



center for new music

D. Martin JENNI, director
David GOMPPER, music director

featuring

recent paintings by

Ann PIBAL, Colin BRANT and Anne SWETT

Reception, 7:00 p.m.

.....
a concert of contemporary Russian music

featuring the works of

Sophia GUBAIDULINA and Alfred SCHNITTKE

with

Jeffrey LYMAN, *guest artist*

and interludes of poetry, read by **Marvin BELL**

Concert, 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 13, 1994
Clapp Recital Hall
The University of Iowa School of Music

reception for artists

7:00 p.m.

recent paintings by

Ann PIBAL, Colin BRANT and Anne SWETT

concert program

8:00 p.m.

Flute Sonatina

Sophia GUBAIDULINA

Laura KOENIG - flute

Mt Papa's Waltz
I Know a Man
The Writer
The Truth

Theodore ROETHKE
Robert CREELEY
Richard WILBUR
Randall JARRELL

spoken by Marvin Bell

Concerto for Bassoon and Low Strings

Sophia GUBAIDULINA

Jeffrey LYMAN - *bassoon soloist*

Carey BOSTIAN II, Hsien-Liang LIEN, Dean BACHUS, Emily GOSMA - *violoncelli*
Paul SHARPE, Andi BECKENDORF, Mario CHIARELLO - *contrabassi*
David GOMPPER - *conductor*

intermission

In the Waiting Room
The Old WPA Weimming Pool
in Martins Ferry, Ohio

Elizabeth BISHOP

James WRIGHT

spoken by Marvin Bell

im anfang war der rhythmus
for 7 percussionists

Sophia GUBAIDULINA

Tony OLIVER, James ROMIG, Lee FERGUSON, Michael GEARY,
Karla KEHOE, Dennis STACER & Mark DORR
David GOMPPER - *conductor*

from: The Book of the Dead Man

Marvin BELL

#14: About the Dead Man and Government

#43: About the Dead Man and the Corpse of
Yugoslavia

spoken by the author

Hymnus III and Hymnus IV

Alfred SCHNITTKE

Carey BOSTIAN II - *violoncello*
Rich WAGOR - *contrabass*
Dulane AABERG - *bassoon*
D. Martin JENNI - *harpsichord*
Pam WEEST-CARRASCO - *harp*
Tony OLIVER - *timpani*
Michael GEARY - *tubular bells*
David GOMPPER - *conductor*

This celebration of the visual, literary and musical arts is the first collaboration by the Center for New Music of three different disciplines in a single presentation. The program runs approximately 90 minutes, and includes a 15 minute intermission. Please let us know whether you enjoyed this format by filling in the enclosed insert and dropping it in the box on your way out.

acknowledgments:

- David NELSON, Director of the School of Music
- Marvin BELL, Flannery O'Connor Professor of Letters, Writers' Workshop
- Ching-chu HU, Research Assistant for the CNM
- Paul BENSHOOF for collaborating with the CNM and the School of Art

music program notes

by Jeffrey Lyman

A unique opportunity was awarded music lovers in the West following the period of *glasnost* and the eventual dissolution of the Soviet Union. A culture closely related in many ways to our own, yet isolated from us at the same time, allowed us access for the first time to a host of "unknown" composers. These artists, though mostly unknown in the West, were not necessarily youngsters, as one might suspect, but often fully mature, with large catalogs of works demanding our attention. Eager to satisfy our curiosity, we grabbed every new recording on the market and demanded more in the process. A particular fascination existed for us as Americans as regards this new repertory, since these "new" composers were living in what until recently was referred to as "the Evil Empire." In the process of discovery some of us sought perhaps the new Shostakovich, someone to continue in the symphonic tradition left without a hero at his death. Many may have expected to find nothing but depressing scores about oppressive regimes. Thankfully for everyone concerned, such was not the case. Tonight's program will offer initiates to this repertory the chance to hear examples of works by two of the most celebrated of the old-newcomers.

Extensive biographical information about a composer can often be irrelevant or even distracting to the listener. However, Sofia GUBAIDULINA (b. 1931) insists that her mixed background has had much to do with both her compositional style and choice of subject matter. She was born in Chistopol, the daughter of a Tartar father and a Russian-Polish-Jewish mother. Her grandfather was a mullah, and her Muslim-Tartar ancestry is mixed with Russian Orthodox and Roman Catholic blood as well. This *mélange* let her to state, "I am the place where East and West meet." Her musical studies included work at the Kazan and Moscow Conservatories. In Moscow, her final examination committee judged that she had chosen a "mistaken path", which led Shostakovich, a member of the committee, to make the oft-quoted remark: "I want you to continue on this mistaken path."

In the article "Encountering Gubaidulina" (*Musical Times*, March 1988), Gerard McBurney notes that Gubaidulina is unique among modern Russian composers in having been able to stay outside the shadow of Shostakovich which has engulfed so many post-war composers in that country. He writes: "From the beginning, her music dealt in something different, and as a result has remained quite free from the self-pity that is the consequence of much brooding on a catastrophic past and an uncompromising present. To some extent she attributes this detachment to the simple fact of her being a woman: 'Nobody took much notice of me. They could always dismiss what I did as simply female eccentricity. It was much harder for the men'."

Although the greater body of her work appears, to that writer at least, detached from the "brooding on a catastrophic past and an uncompromising present," the *Concerto for Bassoon and Low Strings* would seem from her own account to address some of the problems faced by the individual confronted by oppression stemming from either a regime or, as she describes it, a "sea of banalities." The biography *Gubaidulina* (Enzo Restagno, Turin, 1991), written in consultation with the composer, includes the following description of the *Concerto*:

"The future author of *Intrositus* and *Offertorium* chooses as the protagonist of this work a 'little man' similar to the film personality of Chaplin...As a rule, in concerti for orchestra and instrumental soloist, to the latter belongs a solemn role; he is the protagonist and always carries off the victory in the psychological contest with the orchestra; the *Concerto for Bassoon* of Gubaidulina conveys a contrary destiny. The soloist is not the hero in the full and traditional sense of the term; he, in fact, succumbs to blows with no meaning to circumstantial reality only to turn to a gregarious and subordinate position more congenial to the 'masses'." (Restagno, p. 134-135. Translated by Glenn Watkins, University of Michigan, 1993)

Nicholas Slonimsky describes the work as "perhaps her most astounding...in it, the bassoon is embedded in a net of four cellos and three double basses, creating a claustrophobic syndrome of congested low sonorities, while the solo instrument is forced to perform acrobatic feats to escape constriction, including such effects as labial glissandos and explosive iterations of a single thematic note." (Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians, 8th ed., 1990)

These special effects of which Slonimsky speaks were the result of collaborations with bassoonist Valery Popov, to whom the work is dedicated. Two other works were written for Popov: the *Duo-Sonata* (1977) for two bassoons, and *Quasi Hoquetus* (1984) for viola, bassoon and piano.

A similar collaboration with percussionist Mark Pekkarsky led to the composition of many works for percussion ensemble, the latest being *In the Beginning Was Rhythm* (1984). This "was the first work in which the composer rigorously remained within the limits of a rhythmic system based upon the Fibonacci series." (Restagno, p. 220) This structural idea, perhaps too detailed to outline here, was maintained in many of the works composed in the '80s.

The members of the percussion ensemble are required to play their instruments not only in the traditional fashion, but also with their hands, fingers and fingernails. The fluent use of such diverse and unusual modes of sound productions, not only in percussion

instruments, but throughout Gubaidulina's orchestra and orchestration, stems from her many close relationships with top Russian instrumentalists. These extended techniques are treated as more than merely "effects" by her, and her frequent use of them underlines her belief that "the ideal relationship to tradition and to new compositional techniques is the one in which the artist has mastered both the old and the new, though in a way which makes it seem that he takes note of neither the one nor the other." (Note accompanying the Arditti Quartet's recording of her *Quartet No. 3*, Grammavision R2 79439.)

The term "polystylism" may come to haunt Alfred SCHNITTKE (b. 1934) the way "neo-classicism" dogged Igor Stravinsky. No matter that the composer himself used the word to describe his *Concerto Grosso No. 1* (1977), the term seems destined to make frequent appearances in any discussion about the music of this Russian composer of German descent. Those ravenous CD collectors and concertgoers who first come to know one, then another work of Schnittke's may in fact be frustrated by the very aptness of this description. For, just as one thinks the true voice of Schnittke has been pinned down, a new work is auditioned with little on its surface that resembles the last.

The two short *Hymns* on this evening's program can claim a heritage which includes both plainchant and rock. Dating from 1975 and 1976, respectively, *Hymnus III* and *Hymnus IV* are from a set of four chamber works with varying instrumentation, the one common instrument being the cello. *Hymnus III*, for cello, bassoon, harpsichord and bells contains slowly expanding melodic lines, each relating to a different tonic, and each statement is interrupted by a quietly intoned motive in the bells. After a dynamic climax featuring an impassioned bassoon line over multiple-stops in the cello, the work closes solidly on the bassoon's lowest B-flat. *Hymnus IV* begins with a stiff figure of repeated clusters in the harpsichord, underlined by dense chords in the low strings. These are separated once again by a four-note bell motive, paired this time with the timpani. The bassoon seems to imitate a baritone saxophone with a rocking syncopated figure full of displaced accents. Three chord clusters end the work in an unexpected diminuendo. These chords recall the three which open *Hymnus I*, thereby neatly tying together the set of four.

Jeffrey LYMAN, bassoonist, first learned of the *Concerto for Bassoon and Low Strings* by Gubaidulina in a conversation with fellow bassoonist Milan Turkovic, who has performed the work under the supervision of the composer on several occasions. The present concert was first planned for presentation by the Contemporary Directions Ensemble of the University of Michigan, and will be performed by that ensemble on March 4, 1994. Mr. Lyman is completing the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts at the University of Michigan, and is also Assistant Professor of Bassoon at Bowling Green State University in

Ohio. He holds a Research Partnership with Glenn Watkins to study aspects of orchestration and articulation in the music of Igor Stravinsky. He performs at the Colorado Music Festival in Boulder in the summer months, and spends winters playing with the St. Bart's Music Festival Chamber Orchestra on the island of St. Barthélemy, French West Indies. For seven seasons he was principal bassoon of the Savannah Symphony, and while in Savannah was also dessert chef at the celebrated restaurant *Elizabeth* on 37th, chosen in 1992 as one of *Food & Wine's* "Top 25 Restaurants in America."

literary program notes

Marvin BELL (b. 1937) Flannery O'Connor Professor of Letters, is a long-time faculty member of the Writer's Workshop at the University of Iowa. His twelfth and thirteenth books will be published in 1994: *The Book of the Dead Man* (poems) and *A Marvin Bell Reader* (selected poems, journals, memoirs and essays). Mr. BELL will read selections from *The Book of the Dead Man* on March 31, 1994 in Shambaugh Auditorium.

art program notes

Ann Pibal began painting seriously as a student at St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN. After graduating, she taught briefly in the Minneapolis public schools before entering the MFA program at the University of Iowa, School of Art and Art History.

The landscapes in her work are found both through her experiences in an actual place and through the act of painting them. Recently, Ms. Pibal has been greatly influenced by the space and light of English romantic painting and poetry (Turner, Wordsworth).

Colin Brant (b. 1965) studied as an undergraduate at the University of California, Santa Cruz, where he primarily painted landscapes. Though he is still interested in landscape painting, he has been painting abstractly for several years. As a graduate student at the University of Iowa, he has been working spontaneously, creating a world of real and imagined shapes and forms.

Anne Swett (b. 1967) began painting as an undergraduate at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and is presently an MFA candidate in the Painting and Drawing Department at the University of Iowa. Based on observation and memory, her recent work has developed from a series of catalogued objects and places from personal experience. The characteristics of the paint on an evolving canvas are specific to the subject matter. Her paintings evoke a very specific experience with familiar objects and spaces whose personae and logic are made uncanny.