NEW MILLENNIUM ENSEMBLE

The Composers' Ensemble at Princeton

Steven Mackey, Barbara White, and Michael P. Ban, Directors

Tuesday, November 7, 2006
8:00 p.m.

Frank E. Taglio 37 Auditorium
Princeton University
THE PROGRAM

Megaphone
Alan R. Kay, clarinet — John Ferrari, marimba
Margaret Kampmeier, piano
Nathan Michel

Points of Departure
Michael Early
I. Peach Pie
II. Debussy and the Flutist Meet in the Ruined Temple, Then Begin to Argue
III. Intermission (Peach Pie Revisited)
IV. Debussy and the Flutist Conclude their Argument, Then Begin to Dance
Tara Helen O’Connor, flute — Margaret Kampmeier, piano

Resonance Study IV
Tara Helen O’Connor, flute — Alan R. Kay, clarinet
Sunghae Anna Lim, violin — Gregory Hesselink, violoncello
Margaret Kampmeier, piano — John Ferrari, percussion
Samson Young

all spring
five o’clock
all spring
have you
ruffed grouse
just when
Martha Elliott, soprano — Tara Helen O’Connor, flute
Alan R. Kay, clarinet — Sunghae Anna Lim, violin
Gregory Hesselink, violoncello — John Ferrari, percussion
Michael Pratt, conductor
Emily Doolittle

Enough Rope
Barbara White
1. The Flaw in Paganism
2. Promise
3. Reuben’s Children
4. A Well-Worn Story
5. Two-Volume Novel
6. The Willow
7. Prophetic Soul
8. Afternoon
9. Thought For a Sensitive Morning
Kristin Norderval, soprano — Tara Helen O’Connor, flute

Clydesdale Amputee
Sunghae Anna Lim, violin — Gregory Hesselink, violoncello
Margaret Kampmeier, piano — John Ferrari, percussion
Alan Tormey

Inner Voices of Blue
Rebecca Ringle, mezzo-soprano — Tara Helen O’Connor, flute
Alan R. Kay, clarinet — Margaret Kampmeier, piano
John Ferrari, ophicleide — Sunghae Anna Lim, violin
Gregory Hesselink, violoncello — Michael Pratt, conductor
Miriam Young

NEW MILLENNIUM ENSEMBLE
Tara Helen O’Connor, flute — Alan R. Kay, clarinet — Sunghae Anna Lim, violin
Gregory Hesselink, violoncello — Margaret Kampmeier, piano — John Ferrari, percussion
With special guests Michael Pratt, conductor — Martha Elliott, soprano
Kristin Norderval, soprano — Rebecca Ringle, mezzo-soprano
Samson Young

Requiem Study IV

All going to waste
my love
my life
just a frame
in the picture
of a dreamer's books
in a hole
in the sky
in a manger
on the floor
the stars
in my way
the sky
just a frame
in the picture
of a dreamer's books
in a hole
in the sky
in a manger
on the floor

Moogphone

Nathan Michel

Megaphone

The image that inspired this piece was a scene from Samuel Beckett's novel, Watt, which was carefully inspired by the movement of the moon. The image of the moon was accompanied by the music of Charlie Parker and Squashusher.

Nathan Michel makes music in both the fields of classical and rock traditions. Currently a Ph.D. composition fellow at Princeton University, Nathan has also studied at the Royal Conservatory of Amsterdam, with Louis Andriessen. He's received numerous awards for his work, including Morton Gould Young Composer Commission, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, his music — four full-length albums, singles, and compilation appearances — can be found on such labels as Bridge, Nonesuch, and Tomah. He was born in Charleston, South Carolina in 1974.

At time later, time.

Points of Departure

Michael Early

Take one-half pound of Zappa's Paschen, one-eighth pound of regalia, chop well, mix. Add a tablespoon of the impression of Woolf, white, with musical notation. Sip, sit down, and at 55°, get familiar with Daphne's Gargoyle. Serves 4.
Enough Rope

Barbara White

Enough Rope, a cycle of nine songs on texts of Dorothy Parker, was commissioned jointly by the Chameleon Arts Ensemble of Boston and the Koussevitzky Foundation in the Library of Congress. Mrs. Parker (1893-1967), one of the central figures of the Algonquin Round Table, is perhaps best known for her dry witicisms (for example, “men seldom make passes at girls who wear glasses”); she also published many volumes of poetry and fiction and wrote for Vanity Fair and The New Yorker as well as for stage and screen. Several years ago, reading her poems more fully, I was drawn to their concision, pretentiousness and lively rhythm, and they began to sing to me in my inner ear. In composing my song cycle, I reflected on the poems’ marriage of acerbic wit and searing self-awareness, their direct expression of romantic and erotic longings and losses, and their unflinching recognition of mortality and transience.

In gathering the poems for my set, scored for the intimate pairing of soprano and flute, I chose to alternate between quatrains and longer poems. Superimposed on this binary pattern is a grouping into threes, wherein the first few songs take place “in the moment,” the central three reflect backward, and the last group looks to the future (with a poignant recognition of impermanence). The musical settings aim to reflect this progression, as the busy, urgent character of the opening few movements gives way to a more modest, even folk-like style. Throughout, I was inspired by Mrs. Parker’s use of simple language and regular rhythm, as well as by her use of stinging reversals in many of the final lines.

Mrs. Parker is often portrayed as a lovelorn alcoholic with suicidal tendencies — in today’s lingou, she would be an “actively addicted codependent,” I guess. (Alan Rudolph’s informative and moving film Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle, starring the incomparable Jennifer Jason Leigh as Mrs. Parker, offers such a characterization.) While this is certainly accurate, there is more to the story. Mrs. Parker was politically active throughout her life; for example, she traveled from New York to Boston in 1927 to march in protest — and in a cloche hat and white gloves — of the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti. She left her modest estate to Martin Luther King Jr. after he died in 1968 it was passed on to the NAACP. In 1988 her ashes still had not been claimed, and the NAACP interred them at their headquarters in Baltimore, along with a memorial dedication.

The score of Enough Rope expresses warm appreciation the Chameleon Arts Ensemble of Boston for their skill and sensitivity. There is also dedication to my longtime friend Julia Sullivan, whom I have always considered a modern-day embodiment of some of Mrs. Parker’s qualities — namely, her keen intelligence, penetrating wit, and sardonic sophistication.

1. The Flaw In Paganism

Drink and dance and laugh and lie.
Love, the reeling midnight through.
For tomorrow we shall die!
(But alas, we never do.)
— from Death and Taxes (1931)

2. Promise

Love beyond my maddest dreaming
You have sworn you’ll show to me;
You will guide me to the gleaming
Reeling heights of ecstasy.
Dizzier joy than else could reach me,
Fiercer bliss and wilder thrill,
All of this some day you’ll teach me,
Y-e-e-s you will!
— from Complete Poems (uncollected by Parker)

3. Reuben’s Children

Accursed from their birth they be
Who seek to find monogamy,
Pursuing it from bed to bed—
I think they would be better dead.
— from Sunset Gun (1928)

4. A Well-Worn Story

In April, in April,
My one love came along.
And I ran like the slope of my high hill
To follow a thread of song.

His eyes were hard as porphyry
With looking on cruel lands;
His voice went slipping over me
Like terrible silver hands.

Together we trod the secret lane
And walked the murmuring town.
I wore my heart like a wet, red stain
On the breast of a velvct gown.

In April, in April,
My love went whistling by.
And I stumbled here to my high hill
Along the way of a lie.

Now what should I do in this place
But sit and count the chimes,
And splash cold water on my face
And spoil a page with rhymes?
— from Enough Rope (1926)

5. Two-Volume Novel

The sun’s gone dim,
And the moon’s turned black;
For I loved him, and
He didn’t love back.
— from Sunset Gun (1928)

6. The Willow

On sweet young earth where the myrtle presses,
Long we lay when the May was new;
The willow was waving the moon in her tresses,
The bud of the rose was told with dew.

And now on the brittle ground I’m lying,
Screaming to die with the dead year’s dead;
The stem of the rose is black and drying.
The willow is tossing the wind from her head.
— from Death and Taxes (1931)

7. Prophetic Soul

Because your eyes are slant and slow;
Because your hair is sweet to touch,
My heart is high again; but oh,
I doubt if this will get me much.
— from Enough Rope (1926)
8. Afternoon When I'm old and confused, I'll comb my hair with scalpels and bind my legs with hospital bands, And wear my clothes in many layers, From my head to my toes, And I will understand the words of God, If I have understood the words of God, I will have understood the words of God.

4. A Special Morning I thought it was a special morning, But I was wrong, I was wrong, And I still think I was wrong, And I will never admit it, But I was wrong, I was wrong, And I will never admit it, But I was wrong, I was wrong.

3. Thought For A Saturday Morning To read by chance upon a worn text, I will not put my hand upon a worn text, I will not put my hand upon a worn text, But I will put my hand upon a worn text, I will put my hand upon a worn text, I will put my hand upon a worn text, I will put my hand upon a worn text.

1. Thursday, July 10, 1928 (from Some Gun (1928))

The text includes playful and cryptic statements, suggesting a mixture of wisdom and confusion. The phrases are read as stream of consciousness, leading to a sense of the speaker's internal struggle and contemplation. The text seems to reflect on the nature of truth and understanding, contrasting moments of clarity with confusion. It employs a poetic style, with assonance and alliteration to create a rhythm and flow that conveys the speaker's inner monologue.
developing new works for voice and interactive electronics. Commissions have included works for Den Auden Opera in Copenhagen, the Bucharest International Dance Festival in Romania, and Jyll sigman/thinkdance in New York City. She was the recipient of a Norwegian Artist's Stipend (Statens kunstnerristend) in 2004 and 2005 for the development of new multi-
disciplinary work, and the winner of the 2005 Hecity Cowell Award from the American Music Center for innovative music. Ms. Norderval holds a Bachelor of Music in composition from the University of Washington, a Master of Music in voice from the San Francisco Conservatory and a Doctor of Musical Arts from the Manhattan School of Music. In 2003/04 she was a Visiting Scholar at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts in the department of Performance Studies. Kristin Norderval is currently a Research Fellow at the University College of Ostfold in Norway, focusing on the development of collaborative work within the inter-disciplinary performing arts.

Mezzo-soprano Rebecca Ringle, was a 2006 District Winner in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. This winter brings Rebecca to Utah Symphony and Opera where she will perform as Alto Soloist in the Messiah, and cover the role of the Composer in Strauss's Ariadne auf Naxos. In 2007, she will perform as Rossweise in Washington National Opera's production of Die Walküre. In 2003, she appeared as Alto Soloist in Krzysztof Penderecki's Gredo Symphony with the Yale Philharmonia conducted by the composer. In spring of 2006, she performed Mahler's Lieder eines jüdischen Gesellen with Orchestra New England and appeared in a recital at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall in a new work by Sarah Snider. She has performed with the Cleveland Orchestra under Franz Welser-Möst as Tebaldo (Don Carlo) and as Zweiter Magd (Elektra) and with Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano as mezzo-soprano soloist in works by Puccini, Ravel, Britten, Mendelssohn, Purcell and Piazzolla. Rebecca lives in New York City.