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CURRENTS

the professional ensemble for new-music
at the University of Richmond

Fred Cohen Artistic Director

January 27, 1993

8:15 pm

North Court Recital Hall



PROGRAM

BRANDENBURG CONCERTO No. 3

J. S. Bach
(1685-1750)

1. *without tempo indication*
2. **Adagio**
3. **Allegro**

Honggang Li, Laura Roelofs, Terri Lazar *violins*
Osman Kivrak, Judy Cohen, Philip Clarke *violas*
James Wilson, Joachim Venzmer, Linda Swanson *celli*
Joseph Liberti *contrabass* Joanne Kong *harpsichord*
Fred Cohen *conductor*

QUINTET (1987)

David Chaitkin
(b. 1938)

Patricia Werrell *flute* Charles West *clarinet*
Laura Roelofs *violin* James Wilson *cello*
Richard Becker *piano* Fred Cohen *conductor*

****intermission****

QUINTET (1987)

David Chaitkin

TABULA RASA (1977)

Arvo Pärt
(b. 1935)

1. **ludus--Con moto**
2. **silentium--Senza moto**

Laura Roelofs, Terri Lazar *solo violins*
Honggang Li, Yen Yu, Mary Rogevich, Fiona Ross *violins*
Osman Kivrak, Philip Clarke, Sandra Parrott *violas*
James Wilson, Joachim Venzmer, Linda Swanson *celli*
Joseph Liberti *contrabass* Keith Tan *prepared piano*
Fred Cohen *conductor*

PROGRAM NOTES

Johann Sebastian Bach composed the **Brandenburg Concertos** during the years 1718-21. The six concertos were brought together in a dedicatory score which Bach sent to the Margrave Christian Ludwig of Brandenburg (the youngest son of the "Great Elector" Frederick William) in 1721. The name "Brandenburg Concertos" was given by the Bach scholar Philipp Spitta, and its use has become universal.

The Third Concerto in G major was written for the ensemble Bach directed as court Kapellmeister at Cöthen. The musical texture is woven by three groups of strings: three violins, three violas, and three cellos, plus a continuo line consisting of bass and harpsichord. Bach himself probably played the viola at the first performance. The Allegro movements are in rondo form and appear, by virtue of their construction and use of motivic material, to be modeled on works by Vivaldi. Bach used the opening movement again in 1728 in the Cantata BWV 174, "Ich liebe den Höchsten von ganzem Gemüte."

Quintet, in one movement, was begun immediately on completion of my *Concerto for Flute and Strings*. Its origins lie in harmonic impulses stemming directly from that work, and I also carried orchestral notions of sonority with me as I began it.

The work derives its dramatic character from the opening melodic idea which, harmonized in several ways, passes through a number of different contexts; harmonies are elaborated at certain points of arrival. Opening broadly, the piece gradually moves toward, and then maintains, a quick tempo.

Quintet was commissioned by the Da Capo Chamber Players, with assistance from the New York State Council on the Arts, and is affectionately dedicated to them.

notes by the composer

Noted for his lyrical and harmonically adventurous music, **David Chaitkin** has composed symphonic as well as a variety of chamber and vocal works. He has been honored by awards and fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, and the New York Foundation for the Arts, among others. He followed early experience as a jazz musician with studies in composition with Luigi Dallapiccola, Seymour Shifrin, Max Deutsch, Andrew Imbrie, and Karl Kohn.

His recent performances include *Summersong* for 23 wind instruments by the BBC orchestra, Gunther Schuller conducting; *Nocturne for Woodwind Quintet*, performed throughout the U.S. by the Quintet of the Americas; and *Impromptu* for piano solo, in recital tours of eastern cities by Richard Becker and Eliza Garth.

Estonian composer **Arvo Pärt** was born in 1935 in Paide, Estonia/USSR, and graduated from the Tallin conservatory of music where he studied with Heino Eller. From 1958 to 1967 he worked as a sound engineer for the Estonian radio. With his wife and children, he emigrated to Vienna in 1980, settling in West Berlin in 1982.

Two distinct phases divide Pärt's work. His early compositions, including works writing through 1976, were heavily indebted to serial techniques. Since 1976 his music has been strongly influenced by his studies of medieval music, resulting in what Pärt calls his "tintinnabuli style." The compositions of this period are characterized by the combination of scales and triads with interchanging, yet stable patterns--music of austerity, simplicity, and harmonic balance.

In effect, Pärt was creatively "reborn" when he rediscovered plainchant and the music of the Russian Orthodox church. This was not so much a technical discovery as a discovery of spiritual identity, for all Pärt's music is concerned with the numinous. The instrumental works seek the "eternal silence" at the heart of sound, as indicated by the title of his best known composition, *Tabula Rasa*. The work displays Pärt's radiant serenity. According to Fanfare magazine, *Tabula Rasa* is "an ecstatic Penderecki-strung sizzler with a space-traveler's piano entering the second section after an impossible long held string chord that propels the two violins into the stratosphere." *Tabula Rasa* has received a handful of performances in the United States and has been choreographed and performed by the San Francisco Ballet.

The **CURRENTS** new-music ensemble is an ensemble of professional musicians devoted to outstanding performances of the music of our time. Founded in 1986 by Dr. Fred Cohen, Assistant Professor of Music at the University of Richmond, CURRENTS has introduced concert music of regional, national, and internationally noted composers to the central Virginia community in formats ranging from chamber music to orchestral works to opera. CURRENTS has performed American premieres by such composers as György Kurtág, Sofia Gubaidulina, Alfred Schnicke and Edison Denisov, and has commissioned a number of American composers, including Thomas Albert, Allan Blank, Joel Feigin, Jonathan Kramer, Ben Johnston and Walter Ross.

upcoming CURRENTS concerts:

February 9, 1993

works by Margaret Brouwer, Fred Cohen, Vivian Fine, Gunther Schuller, Robert Steward
special guest: soprano Christine Schadeberg
Miller Theater, New York City

March 29, 1993

works by Steven Addiss, Will Averitt, Fred Cohen, Steven Stucky
special guest: soprano Christine Schadeberg
guest composers: Will Averitt, Steven Stucky
North Court Recital Hall, University of Richmond