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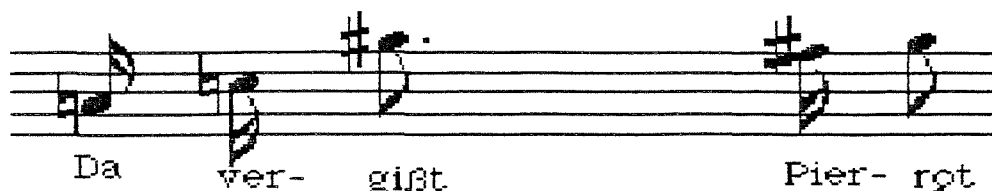
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CURRENTS

the new music ensemble at the University of Richmond
Fred Cohen, music director

presents

Richard Becker (b. 1943)

FIVE MEMENTOS (1980)

Richard Becker *piano*

Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951)

VARIATIONS ON A RECITATIVE, Op. 40 (1941)

Transcribed by Celius Dougherty

Frieda E. Myers, Paul S. Hesselink *pianos*

Arnold Schoenberg

PIERROT LUNAIRE, Op. 21 (1912)

Thrice Seven Poems from Albert Giraud's "Pierrot lunaire"

Claudia Stevens *vocalist*

Patricia Werrell *flutes*

David Niethamer *clarinets*

Bruno Nasta *violin/viola*

William Comita *cello*

Suzanne Bunting *piano*

Fred Cohen *conductor*

SUNDAY, APRIL 12, 1987

NORTH COURT RECITAL HALL

4:00 PM

Coming Events:

April 20, 4:30 PM, Greek Theater: **UR Jazz Ensemble**

April 22, 8:15 PM, Camp Theater: **UR Orchestra**
featuring soloist Richard Becker

April 23, 8:15 PM, NCRH: Beverly Letcher, **Piano Recital**

PROGRAM NOTES

FIVE MEMENTOS

The individual movements of the *Five Mementos* are:

- I. *Prelude* (dedicated to Leonard Shure)
- II. *Reflections*
- III. *Farewell to Friends* (dedicated to Benito and Diane Rivera)
- IV. *Bagatelle*
- V. *Postlude*

Richard Becker is a faculty member of the University of Richmond.

VARIATIONS ON A RECITATIVE, Op. 40

Arnold Schoenberg's *Variations on a Recitative*, Op. 40, was commissioned for the H. W. Gray Publishing Company's "Contemporary Organ Series." In a postscript to a letter dated March 28, 1942, Schoenberg wrote:

I considered the possibility of making one or perhaps two transcriptions of this piece: (1) for two pianos (2) for orchestra. Would you perhaps be interested in acquiring such arrangements?

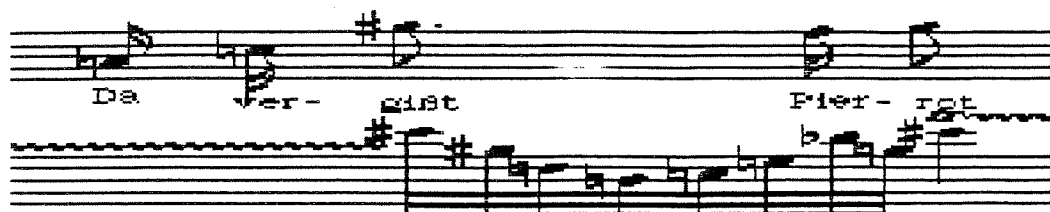
Schoenberg began the two piano transcription but only completed the first few measures of the work. The organ variations were selling so poorly that nothing more was negotiated.

Variations on a Recitative is a series of ten continuous variations based on an original recitative, a cadenza, and a concluding fugue. The work is tonal--D Major/D Minor; Schoenberg referred to it as "my piece in olden style." The powerful theme contains all the twelve chromatic pitches but is organized in Schoenberg's highly chromatic idiom extended from the late Romantic style.

Frieda E. Myers and Paul S. Hellelink are faculty members at Longwood College. CURRENTS extends a warm welcome and thanks for their participation on this program.

notes by Paul S. Hellelink

CURRENTS is a professional chamber music ensemble dedicated to new music and the promotion of new music in Virginia. Members of CURRENTS are full-time and adjunct faculty members at the University of Richmond, students, professional musicians in the Richmond area, and members of the Roxbury Chamber Players--William Comita, Helen Coulson, Bruno Nasta, David Niethamer (Music Director), and Patricia Werrell.



PIERROT LUNAIRE (Op. 21)

by

ARNOLD SCHOENBERG

TRANSLATION

PART ONE

1. MONDESTRUNKEN (MOONDRUNK)

(flute, violin, cello, piano)

The wine that through the eyes is drunk
Pours nighttimes from the moon in waves,
Until its springtime tide overflows
The silent far horizon.

Desires, shocking and sweet
Float through the tide unnumbered!
The wine that through the eyes is drunk
Pours nighttimes from the moon in waves.

The poet whom devotion drives
Gets tipsy on the holy brew
Towards Heaven turning his rapt gaze
And giddily sucks and slurps the wine,
The wine that through the eyes is drunk.

2. COLUMBINE

(flute, clarinet, violin, piano)

The moonlight's pallid blossoms,
The white and wondrous roses,
Bloom in July nights--
Oh could I pluck just one!

To still my heavy heart
I seek in dark streams
The moonlight's pallid blossoms,
The white and wondrous roses.

All my yearning would be stilled
Could I as in a fable,
So gently but scatter
Upon your brown hair
The moonlight's pallid blossoms.

3. DER DANDY (THE DANDY)

(piccolo, clarinet, piano)

With a fantastical light-beam
The moon strikes sparks from crystal flacons.
On the black high altar, the washstand,
On the laconic dandy from Bergamo.

In the sonorous bronze basin
Water laughs brightly and noisily
With a fantastical light-beam
The moon strikes sparks from crystal flacons.

Pierrot with a waxy complexion
Muses and ponders: what makeup today?
Rejecting the red and Orient green
He paints his face in a loftier style
With a fantastical light-beam

4. EINE BLASSE WASCHERIN

(A PALLID WASHERWOMAN)

(flute, clarinet, violin)

A pallid washerwoman
Nightly washes faded linen;
Naked, silver-white arms
Stretch downward into the stream.

Through the clearing, gentle breezes
Gently ruffles up the river.
A pallid washerwoman
Nightly washes faded linen.

Heaven's lovely, tender maid

By the branches gently fondled,
Lays out in the darkening meadow
All her bedlinen woven of moonbeams--
A pallid washerwoman.

5. VALSE DE CHOPIN

(flute, clarinet, piano)

As a pallid drop of blood
Stains the lips of a consumptive,
So there lurks within these tones
A morbid, self-destroying spell.

Wild chords of passion
Break desperation's icy-white dreams--
As a pallid drop of blood
Stains the lips of a consumptive.

Hot, triumphant, sweetly yearning
Melancholy nighttime waltz
May you ever haunt my senses,
Holding fast to every thought,
As a pallid drop of blood!

6. MADONNA

(flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano)

Rise, Madonna of all sorrows,
On the altar of my verses!
Blood pours out thy withered breast
Where the slashing sword pierced it.

And thy ever-bleeding wounds,
Seem like eyes, red and staring.
Rise, Madonna of all sorrows,
On the altar of my verses!

In thy torn and wasted hands
Holding the corpse that was thy Son
Thou relveadst Him to all mankind--
But the eyes of men still turn aside
Madonna of all sorrows.

7. DER KRANKE MOND (THE SICK MOON)

(flute)

You somber death-stricken moon
Lying on the night-sky's pillow,
Your wide-eyed, feverish stare,
Holds me, like music from afar.

Of unappeasable ache of love
You die of yearning, choked to death.
You somber death-stricken moon
Lying on the night-sky's pillow.

The lover, with his heart aflame,
Goes heedless to his lover's bed
Applauding thy play of light.
The pallid, pain-begotten blood,
You somber death-stricken moon.

PART II

8. NACHT (NIGHT)

(clarinet, cello, piano)

Gigantic black butterflies
Have blotted out the blazing sun.
Like a wizard's sealed book,
The horizon sleeps in secret silence.

From murky depths, dank, forgotten
A scent arrises to murder memory!
Gigantic black butterflies
Have blotted out the blazing sun.

And from heaven toward the earth
Sinking down in heavy circles
All unseen the monsters swarm
Upon the hearts of men.
Gigantic black butterflies.

9. GEBET AN PIERROT (PRAYER TO PIERROT)

(clarinet, piano)

Pierrot! my laughter
I have forgotten!
The radiant dream
Dispersed, disperced!

Black waves the flag
That flies at the mast.
Pierrot! my laughter
I have forgotten!

O restore to me
Soul's veterinarian
Snowman of Verse,
Your Lunar Highness
Pierrot! my laughter.

10. RAUB (THEFT)

(flute, clarinet, violin, cello)

Red, gleaming princely rubies,
Bloody drops of ancient glory,
Slumber in dead men's coffins
Buried in the vaults below.

At night, with his boon companions
Pierrot breaks in--to steal
Red, gleaming princely rubies
Bloody drops of ancient glory.

But suddenly--their hair's on end--
Scared to death, they're turned to stone:
For through the darkness, shining redly
Staring from the dead men's coffins--
Red, gleaming princely rubies.

11. ROTE MESSE (RED MASS)

(tutti)

At the gruesome grim communion,
In the blinding golden glitter,
In the flickering candlelight,
To the altar comes--Pierrot!

His hand, to God devoted
Rips open his priestly raiment,
At the gruesome grim communion,
In the blinding golden glitter.

He makes the sign of the cross
Keeping hands aloft for trembling souls
The oozing crimson wafer:
His heart in bloody fingers
At the gruesome grim communion.

12. GALGENLIED (GALLOWS SONG)

(piccolo, viola, cello)

The haggard harlot
With a scrawny neck
Will be the last
Of his mistresses.

And in his brain
She'll stick like a needle,
The haggard harlot
With a scrawny neck

Slim as a pinetree,
With hair in a pigtail
That she'll gaily bind
Around his neck,
The haggard harlot.

13. ENTHAUPUNG (BEHEADING)

(clarinet, viola, cello, piano)

The moon, a naked Turkish sword
Upon a silk black cushion,
Ghostly and vast hangs like a threat
In night as dark as woe.

Pierrot restlessly paces about
And stares in deathly fear at the moon,
A naked Turkish sword
Upon a silk black cushion.

And shaking, quaking, knees atremble,
Suddenly he falls into a faint of fright,
Convinced that there comes whistling down
Upon his guilty sinful neck
The moon, a naked Turkish sword.

14. DIE KREUZE (THE CROSSES)

(piano-tutti)

Holy crosses are the poems
Where poets bleed in silence,
Blinded by beating wings
Of a spectral vulture swarm.

In their bodies swords have feasted,
Reveling in their scarlet blood!
Holy crosses are the poems
Where poets bleed in silence.

Dead the head, bowed the tresses--
Far away the the mob still prattles,
Slowly sinks the sun in splendor,
Gold and red, a royal crown.
Holy crosses are the poems.

PART III

15. HEIMWEH (NOSTALGIA)

(tutti)

Sweet lamenting, like a crystalline sighing
Cries the old Italian pantomime
Complaining: How's Pierrot grown so wooden,
So trite and mawkish, inanely à la mode?

And it echoes through his heart's desert,
Echoes mutedly through all his senses--
Sweet lamenting, like a crystalline sighing
Cries from the old Italian pantomime.

Pierrot drops his childish manner,
Through the silver fiery glow of moonshine,
Through tides of light, his nostalgia
yearning
Boldly soars on high to skies of homeland--
Sweet lamenting, like a crystalline sighing.

16. GEMEINHEIT! (HORSEPLAY!)

(tutti)

In the bonebald skull of Cassander
Who screams and cries and rends the air--
Pierrot drills with hypocritical kindness
With a surgeon's borer.

And then presses with his thumb
His best blend of Turkish tobacco
In the bonebald skull of Cassander
Who screams and cries and rends the air.

Then screws with a cherry pipestem
Into the back of the polished pate,
At his ease he puffs away
His best blend of Turkish tobacco
In the bonebald skull of Cassander.

17. PARODIE (PARODY)

(piccolo, clarinet, viola, piano)

Knitting needles, brightly twinkling,
Stuck in her mousegray hair,
The Duenna sits mumbling,
In her best red dress.

She's waiting in the arbor,
Ablaze for Pierrot with passion,
Knitting needles, brightly twinkling,
Stuck in her mousegray hair

Suddenly--hark!--a whisper,
A wind puff titters softly:
The moon, coldhearted mocker,
Is mimicking with moonbeams
Knitting needles, brightly twinkling.

18. DER MONDFLECK (THE MOONFLECK)
(tutti)

With a fleck of white-bright moonlight--
On the back of his black jacket,
Pierrot set forth one balmy evening,
In pursuit of fortune and adventure.

Suddenly--he sees that something's wrong,
He looks round and about and then he finds it--
There's a fleck of white-bright moonlight--
On the back of his black jacket.

Damn! he thinks: it's a spot of plaster!
He rubs and rubs, but he can't make it vanish!
Oh he goes, his pleasure poisoned,
He rubs and rubs till morning comes,
At a fleck of white-bright moonlight.

19. SERENADE
(tutti)

With a grotesquely huge bow
Pierrot scrapes on his viola.
Like a stork, on one leg balanced,
He plucks a sad pizzicato.

Suddenly here's Cassander
Raging at the nighttime virtuoso--
With a grotesquely huge bow
Pierrot scrapes on his viola.

So he throws aside his viola:
Delicately, with his dexterous left hand,
He seizes Cassander by the collar--
And dreamily plays upon his bald head
With a grotesquely huge bow.

20. HEIMFAHRT (JOURNEY HOMEWARD)
(tutti)

A moonbeam is his rudder,
A waterlily is his boat,
And so Pierrot sails southward
Driven by a friendly wind.

The river hums scales beneath him
And gently rocks the skiff,
A moonbeam is his rudder,
A waterlily is his boat.

To Bergamo, his homeland,
At last Pierrot returns;
Dawn's glimmer rises eastward,
The green of the horizon.
A moonbeam is his rudder.

21. O ALTER DUFT (O ANCIENT SCENT)
(tutti)

O ancient scent of fabled times
Again you captivate my senses!
A silly swarm of idle fancies
Whispers through the gentle air.

A happy ending so long yearned for
Recalls pleasures too long neglected.
O ancient scent of fabled times
Again you captivate my senses!

My bitter gloom I've set aside
And from my sundrenched window
I gladly view the lovely world,
And dreams go forward to the world
beyond...
O ancient scent of fabled times!

