The University of Iowa School of Music

The Center for New Music

David K. Gompper, Music Director

Iowa Wesleyan College
Chapel Auditorium
April 21, 1992
7:30 pm

Program

Pentagram

Maurita Mead* - clarinet

From the Other Side (1988)
"A Divertimento in five movements
for flute, cello, piano and percussion"

Karen Berger - flute
Joseph Rowan - violoncello
Michael Gentry - percussion
Robert Fuller - piano

intermission

Mosaic and In(ter)ferences (1992)

Laura Koenig, piccolo
Robert Fuller, piano

Chamber Concerto
for 13 instrumentalists (1970)

Laura Koenig - flute
Peggy Mordo - oboe/baroque horn/boy's d'amore
Maria Fommy - clarinet
Janis Brown - clarinet/baroque clarinet
Rachel Pauley - horn
Michael Mazziotti - trombone
Sven Hamann - harpsichord/organ
Robert Fuller - piano/continuo
Donald Hamer* - violin I
Wesley Kim - violin II
Marc Hervig - viola
Joseph Rowan - violoncello
Gary Palmer - double bass

David K. Gompper* - conductor

* indicated University of Iowa School of Music faculty

sponsored by the University of Iowa School of Music, and the University of Iowa Arts Education Outreach program
Program Notes

Michael Eckert (b. 1950) joined the faculty of the UI School of Music in 1985; he has also taught at Colorado State University, the University of North Carolina, Tulane, and Amherst College. He began composing as an undergraduate at Amherst under John Richard Ronseifer (whose music figured on a number of early CMN concerts), and then studied with Ralph Shapley at the University of Chicago, where he received graduate degrees in composition and musicology. In 1975 Eckert received the Biola Prize from Columbia University for his String Quartet, and in 1983 the University of Minnesota named him Composer of the Year. Other awards include an NEA Fellowship in composition and the Charles Ives Scholarship of the National Institute of Arts and Letters. He is a member of American Composers Alliance and the Iowa Composers Forum.

Donald Martino (b. 1931 New Jersey), studied the clarinet, oboe and saxophone at an early age. Martino studied composition Roger Sessions and is currently a Professor of Music at Harvard University. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and has received many grants and awards: three Guggenheim awards, National Endowment for the Arts and a Pulitzer in 1974 for his chamber work Nocturne.

From the Other Side

I. Introduction and Slow Dance
   (piano)

II. Tango dei Grulli
   (piano)

III. Dance of the Reluctant Flamenco
   (piano)

IV. Ballad for a Blue Bill
   (piano)

V. Magique Kabaret des Doleur Schlesberg

While I was composing Introduction-Slow Dance, I was reminded of those slow jazz ballades that I use to play as a teenager. I am thinking of times like “I want you for” which I first heard with the Billy Eckstein band, and “Love Man”, performed by Sarah Vaughan and Charlie Parker. I started to write a concert piece, and all of these echoes of the pop world kept popping into my head... so I thought about cowboys, about cowboy songs, and jazz, T.V. commercials and about Nocturne. In the Tango of the Fools, I am reminiscing about my dance band days, when with music memorized, we danced out from the band stands at pretty young things. I so often noted with distaste, how many dances were grossly out of step. About mid-way, I roused from my reminiscence to go back to the composing of art music, now tainted by earlier images, that I am powerless to produce more than a parody, and hence I irresponsibly drawn back to the Tango-inflected waltz of the Rosenblum Ballroom. My childhood friend, the great Bill Evans in the Blue Bill of Movement Four. The opening theme attempts to evoke Bill’s typically introspective mood, and the choruses that follow are produced by using arrhythmic combinability. The interesting thing about this piece is that it is a twelve-tone work from beginning to end, even if you want it to hear that this led to the move, last year, Dr. Schönberg’s magic cabinet. Here I conjure the cabinet quartet of Arnold, Amos, Alben and perhaps Edgar (Welles). They are readily playing away at the Übermensch. A recent cardboard, I imagine them condemned for all time to the pit board of the inferno, where each of their musical ideas must find realization via the twelve tone system. But take the likeness of a commercial pop tune. Much to Arnold’s irritation, there are cameo appearances by Bartok and Stravinsky, and Arnold stubbornly refuses the well-intentioned help of more than a dozen highly successful Tin Pan Alley men. Instead, Arnold and his boys from Vienna convert what we have come to appreciate as their own material into a medley of sixteen ethnic, jazz and waltz tunes. These appear, in their real live patch levels as completely chromatic melodies, chromatic bass lines and tonally chromatic harmonies. The last movement might be described as a re-composition or an arrangement, because it is everyone else’s work but with my own. After the introduction, the first medley appears, which is the Wehren op. 23, No. 1 song. The entire medley ends with the Schönberg 4th String Quartet, played as an impassioned waltz. The coena contains cameo appearances by Beethoven, Chopin and all the previous melodies, and the final chord of the work, is the same chord Wehren used to end his second cantata. If you move it around in the proper way, it makes a very nice jazz pyramid chord.

Robert Fuller was born in Tampere, Finland, grew up in upstate New York near Albany, and has studied music on both the East and West coasts. He is currently concentrating work on his Ph. D. thesis in Composition at the University of Iowa, where his studies with Kenneth Gaburo, Robert Parades and Kirk Cearley have, fortunately, raised more questions than they have answered. He has experimented in photography, oil pastels, videotaping (through Ireland—in the rain!), writing, meeting interesting people and translating Spanish poetry, teaching and perhaps even living.

Mosaic and Interferences was written especially for Laura Koenig, and grew in part out of the musical relationship that evolved when we were working out the immensely involved and intricate Piece in Two Parts (1960), by Stephen Wolfe (for flute and piano). As in that work, in which the characters, the theater, the dynamic presence of both the musical lines and musicians alike, are vital to the work, in Mosaic and Interferences—other works in the album's repertoire—the score is constructed of a web of sound, in which the cells of each and such a theatrical system. It provides the first major interference in the work, in direct opposition to the cellular "Mosaic" type of structure that precedes it. From these two types of events there emerges another mosaic consisting of a somewhat-alternation of both types, a quasiclassical interpretation with silences, out of which the piccolo, nearly muted at first, resonantly resonated to the (much-and-such) system, working up to an understanding, in some sense, by (nearly) exhausting all the possibilities, some new sense of freedom.

R. Fuller

Rörgy Ligeti - Chamber Concerto (1969-70). A type of form with which Ligeti particularly likes to work as he has titled it "like a conclusion mechanism". He has always been fascinated by machines that do not work properly and by the world of technology and nonsense "in which engines and nuts put people at the mercy of bureaucracy". The ticking or periodic mechanical noises of not-quite-reliable machinery occurs in many of his works. By the time he came to write the third movement of the Chamber Concerto, he had elevated such mechanical fantasies to the level of a sophisticated mode of expression. Here, the crazy chattering of regular but disconnected rhythms produces a kind of acoustic illusion through which we are made aware of another world of events and mechanical connections, moving on a different plane. Things are not always what they seem.

The Chamber Concerto reflects Ligeti's interest in composing with layers of material in different meters and even in different tempos, and in polyrhythm in general. As in the Apogée Sinfonique de Don Giovanni, several layers, processes and kinds of movement can take place on different planes. A relatively simple form of complication for composition's sake: in the Chamber Concerto it probably suggested itself by the requirement to write a brilliant piece for Friedrich Cerha's ensemble Die Reihe, in which the 13 players were solosists and in which ensemble playing could also be present with virtuosity. The problem Ligeti set himself was how to exploit this collective virtuosity and to realize his multilayered structures in such a context. In spite of frequent markings of "vibrato," the musicians were not given as much linear freedom as, for example, Lucasfiesta gives in comparable pieces: Ligeti insists on keeping his texture under strict control at any given moment. Like so many of Ligeti's works, the four movements of the Chamber Concerto begin and end in such a way that each of them is only an audible extract of a much larger span of music, the rest of which we are unable to hear. His general idea for the first, he has said, is the surface of a stretch of water, where everything takes place below the surface. "The musical events you hear are blurring; suddenly a time emerges and then fades back again. For a moment the outlines seem quite clear, then everything gets blurred again."

Stephen Plaissau

The Center for New Music
D. Martin Jones, Director
David K. Gompper, Musical Director

The Center for New Music at the University of Iowa, founded in 1966 with a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, has since 1975, it has served the School of Music, the University and the state of Iowa with performances of contemporary music. The Center performs and commissions new works by composers of national and international stature, and functions to provide musicans the opportunity to learn 20th century chamber repertoire.

The CMN was the recipient of the prestigious BMI commendation of excellence award in 1986, and has produced a CRI recording of music by Iowa composers. A CD recording is being planned for release next year, including music from the 25th year concert series. The CMN has toured throughout the country, even performing at the Guggenheim Museum, New York, in 1970. Future plans are being made to form a midwest tour next Spring of 1993, and to host African group from Nigeria.

Many thanks to Carrie Kiser-Wacker from Arts Education Outreach who engaged the Center for this performance.