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Currents, The New-Music Ensemble

Department of Music, University of Richmond

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CURRENTS

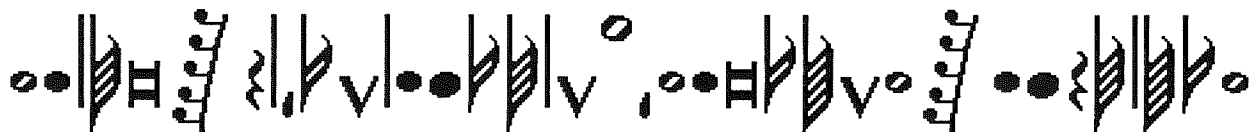
THE NEW-MUSIC ENSEMBLE
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

FRED COHEN *ARTISTIC DIRECTOR*

PRESENTS

NEW MUSIC BY VIRGINIA COMPOSERS

NOVEMBER 11, 1990
VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
3:00 PM



PROGRAM

TRIPARTITA (1989)

1. Elaborations
2. Dances
3. Blues with Variations

William Averitt
(b. 1948)

Terri Lazar *violin*
Charles West *clarinet*
Landon Bilyeu *piano*

ALL INTERVAL SUITE (1988)

- Tritone Fanfare
- Semitone Swing
- Perfect Aria
- Major Third Canon
- Minor Third March
- Whole Tone Toccata

Gordon Ring
(b. 1953)

Michael Davison *trumpet*

CANTUS (1989)

John J. Davye
(b. 1929)

Mikhail Istomin *cello*

THREE FOR EMILY (1990)

1. Wood
2. Starlight
3. Child

Fred Cohen
(b. 1958)

Christine Schadeberg *soprano*
Patricia Werrell *flute* Charles West *clarinet*
Mary Lynn van Deventer *French horn*
Terri Lazar *violin* Judy Hobbs Cohen *viola*
Mikhail Istomin *cello* Hope Armstrong Erb *piano*
Greg Giannascoli *percussion*
Fred Cohen *conductor*

* * * INTERMISSION * * *

MA MATA
I SANG (1990)

Margaret Brouwer
(b. 1949)

Christine Schadeberg *soprano*
Patricia Werrell *flute* Pamela Barton *trombone*
Terri Lazar *violin* Mikail Istomin *cello*
Hope Armstrong Erb *piano* Greg Giannascoli *percussion*
Fred Cohen *conductor*

LINKS (1987)

Allan Blank
(b.1925)

Terri Lazar *violin*
Charles West *clarinet*
Landon Bilyeu *piano*

CURRENTS

Currents is an ensemble of professional musicians specializing in the music of our time. Founded in 1986 by Dr. Fred Cohen, Assistant Professor of Music at the University of Richmond, CURRENTS has performed eleven world premieres and over fifty first performances of works in the central Virginia area. Composers commissioned and performed by CURRENTS include Allan Blank, Fred Cohen, David Cope, Joel Feigin, Ben Johnston, Timothy Kloth, Jonathan Kramer and Walter Ross. Performing formats presented by the CURRENTS ensemble include opera, music-theatre, electronic and computer music, chamber-orchestra and chamber music. CURRENTS programs include premieres of works by Eastern European composers, commissioned American composers, and the classics of the 20th-century. Guest performers include some of the luminaries of the 20th-century music scene, such as oboist Heinz Holliger and soprano Christine Schadeberg.

Here are the other CURRENTS concerts dates for the 1990-91 season:

MARCH 7, 1991

NORTH COURT RECITAL HALL, UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

8:15 PM (FREE ADMISSION)

Arnold Schoenberg: *Pierrot lunaire*, with soprano Christine Schadeberg

Mario Davidovsky: *Biblical Songs* (Virginia premiere)

Joan Tower: *Noon Dance* (Virginia premiere)

APRIL 30, 1991

CARPENTER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

8:00 PM (FREE ADMISSION)

U.S. premieres of works by Hungarian composer György Kurtág, and Czech composers Petr Eben and Václav Kucera. Guest performers are Jonathan Bellman, piano, Christine Schadeberg, soprano, and Ronald Snidor, cimbalom.

CURRENTS is co-sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Virginia Commission for the Arts, the Carpenter Foundation, the Sydney and Frances Lewis Foundation, the University of Richmond, Meet the Composer, Inc. and private donations. The November, 1990, concert is additionally co-sponsored by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.



Soprano **Christine Schadeberg** is recognized as one of America's leading recitalists, specializing in 20th-century repertoire. She is featured regularly with chamber ensembles and orchestras across the United States and Europe, and has premiered over 70 works by contemporary composers, many written especially for her.

Since moving to New York in 1982, Ms. Schadeberg has continued to receive critical acclaim for her exciting and varied song recitals, programming works by living composers within the context of a broad range of 20th-century masterpieces and standard vocal repertoire. She has also continued to receive special attention for her dramatic interpretation and vocal quality, both in premieres of new works and in the standard operatic and recital repertoire. Reviews have praised her for her "impeccable sense of style, firm command of languages and supple and expressive tone" (Allan Kozinn, *The New York Times*); her "mastery of impossible vocal lines--no matter how high, how low, how jagged, how loud or how soft -- with uncommon purity, with uncanny accuracy and dramatic point" (Martin Bernheimer, *The Los Angeles Times*); and her extraordinary ability to communicate with an audience: "an artist who could chant from the Yellow Pages and hold listeners intent" (Andrew Porter, *The New Yorker*).

Last season, Ms. Schadeberg received rave reviews on both coasts for her performances of Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire* in New York City and Los Angeles; in 1988 she made her Carnegie Hall and Kennedy Center debuts. Her recent recording of Elliot Carter's *a Mirror on Which to Dwell* with SPECULUM MUSICAE was praised in *The New York Times* and *Musical America*, and in September, 1989, she sang Luciano Berio's *O King* with Maestro Berio conducting at a gala benefit concert sponsored by the Italian Consulate at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

THREE FOR EMILY
TEXTS

I. *Wood*

by Linda Pastan

My daughter at almost three
rehearses for her life all day
with acquiescent dolls and blocks
that form strange alphabets
of prophecy. I watch,
fearing the evil eye
of milkmen and housecats,
the bland malevolence of stairs,
the viruses that come
even through the mailslot,
so hungry are they for cells.
Beauty ignites its own slow fuse.
Helpless I knock and knock on wood,
on cribslats, on pencils,
on the bottoms of chairs,
and now on this rough tree trunk
I drag into the house
and shamefaced christen roofbeam.

II. *Starlight*

by Philip Levine

My father stands in the warm evening
on the porch of my first house.
I am four years old and growing tired.
I see his head among the stars,
the glow of his cigarette, redder
than the summer moon riding
low over the old neighborhood. We
are alone, and he asks me if I am happy.
"Are you happy?" I cannot answer.
I do not really understand the word,
and the voice, my father's voice, is not
his voice, but somehow thick and choked,
a voice I have not heard before, but
heard often since. He bends and passes
a thumb beneath each of my eyes.
The cigarette is gone, but I can smell
the tiredness that hangs on his breath.
He has found nothing, and he smiles
and holds my head with both his hands,
Then he lifts me to his shoulder,

and now I am there among the stars,
as tall as he. Are you happy? I say.
He nods in answer, Yes! oh yes! oh yes!
And in that new voice he says nothing,
holding my head tight against his head,
his eyes closed up against the starlight,
as though those tiny blinking eyes
of light might find a tall, gaunt child
holding his child against the promises
of autumn, until the boy slept
never to wake in that world again.

III. *Child*

by Sylvia Plath

Your clear eye is the one absolutely beautiful thing.
I want to fill it with colour and ducks,
The zoo of the new

Whose names you meditate--
April snowdrop, Indian pipe,
Little

stalk without wrinkle,
Pool in which images
Should be grand and classical

Not this troublous
Wringing of hands, this dark
Ceiling without a star.

MA MATA, I SANG

After participating recently in a class on mythology, I was inspired to study further the goddess of the period 2500 - 700 B.C. Anthropological studies suggest that in this time the prominent deity was a goddess who was called by various names in different parts of the world, Ma Mata, Demeter, Egg of Heaven, Queen of the Bright Night, etc. The goddess was worshipped by non-aggressive cultures who were agrarian, intuitive, and in touch with the earth and natural forces. The text for "Ma Mata" is a result of this study. Some of the terminology in this text is an amalgamation of language gleaned from various books on the subject, while the rest is my own. The text for "I Sang" is by Carl Sandburg. These songs are the first two of a set of songs that are now being written.

Margaret Brouwer, American composer and violinist, is currently composing and teaching at Washington and Lee University. Her works, *Two Pieces for Viola*, *Timespan*, and *SCHerZOid* were performed in February of this year while she was Composer in Residence at James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA. On April 1, Western Virginia Public Television aired an interview with Brouwer and a performance of her Sonata for Violin and Piano. Also in April she was Composer in Residence at SMU, Dallas, where *Two Pieces for Viola* was performed on Perspectives, Festival of Contemporary Music, and performed again on a faculty recital at SMU in May. In May Brouwer was founder and Musical Director of

SONOKLECT, the New Music Festival at Washington and Lee University, where *Ma Mata* and *I Sang*, and *Two Pieces for Viola* were performed. She received a grant from the Virginia Commission for the Arts to work on a piece for chamber orchestra, now in progress. Brouwer was a Fellow at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts this summer. *Two Pieces for Viola* was again performed at an Aspen faculty recital, and will be on the St. Louis Symphony Chamber Music Series in November. Two recordings of Brouwer's works are due to be released this winter: *Timespan*, New Mexico Brass Quintet, CRYSTAL RECORDS, CD; and *Sonata for Violin and Piano*, CRS, CD.

MA MATA
TEXTS

MA MATA

by Margaret Brouwer

The moonlight glows among the grey white trees
glows in the stillness that has risen
everywhere
in the silent wood.

Liquid in the black soil of darkness
the dreams from her breast,
silvery and gentle,
flow into the plants breathing at night.

Gentle vine-roots descend into the center of the earth
finding energy
While the tree spirits accept strength and rejuvenation
Flowing, flowing
from the mystical, eternal silence.

I Sang

by Carl Sandburg

I sang to you and the moon
But only the moon remembers.

I sang

O reckless free-hearted
free-throated rhythms.

Even the moon remembers them
And is kind to me.

LINKS

Links, for violin, clarinet, and piano (1987) was written at the request of Dr. Charles West and first performed at the 1988 International Clarinet Society Conference. The work is structured in nine sections with an Introduction that supplies many of the ideas elaborated on later. The groupings of the three instruments are arranged in shifting patterns of trios, duos and solos, and unfolds a wide expressive palette.

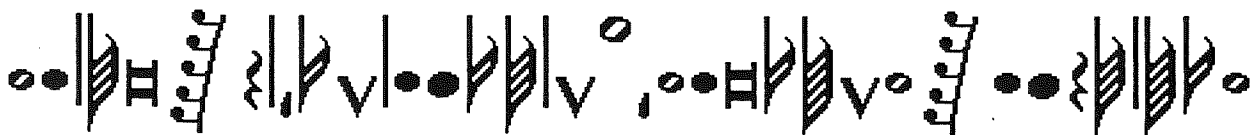
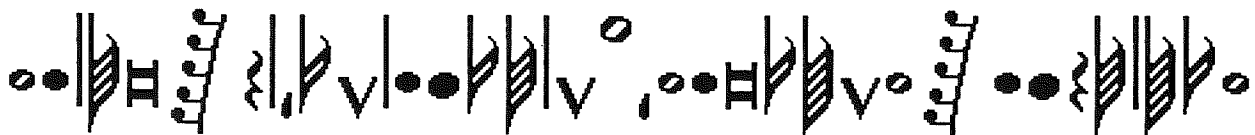
Allan Blank was born in New York in 1925. His early musical training was on the violin. He attended the High School of Music and Art where an interest in conducting and composition was fostered. Further studies were at the Juilliard School of Music (1945-1947), Washington Square College (BA, 1948), University of Minnesota (MA, 1950) and the University of Iowa. He was a violinist with the Pittsburgh

Symphony Orchestra (1950-52) and has taught at a number of schools and universities. Currently he is Professor of Composition at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Recent awards include First Prize in the George Eastman Competition (1983) sponsored by the Eastman School of Music, for his DUO for Bassoon and Piano, and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in support of his one-act opera, THE MAGIC BONBONS. He was commissioned by the Virginia Shakespeare Festival in Williamsburg to write music for their production of Measure for Measure. He has received two commissions (1979,1988) from the Virginia Music Teachers Association. In 1988 he won both the ERIC SATIE MOSTLY TONAL AWARD for his string trio, FANTASY ON CANTILLATION MOTIVES, and the ANNUAL CHORAL COMPETITION CONTEST sponsored by the Chautauqua Chamber Singers for his setting called POOR RICHARD'S ALMANACK. In 1990 Mr. Blank was awarded a grant from the Virginia Commission for the Arts for a CONCERTO FOR CLARINET AND STRING ORCHESTRA.



Special thanks to Mary White, University of Richmond Department of Music; Kevin Concannon, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Educational Outreach Department; and most especially the many Virginian composers who sent in their scores for consideration.



PROGRAM NOTES

TRIPARTITA

Tripartita is an invented name for a piece in three movements for three players. The first movement ("Elaborations") is a sonata-like structure whose ideas evolve from the harmonic succession heard as the background material of the opening passage. The second and third movements are based on essentially the same scalar and harmonic materials as the first; however, they are somewhat different in their moods and expression, in part, because they both incorporate elements derived from popular music idioms of the early part of this century. The form of the second movement ("Dances") is related to the 19th century scherzo with two trios, first used frequently by Beethoven; here, the scherzo sections are fast and jazzy, while the two more relaxed digressions are, respectively, a ragtime waltz and a tango. The third movement ("Blues and Variations") follows without pause and, furthermore, is linked structurally to the second movement, since the chord sequence used as the basis for the "Blues" (as well as for the variations that follow) is the same one employed previously for both the waltz and the tango.

Commissioned by the Hans Kindler Foundation of the Library of Congress, *Tripartita* was premiered there in 1989 by the Verdehr Trio who also have toured with the score and who gave its New York premiere at Tully Hall this weekend (10 November).

William Averitt is the composer of nearly fifty works which have received performances throughout the United States and in Europe. His works have been published by Concordia, ALRY Publications, Dorn Publications, and Hinshaw Music. He has received several composer grants, fellowships, and commissions from a variety of sources including the National Endowment for the Arts (twice), the Kindler Foundation of the Library of Congress, Meet the Composer, the Atlanta Chamber Players, and Virginia Music Teachers Association (twice). A native of Paducah, Kentucky, Mr. Averitt holds the Doctor of Music Degree in Composition from the Florida State University and is Professor of Music at the Shenandoah College and Conservatory in Winchester, Virginia where he has been on the faculty since 1973.

ALL INTERVAL SUITE

All Interval Suite was written in 1988 with two objectives in mind. First was to provide a set of short pieces which could serve as models for beginning composition students. Each movement is short and is based, or generated, from one interval class. The forms are simple, usually ABA, and only one expression or mood is used in each movement. The second objective was to use a wide variety of techniques and timbres in a unified work for solo trumpet. Of special note is the fourth movement canon, in which all three voices of the canon are played by the one instrument, but in varying timbres. The work was first performed in 1988 by James Buckner of Quincy, Illinois.

Gordon Ring attended Central Missouri State University in Warrensburg, where he earned bachelor's degrees in Music Education and Theory/Composition in 1976. He served as an instrumental music director in the Missouri public schools for four years. He attended graduate school at North Texas State University in Denton, where he studied composition with Martin Mailman and conducting with Robert Winslow. He earned his Master of Music degree in 1982 and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in 1985, both majoring in composition.

From 1985 through 1989 he was director of bands and professor of composition and theory at Culver-Stockton College in Canton, Missouri. In the fall of 1989, he moved to a similar position at Longwood College in Farmville, Virginia.

He has been a prize winner in several national and international composition contests including the International Horn Society (1982), Central Michigan University (1982), North Texas State University (1984), Christ Church - New York City (1986), Pro-Arte Foundation (1989), and the National Band Association (1989). He has also been the recipient of several commissions for various media.

CANTUS

Cantus was composed as a "thank-you" gift for Janet Kriner, principal cellist in the Virginia Symphony Orchestra. It is an unbroken set of 48 variations using all twelve-tones of the chromatic scale in a unique serial-technique. This is my only composition to use such a procedure throughout its entire length. Most of my music, such as the ballet *Four Days From My Life*, makes use of Modal scales, either archaic or of a present day synthetic (man-made) variety.

John J. Davye, Professor of Music at Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia and active composer/conductor, holds degrees from the University of Miami (Florida), and Ithaca College (New York) where he studied composition with Warren Benson.

For over 30 years Davye has had his music published by Associated Music Publishers, Inc. (New York City/London); Augsburg Publishing House (Minneapolis, Minnesota); Crystal Spring Music Publishers, Inc. (Roanoke, Virginia); Mark Foster Music Co. (Champaign, Illinois), and World Library Publications, Inc. (Cincinnati, Ohio).

Highlights from an exciting past six months include, the premiere performances of his *Four Days From My Life*, a ballet in five scenes, with Paula Rodriguez (Buenos Aires, Argentina) and Medhi Bahiri (New York City) as principal dancers; a performance of *Sinfonietta for String Orchestra* by the Saratoga Springs (New York) Festival Orchestra, and a review of *Two Psalms of Meditation*, for high voice and organ in the October issue of *The American Organist*, the journal of the American Guild of Organists.

THREE FOR EMILY

Three For Emily was composed in 1989-90 as a birthday present for my daughter, Emily, who turned three-years-old in June, 1990. The texts, three poems by contemporary American poets, focus on the relationship between parents and their children in contemporary settings. The first poem, "Wood," expresses both the love of a parent for his/her child and the helplessness in not being able to protect the child from the dangers of the world. The second, "Starlight," concerns the coming of age of a young boy, now the poet, and his relationship with his father. The third, "Child," is an eloquent expression of the emotional, protective bond between parent and child. The music of *Three for Emily* uses metaphors of wood (in children's terms: bumping and thumping), starlight and "three-ness" to coalesce these three poems into a single musical statement.

Fred Cohen is currently Assistant Professor of Music at the University of Richmond where he conducts the University of Richmond Orchestra and teaches theory and composition. He is the founder and Artistic Director of CURRENTS, and is also director of the University's music technology lab. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of California, and the Masters and Doctor of Musical Arts from Cornell University.

As a conductor, Mr. Cohen has led a diverse number of musical organizations, from opera and chamber opera to Gilbert and Sullivan, from numerous world premiere performances of all descriptions to historically authentic performances of classical music. According to the Richmond Times Dispatch, his work with CURRENTS has earned him the appellation "the city's maitre d' of modern music."

Mr. Cohen's musical output includes opera, chamber music, works for orchestra, film music, and electronic/computer music compositions. His works have been performed widely throughout America and in South America. He has received commissions from the Richmond Symphony, the Jewish Federation of Richmond, and numerous artists. His awards include the ASCAP Award to Young Composers, First Place in the Virginia Music Teachers Association Commissioned Composer Contest, and First Place in the Inaugural Composition Competition sponsored by Westfield State College. In 1990 Dr. Cohen received the highest grant award in the Artist Project category from the Virginia Commission for the Arts.