought
But he was mighty clever and he never got caught
Yet everywhere he went, Gertie's voice was on hand
From the organ grinder in the street to the thundering feet of each marching
band.
Finally he lay dying years and years had passed
He closed his eyes and prayed that he would find peace at last
Suddenly, coming up from the ground
He heard an old familiar sound
It seems the folks downstairs had bought a radio that year
and through the floors came Gertie's voice broadcasting
loud and clear
"Ah, don't think by dying that you can relax!
Because you can bet I've got plenty of breath
To never, never, never let you forget
How you cut off Gertie's Head with the fire ax!!!"

Notes: *La Canterina*

Although Joseph Haydn is recognized primarily for developing and solidifying Viennese classical style in instrumental music, he devoted a major part of his career to operatic composition and production at the Esterházy court. Before 1776, he produced and directed his own Italian operas exclusively, including *Acide* (1762), *La canterina* (1766), *Lo speciale* (1768), *Le pescatrici* (1769), *L'infedeltà delusa* (1773), and *L'incontro improvviso* (1775). But upon assuming the post of "Opera Conductor" in 1776, Haydn undertook a busy schedule of staging works by other composers for Prince Nicholas Esterházy and his court guests. During the remainder of his career, Haydn composed five more operas for Esterháza — *Il mondo della luna* (1777), *La vera costanze* (1778), *La fedeltà premiata* (1780), *Orlando paladino* (1782), and *Armida* (1784) — while producing over 100 Italian operas by leading composers of the period. In 1786 alone, Haydn conducted 125 performances of 17 different operas (8 of which were new to the resident opera troupe), revising many to suit the skills of the performers. His last opera, *L'anima del filosofo (Orfeo ed Euridice)*, was written for London in 1791 but, because of political intrigue, never performed.

Many people are surprised to learn that Haydn was such a prolific opera composer. His operas are rarely performed today, and many critics believe they do not offer a vivid sense

of characterization, dramatic pacing, or theatrical situation. Part of the problem undoubtedly lies in the inferior quality of many librettos set by Haydn, for they are often long and complicated, allowing little opportunity for characters to interact with one another. Although Haydn did set three texts by the Venetian comic poet, Carlo Goldoni, the majority of his librettos were by less skilled poets. And even though an in-house poet was often responsible for revising and modernizing the texts Haydn set, there seems to have been little opportunity for full-scale reworkings or close interaction between composer and librettist, as in the collaborations between Mozart and da Ponte. Furthermore, we do not know the extent to which Haydn was responsible for choosing the texts he set. At present, it is presumed that Prince Esterházy chose the works Haydn composed and staged, and that the predominance of comic operas at Esterháza represents his tastes.

The lack of any kind of continuous performing tradition for Haydn's operas must also be partially responsible for their present status. If they had achieved a wider circulation, and if nineteenth-century opinion in general had not been so condescending (it was during this time that the sobriquet "Papa Haydn" was coined), some of Haydn's more successful stage works might have continued as part of a living tradition. Thus the inability of these works to

survive in the hearts and minds of contemporary audiences only adds to their inaccessibility, and makes the task of mounting a modern production that much more difficult.

La Canterina (The Songstress)

During 1766, when Haydn composed *La canterina*, he was promoted to full Capellmeister, responsible for fulfilling all the court's needs for church, chamber and theatre music. Also during this year, the court's activities moved from the town of Eisenstadt to the newly erected palace at Eszterháza. The lavish and extravagant decor of the new palace, intended to rival the splendor of Versailles, provided the setting for Haydn's operas. Since the opera house was not completed until 1768, *La canterina* probably received its first performance in one of the palace's large salons, or in the extensive surrounding gardens, during the summer of 1766. The first documented performance took place on February 16, 1767, during the carnival celebrations in Pressburg (present-day Bratislava). On this occasion, Prince Nicholas took Haydn and many of his court musicians and singers along with him in order to present the opera.

La canterina represents the composer's entrée into the world of comic opera. There is some confusion, however, as to whether the work belongs to

the genre of comic *intermezzo* or opera buffa. The title-page of the original score reads "Intermezzo in Musica," suggesting that the two-act work is a short comic entertainment meant to be performed during the intermissions of a three-act serious opera (*opera seria*). Indeed, no overture is provided for the opera. But in the libretto, 200 copies of which were published for the 1767 Pressburg performance, the title-page refers to *La canterina* as an *Opera Buffa*, implying that it is an autonomous comic opera. And in fact, at the Pressburg performance, the opera was presented as an independent work. Since the evidence for either interpretation is inconclusive, we have chosen to present the two halves of the opera divided by another entertainment (*Gertie's Head*), in the manner of an *intermezzo*.

To complicate matters further, the librettist is not known: the opera is not a setting of Goldoni's text by the same name. Within the last decade, more information has been uncovered about the libretto, even though the author still remains a mystery. The plot of *La canterina* bears such a striking resemblance to events in Niccolò Piccinni's comic opera *L'Origille* (1760), that it appears Haydn's libretto was extracted from Piccinni's opera. The characters' names are changed and the layout of numbers is different, but both works incorporate the archaic text "Che mai fer degg'io?" ("Whatever can I do?")—used by the singing master to

instruct his student—from the *opera seria* libretto *Lucio vero* (1700) by Apostolo Zeno.

La canterina lampoons "the singer" in the eighteenth century. The slim plot centers around Gasparina, the soprano singing student, her "finta madre" Apollonia, who poses as Gasparina's mother, and two suitors: the young Don Ettore, and the singing master, Don Pelagio. In the score, Don Pelagio's part is notated in tenor clef, while all the other parts are written in soprano clef, indicating that Don Ettore's part is a "trouser" role (a female singing a male part). In order to increase the comic effect of the first performance, the role of Apollonia was sung by a male, presumably in falsetto—a practice not followed in this performance.

The action takes place in the sitting room of Apollonia's and Gasparina's apartment, which is maintained for them by Don Pelagio. Act One opens with Gasparina sitting at her dressing table applying a new cosmetic, while Apollonia extols its virtues. Their conversation is interrupted by the arrival of Don Ettore bearing a diamond bracelet and some expensive linen as gifts. Gasparina has little time for her young suitor, but she is attracted by his impressive offerings. Soon thereafter an abrupt knock at the door announces the arrival of Don Pelagio, who has come to give Gasparina her voice lesson. But before the lesson begins, Gasparina pretends to be involved in a financial deal with Don Ettore in the hope of

persuading Don Pelagio to buy her a gift. Her ploy is successful, and the dotting Don Pelagio reluctantly purchases the piece of linen. Before Don Ettore takes his leave, Apollonia asks him to wait in a nearby café during the lesson.

The singing lesson begins. Don Pelagio performs an amorous accompanied recitative and aria, which he has composed especially for Gasparina, and then invites her to join in. As she sings, he guides her and offers technical advice. At one point, Apollonia interrupts to offer her rendition of a particularly languid section, prompting Gasparina, at the urging of Don Pelagio, to ask her mother to fetch some hot chocolate. When the master and student are alone, Don Pelagio confesses his love for Gasparina and proposes marriage. She is caught by surprise, but is saved by the prompt return of Apollonia. Poor Don Pelagio, thwarted in his pursuit of love by Gasparina's coquettishness and Apollonia's intrusions, departs in disappointment.

Through the window, Gasparina summons Don Ettore from the local café with the news that her singing lesson with "the old fool" is finished. She is unaware, however, that Don Pelagio has returned to fetch his music and, realizing he has a rival, hides under the harpsichord so as to overhear the conversation. Suddenly, the angry and jealous Don Pelagio barges into the room. Angered by Gasparina's betrayal, he vows

to halt her free lessons and to throw her and Apollonia out of the apartment. When Don Ettore volunteers to pay for Gasparina's lessons, Don Pelagio grabs the money from the perplexed lad and hurls it to the floor, at which point all four join in a lively quartet: Gasparina laments her misfortune, Don Pelagio vents his anger and desire for revenge, Don Ettore expresses his bewilderment and fear, while Apollonia attempts to reconcile the others.

At the beginning of Act Two, Gasparina and Apollonia are commiserating in their apartment when Don Pelagio and the police arrive to evict them. When Gasparina realizes that Don Pelagio is serious, she summons all her feminine wiles in a bid for mercy. In a passionate C minor *Sturm und Drang* ("storm and stress") aria, replete with expressive sighing motives and somber English horns, Gasparina mourns her miserable state of affairs. But she has not yet emptied her bag of theatrical tricks. When Don Pelagio begins to weaken, Gasparina offers kisses in return for his favors; and when he retracts his unkind punishment altogether, she seizes the opportunity to employ one of the most dependable devices known to eighteenth-century womankind—she pretends to faint. Don Pelagio and Don Ettore try to revive her with smelling salts, and when that fails, they tempt her with a purse of money and more diamonds. Appeased at last by their presents, and pleased with her own performance, Gasparina rallies. In the sectional quartet finale, everyone acknowledges Gasparina's cleverness, and all

join in a cheerful chorus praising the virtues of happiness and forgiveness.

To anyone familiar with the stock characters of the traditional improvised Italian "commedia dell'arte," several basic types are immediately recognizable in *La canterina*. Young lovers and the rivalries of older ones (who often end up as cuckolds, like Don Pelagio) are two mainstays of "commedia dell'arte," and typical stage situations incorporate overheard conversations, the settling of accounts, and general confusion. Outlandish disguises and tricks are often used by characters to gain the upper hand (as demonstrated by Gasparina) as well as to create farcical situations. But even closer are the parallels between the themes of *La canterina* and those described by Benedetto Marcello in his satire *Il teatro alla moda* (c. 1720). In this work, which still retains its wit and humor to this day, Marcello upholds the virtues of musical theatre against those, especially singers, who use the stage to gratify their personal vanities. The demands of singers, especially sopranos and castrati, are well-known to those involved in eighteenth-century theatre, and Marcello burlesques them brilliantly in his treatise. Haydn is no less adept in satirizing "the singer" in *La canterina*.

In *La canterina* mockery manifests itself at many levels. Gasparina's sly maneuvers, made evident early on through her words and stage actions, are enhanced musically by the exaggerated grief she expresses in her Act II aria. Haydn also

takes advantage of Don Pelagio's gullibility to incorporate a further musical parody. In Act I the singing master's setting of an old-fashioned serious opera text by Zeno is Haydn's cue to exploit the clichés of *opera seria*. Don Pelagio's accompanied recitative and aria both open with extraordinarily long instrumental introductions of 30 measures each, featuring oboes and horns in their high registers. In the recitative text, the vocative "sposo" (husband) is absurdly detached from the question "ti vedrò essangue?" ("Will I see you bloodless?"), an illogicality rendered even more preposterous by the lengthy orchestral flourishes separating the successive lines of text. The recitative text is filled with metaphorical references, for instance "quei lumi, quei dolci lumi" ("those lights, those sweet lights"), which provides Don Pelagio ample opportunity to make "eyes" at Gasparina while instructing her. In the aria, the distraught prima donna's noble conflict between duty and heart takes on new significance when we discover its utter meaninglessness to Gasparina and its close parallel to Don Pelagio's own situation later in the drama. Haydn deftly carries out this caricature of *opera seria*.

Haydn's *La canterina* combines tightly-knit action and fluid music to capture the spirit of the drama, and its wit and charm are as enjoyable today as they were in the eighteenth century. Surely this work and Haydn's other operas deserve fresh consideration by twentieth century audiences.

(notes by Caryl Clark)

Biographies

RICHARD PEARSON THOMAS, composer and pianist, has composed extensively for theatre, concert and film. His music for *What Became Known As...The Eleanor Affair* was awarded Best Original Score at the 1997 NYU Film Festival and his Off-Off Broadway musical, *Ladies in a Maze*, was produced by Encompass Music Theatre. In addition to performances by the Boston Pops and the Covent Garden Festival, his theatrical works have been staged by Houston Grand Opera, Chautauqua Opera, the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, the Banff Centre, and the Skylight Opera Theatre. His piece, *AIDS Anxiety* was singled out for performance at the 1992 Congressional Forum on the International HIV/AIDS Pandemic in Washington, D.C. and appears on the CD *Aids Quilt Songbook* (Harmonia Mundi). His educational operas for children have toured the northeastern United States and western Canada. He appears as composer-in-residence of the Gold Opera Project/Young Audiences New York, which received the 1994 National Medal of the Arts.

An accomplished pianist, Mr. Thomas has concertized extensively with singers throughout the United States and Europe. He has served as coach/music director with the Aspen Music Festival, Lake George Opera, Skylight Opera Theater, the Banff Centre, and the Yale School of Music. Mr. Thomas is a native of Montana and a graduate of the Eastman School of Music.

Keith Jameson a native of Greenwood, South Carolina, recently performed with the New York Gilbert and Sullivan Players in *The Yeomen of the Guard* and *The Mikado*, and with Indianapolis Opera as Monostatos in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. Last year he sang the role of Sigmund Freud in the world premier staging of *Dora* by Melissa Shiflett with American Chamber Opera Company in New York City, the Counsellor in Stradella's *San Giovanni Battista* with Opera Manhattan, and Dr. Blind in *Die Fledermaus* with Indianapolis Opera. He was a 1997 finalist for the Merola Opera Program with the San Francisco Opera. Previously a baritone, he was the 1996 finalist for the Center for American Artists with Lyric Opera of Chicago. Mr.

Jameson has performed various roles in American Chamber Opera Company's world premier of Martin's *Beast and Superbeast*, Danilo in *The Merry Widow* with Victorian Lyric Opera in Washington, DC, Valentin in *Faust* with the Brevard Music Center, North Carolina, and The Lecturer in Argento's *A Water Bird Talk* and John Sorel in Menotti's *The Consul*, with Eastman Opera Theatre. He received his Bachelor of Music degree in 1990 from Furman University and his Master of Music in Conducting in 1992 and his Doctorate of Musical Arts in Vocal Performance in 1995 from the Eastman School of Music. He was a Virginia Best Adams Voice Fellow at the Carmel Bach Festival, California, in 1992. This summer, he will be an apprentice with the Santa Fe Opera. Mr. Jameson, a student of Richard Hughes, lives in New York City.

University of Richmond faculty member **JENNIFER CABLE** has performed throughout the United States and Europe in solo repertoire ranging from the Renaissance through the 20th century. In addition to opera and oratorio, Miss Cable has sung with many chamber music ensembles including Tragicomedia, Musica Nova, the Kennedy Center Chamber Players, the Richmond Chamber Players, and CURRENTS. She is a founding member and regular artist with Affetti Musicali, an early music ensemble well known to Richmond audiences, and has made several solo appearances with the Richmond Symphony Orchestra. Her most recent prize was top award from the National Association of Composers USA Young Artists Competition. Undergraduate study at Oberlin College was followed by the Eastman School of Music for her Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts. Miss Cable was also awarded Performer's Certificates in both Opera and Vocal Performance from the Eastman School of Music. She has attended the Aspen Music Festival, the Akademie für Alte Musik in Bremen, Germany, the International Institute for Chamber Music in Munich, the Aldeburgh Festival and Britten-Pears School in Aldeburgh, England, and the Franz Schubert Institute in Vienna. She is currently studying voice with Marlena Malas in New York. She has recorded for Word Records and the Contemporary Record Society.

JEANETTE THOMPSON, soprano, who recently made her Carnegie Hall debut singing Verdi's *Messa da Requiem*, is becoming an international star of high acclaim. She has performed with many conductors through the United States, Europe and Asia. She has a recording with the famed Orchestra Haydn of Italy which is expected to be released sometime in 1998. Her 1997 performance of Strauss' *Vier letzte Lieder* with conductor Andrew Massey and Toledo Symphony was so compelling that the audience sprang to their feet; and she has been invited back to perform Brunnehilde's Immolation Scene from *Götterdämmerung*. Other performances have included the Strauss songs in Turkey under the baton of Emin Yasclilem, a tour with the Nieuw Vlaams SymfonieOrkest under the direction of Maestro Fernand Terby, Angelo Campori and the Haydn Orchestra, Keri-Lynn Wilson and the Latvian National Symphony. Her skyrocketing career has taken her all over the globe with recitals, orchestra concerts and operatic appearances in Belgium, Germany, France, Turkey, Spain, Italy, Austria, Yugoslavia, Latvia, Greece, Mexico, Canada, Puerto Rico, and throughout the United States. She made the sound track and guest starred in the movie, "Deux Ramoneurs chez Une Cantatrice," (a Belgian release) which premiered in October of 1991. She performed the role of Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* with the State Opera of Istanbul in Turkey. She also released a Mozart Arias and Duets compact disc with such noted artists as Stuart Burrows, Edda Moser, Rosalind Plowright and others. She also sang Giulietta in Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffmann* in Regensburg, Germany; and if visiting any French speaking nation (in the world) you may have seen her as celebrity guest on Amnesty International or The Jerry Lewis Telethon (European division). She has appeared under the baton of such noted conductors as Marc Soustrot, Fernand Terby, Enrique Batiz, John De Main, Marin Alsop, André Vandernoot, Mendi Rodan, and Rengim Gokmen, to name a few. Ms. Thompson has been acclaimed by critics from all over the world as an expressive, impressive soprano with style, honesty, and heart who exudes professionalism and an imposing, endearing stage presence. She is the 1988 Gold Medal Winner of the prestigious Concours de la Reine Elisabeth de Chants in Brussels and has the distinction of having been invited to perform on a concert for the Queen and King of Belgium.

A native of Florida, Ms. Thompson received her undergraduate degree from Florida State University in Tallahassee and her Master's Degree from Rice University in Houston, Texas. She was member of the Lehigh University music faculty from 1984 until 1987, where she performed the world premier of *Gabriel* (a Christmas Cantata for choir and solo soprano) by Steven Sametz, which was written expressly for her. Since the world premier of *Gabriel*, noted composers David Winkler, Craig Bohmler and Thomas Cipullo have also written works for Ms. Thompson. She played the title role in Verdi's masterpiece, *Aida*, in Birmingham, Alabama, where critics acclaimed her "the unchallengeable star of the evening." At the special invitation of Prince Rene Simo and the Office of Cultural Affairs of Cameroun, she made her debut in Africa doing solo recitals in Cameroun, Kenya and Zaire. Ms. Thompson was invited by Florida Governor Robert Graham to sing at his inauguration.

She is the first place winner of several opera competitions including Internationale Citta di Ercolano di Canti in Italy, the Baltimore Opera Competition, the Florida Metropolitan Opera Auditions, the Bergen Philharmonic Young Artists Competition, the Oklahoma Symphony Young Artists Competition, the Florida Federation of Music Clubs Singing Competition, the Birmingham Opera Competition, the Florida Suncoast Opera Competition and the Palm Beach Opera Competition. She is the recipient of the Grady-Harlan Most Outstanding Singer Award (chosen out of 700 singers).

Ms. Thompson's recordings include *Jeanette Thompson Sings Negro Spirituals* (compact disc) on Pavane Records label; *Mozart's Arias and Duets* (compact disc) on Noblese label; (featured soloist) on Celebration label, *O Holy Night*, (cassette and LP); and a private release, in Belgium only, of a solo recital.

SUZANNE STEVENS has sung to critical acclaim in the southeast and around the country. She enjoys singing both concert and opera repertoire, and is equally at home in both venues. A graduate of Michigan State University, she earned the Master of Music degree in Vocal Performance and Literature from the Eastman School of Music, where she also earned the Performer's

Certificate. Her operatic credits include a recent performance with Opera Carolina, where she sang the role of Dinah in Leonard Bernstein's one-act opera *Trouble in Tahiti*. Regionally, she has also sung with the AshLawn Highland Summer Festival in Charlottesville, performing the role of Ma Moss in its acclaimed production of Aaron Copland's *The Tender Land*; and with Virginia Opera as part of their SPECTrum Artist program, introducing opera to schools and communities throughout the Commonwealth. She made her professional debut with Portland Opera (Oregon) in Offenbach's *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, and also has sung the roles of Hansel in Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, Dorabella in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* and Mother Marie in Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites*. Concert work includes appearances with the Rochester Oratorio Society, Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, the Greater Lansing Symphony Orchestra, the Eastman School Symphony and most recently, the University of Richmond Orchestra and Choirs. She teaches on the adjunct faculty at University of Richmond, and is on faculty with the Virginia Commonwealth University Community School for Performing Arts. In May of this year, she married the best stage manager she ever had, Robert Aaron.

A composer and conductor living in Richmond, Virginia, *FRED COHEN* received his doctorate in music composition from Cornell University in 1987, where his principal teachers were Karel Husa and Steven Stucky. He earned his undergraduate degree from the University of California at Santa Cruz in 1980, where he studied with David Cope and Gordon Mumma. Mr. Cohen has been the recipient of a number of composition awards, including the ASCAP Grant to Young Composers, First Place in the Westfield State College Inauguration Composition Competition, and First Place in the Virginia Music Teachers Association Commissioned Composer Contest (most recently in 1997). He has received composition grants from the Virginia Council for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as funding from the Sydney and Frances Lewis Foundation, the Margaret Jury Copying Assistance Program, the University of Richmond, and Meet the Composer, Inc.

His works have been commissioned and performed by such organizations as the Richmond Symphony (most recently the *Concerto For Orchestra*, premiered Jan/Feb., 1998), the Cleveland Chamber Orchestra, the El Cerrito Youth Orchestra, the Washington Singers (a professional chamber chorus directed by Paul Hill), the Richmond Symphony Chorus, the Twentieth Century Music Forum, the Virginia Commonwealth University Department of Dance, the University of Richmond Dance Company, and the Boston Woodwind Trio. His works have also been commissioned and performed by such artists as soprano Christine Schadeberg, soprano Mimmi Fulmer, flutist Leone Buyse, performance artist Claudia Stevens, clarinetist Charles West, and violinist Sonya Monosoff. His chamber and orchestral works have been performed throughout the United States, in South America, and in Europe.

Mr. Cohen's works are published by the American Composers Alliance, where he was elected to the Board of Directors in 1993, by Magna Music Baton, and by Frank E. Warren Music.

As a conductor and artistic director, Mr. Cohen has directed orchestras and new-music ensembles since 1978. Between 1978 and 1980 he was the director of Ensemble Nova in Santa Cruz. He founded the Cornell Contemporary Ensemble and directed it from 1982 to 1986, and founded CURRENTS, the professional new-music ensemble in residence at the University of Richmond, upon his appointment in 1986. As Artistic Director of CURRENTS, Mr. Cohen has commissioned and performed more than fifty works by American composers. CURRENTS made its New York debut in 1992 at the Margaret Tache Miller Theater, and its first compact disc was released on the Centaur label in spring 1995.

In addition to frequent appearances as the conductor of contemporary music in Virginia and New York, Mr. Cohen directs the University of Richmond Orchestra and appears as a guest conductor with the Richmond Symphony.

Mr. Cohen is currently Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Music at the University of Richmond.

Program editor: Bonny Hall

Special thanks:

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