

PROGRAM NOTES

ELISABETH LA FORET • GRADUATE RECITAL

April 9, 2006 - 2:00pm



Reza Vali – Persian Suite, Folk Songs, Set No. 12 E (2002)

Reza Vali was born in Ghazvin, Iran, and is currently a faculty member at Carnegie Mellon University. He studied at the Conservatory of Music in Teheran, the Academy of Music in Vienna, and the University of Pittsburgh, and has received numerous awards and commissions, including two Andrew W. Mellon Fellowships, grants from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, and commissions by the Kronos Quartet, The Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, and The Boston Modern Orchestra.



www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/rv01/

Critically acclaimed for his integration of ethnic folk music with the Western classical style, Reza Vali has been writing a cycle of Persian songs since 1978, of which this set is the twelfth. Each of the movements contains authentic Persian and Armenian folk music as well as melodies written in the manner of folk songs. The first movement, an expressive Armenian song set in a lush framework of varying colors and tempi, shares the same slower bridge material as the second movement. The *Allegro Scherzando* is more playful, featuring a lilting melody sparked with grace notes and glissandos, syncopated rhythms, and shimmering bird calls for the piano. By contrast, the *Lullaby* is a melismatic, improvisatory song for the flute which is paired with a delicate, crystalline piano accompaniment. Rhythm is the driving force of the fourth movement, in which pounding sixteenths in the flute contrast with slower melodies spiced with tritones which unfold over a rhythmic, drum-like syncopation from the piano's stopped strings. The tempo and mood builds until the end, where the flute and piano's frenetic rhythmic patterns lead to a dramatic flourish and an unexpected ending.



Helen Fisher – Te Tangi A Te Matui (1986)

A native of Nelson, New Zealand, Helen Fisher obtained degrees in English and composition from Canterbury University and Victoria University of Wellington. Her compositions are often inspired by the Maori culture, the indigenous population of New Zealand, and she has been at the forefront in integrating the traditional Maori music with the Western style of playing, an early example of which is *Te Tangi A Te Matui*.



sounz.org.nz

Written for solo flute and alto voice, both parts are intended for the same performer, who must be female. *Te Tangi A Te Matui* best translates as The Call of the Matui, the tui being a native New Zealand bird. The work is written in memory of Helen Fisher's mother, and begins with a famous

Maori *karakia* or incantation, which Fisher first learned from her Maori language teacher, Teariki Mei of the *Tuhoe* tribe. The *karakia* is first sung in its entirety, and then appears again in small sections throughout the piece, each time blended with the sound of the flute. The quarter tones and embellishments of the flute part are reminiscent of the *koauau*, a small Maori flute.

Te Reo Maori, as the Maori call their language, is considered by many native New Zealanders to be the soul and *mana* (prestige) of its people, but it has experienced much decline since the nineteenth century, when English became the dominant language and Maori was outlawed from being used in schools. Today, recovery programs are in place to reintroduce the native language of Aotearoa (“Land of the Long White Cloud”, the Maori name for New Zealand), and soon after *Te Tangi A Te Matui* was written, *Teo Reo Maori* at last became an official language of New Zealand.

Te Tangi A Te Matui

Kia whakarongo ake au
Ki te tangi a te manu nei
a te Matui
Tui-i-i, tui-i-i, tuituia
Tuia i runga
Tuia i raro
Tuia i waho
Tuia i roto
Tuia i te here tangata
Ka Rongo te po
Ka Rongo te ao.

The Call of the Matui

As the senses of my physical self
are drawn to the plaintive cry
of the Matui
Tui-i-i, tui-i-i, tuituia
That it be woven above
Enmeshed below
Entwined outside
Embraced within my very being
Interlaced by threads of human love and compassion
Let Peace abound throughout the night
and the light of day.

(Author unknown, translated by Huirangi Waikerepuru)

I first heard Te Tangi A Te Matui when Carnegie Mellon alumnus Simone Madden-Grey gave a class on New Zealand music in 2000 when I was a freshman. Although Te Tangi made a deep and lasting impression with its integration of the flute with Maori song, I always put off learning it due to the awesome horror I (still) have for singing in public. However, I felt compelled to play it today (although part of me is still kicking over having to sing) in order to bring it to a new audience as Simone had to us. If other flutists here feel the same affinity for Te Tangi and the Maori words that I have felt and want to learn this music, too, then we will not only be spreading a wonderful piece but also, in Helen Fisher’s words, allowing “the Maori language to stand tall in many more corners of the world.” - E. L.



Eric Ewazen – Ballade, Pastorale, and Dance (1993)

Born in Ohio in 1954, Eric Ewazen is currently a faculty member at Juilliard, lecturer for the New York Philharmonic’s Musical Encounter Series, and vice-president of the League of Composers-ISCM. He attended the Eastman and Juilliard Schools of Music, studying composition with Milton Babbitt, Samuel



ericewazen.com

Adler, Warren Benson, Joseph Schwantner and Gunther Schuller. His works have been widely performed and recorded, and range from solo to chamber and large ensemble.

Commissioned by Bärli Nugent, flutist, and David Wakefield, hornist, *Ballade, Pastorale, and Dance* was premiered at the Aspen Festival in 1993. The *Ballade* is in A-B-A form, featuring shifting moods, tonalities, and lambent colors. A slower, dramatic beginning quickly transitions into a livelier tempo with skirling flute passages that weave among rhythmic syncopations from the horn. The *Pastorale* (which, despite the title's evocation of summer serenity, was actually written during the winter holidays) provides a warm, pastel contrast to the first movement's edgier, bright lyricism, and features expansive, soaring melodies for the flute and horn while the piano provides scumbled background color with its continuous rippling arpeggios. The *Dance* is a bucolic and sparkingly exuberant celebration that brings the whole work to a triumphant finish.



Shirish Korde - *Tenderness of Cranes* (1990)

Shirish Korde was born in Uganda of Indian parents, and currently lives in the United States. He attended New England Conservatory, Berklee College of Music, and Brown University, where he studied composition, jazz, and ethnomusicology (with an emphasis on the music of Africa and India). His music reflects his diverse interests and include influences from jazz, computers and computer technology, Indian tala, Japanese shakuhachi, Asian musical and dramatic forms, and Balinese gamelan. Writing for a multitude of instrumental combinations and musical styles, he has also collaborated with other disciplines such as dancing and filmmaking in multi-media projects.



www.holycross.edu

Composed in 1990, the inspiration for *Tenderness of Cranes* literally came to Korde in a dream. In the dream, he saw flocks of birds moving and flying in different ways, and he heard the voices of the cranes, whose sounds he used in this composition. It was the first time that Korde had utilized one of his dreams before, and today, he looks back on this piece as a turning point for him in terms of expressing himself more naturally in his music. The piece is based on the Japanese shakuhachi flute manner of playing, and contains a literal transcription of *Tsuru no Sugomori*, a traditional melody for shakuhachi, the English translation of which gives the piece its title. The shakuhachi flute itself dates back to the indigent Komuso monks of the twelfth century, who used the bamboo instrument for spiritual purposes and to help them reach enlightenment or nirvana. (Interestingly, the flute actually became a weapon during the tumultuous 17th century Edo period, when samurai forbidden to carry swords became monks and developed it into a hefty, sword-sized club.)

The title refers to the affection between birds and their young, and the techniques used, such as flutter tonguing, pitch bends, airy sounds, and key clicks, evoke the vocalizations of birds. However new they may seem to us, all of these techniques are centuries old, and are an important part of the traditional shakuhachi manner of playing. The transcription of *Tsuru no Sugomori* comprises the second and final sections of the piece, and Korde's use of timbre, rhythm, and articulation in the rest of the composition further imitates the shakuhachi style.





Efrain Amaya – Malagigi the Sorcerer (1999)

efrainamaya.com



Born in Venezuela, Efrain Amaya is a faculty member at Carnegie Mellon University, Music Director and Conductor of the Three Rivers Young Peoples Orchestras and the Greensburg America Opera, and the Assistant Conductor of the Westmoreland Symphony Orchestra. He has received degrees from the University of Indiana, Bloomington and Rice University. Since 2001, Efrain Amaya has been a *Meet The Composer* Composer-in-Residence with Gateway to the Arts, WQED-FM, Renaissance City Wind Music Society, and Shaler School District, and he received a 2004 Fellowship from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

Malagigi the Sorcerer is based on a legend about Sir Rinaldo, a nephew of Charlemagne. In the forest of Arden, an untamable horse named Bayard is held captive by a sorcerer named Malagigi. The first movement, *The Enchantment*, begins with Malagigi summoning his magic while in a trance, as depicted by the rumbling bass in the piano and the simultaneous singing and playing from the flutist. Malagigi casts a spell on Bayard, and a fugue in the second section represents the horse's fight against the magic. Bayard is unable to defeat the sorcerer, however, and succumbs to the spell as the music returns to Malagigi's incantation theme.



Malagigi
(mizii.com)



Bayard
(mizii.com)

Bayard is now trapped within Arden Forest by Malagigi's enchantment, and both the horse and the forest are the focus of the second movement. *Arden Forest* opens with a section for flute alone which incorporates pitch bends, fluttertonguing, and multiphonics to evoke the sounds of birds in the forest. This woodland environment gives way to the second section, which portrays Bayard's resentment and helpless fury at being snared forever in Malagigi's spell. Efrain Amaya writes that "the flute cadenza becomes more agitated until the piano joins the flute in a climax, which will rebuild again to a second and more dramatic climax. After this outburst of anguish and frustration the second section will evolve into the third section where the wisdom of the forest takes over Bayard, giving the horse the serenity and peace so much sought after."

Meanwhile, anxious to prove himself, Sir Rinaldo travels to the Arden Forest, where he meets an old man who informs him about the captive horse, and how Malagigi declared that to subdue Bayard would take a knight as brave and noble as the horse's former owner, Amadis of Gaul. The knight doesn't know that the old man is actually Malagigi himself in disguise, who, being related to Rinaldo, is anxious to give his cousin a little help in making a name for himself and has captured Bayard for this purpose. Rinaldo finds the horse, and the composer writes that the third movement, *Bayard*, portrays their fight, as the knight must wrestle with the untamed horse in order to overcome him. Eventually, the horse trips on a root, allowing Rinaldo to win not only the fight but the Bayard's freedom and loyalty as well.



Rinaldo
(mizii.com)