

ALEA III

Theodore Antoniou, Music Director

Thursday, February 28, 1985
Longy School of Music

8 PM
Cambridge, MA

Charles Fussell, Guest Conductor

PROGRAM

Konzertstück (1963)

Boris Blacher (b. 1903)

- I. Allegro
Intermezzo I - Andante
- II. Vivace
Intermezzo II - Andante
- III. Molto allegro

Hart Crane Settings (1981-84)

James Willey

- "My Grandmother's Love Letters"
- "The Broken Tower"
- "The Harbor Dawn"

Joan Heller, Soprano

INTERMISSION

Wall Street (1984)

Haris Vrontos (b. 1951)

Joanne Wangh, Mezzo-soprano

Songs and Duets from Cymbeline (1984)

Charles Fussell

- I. Prelude
- V. Scene for Clothen - tenor
- VI. Hark, hark, the Lark - tenor
- VII. Recitative and arioso - soprano
- VIII. Dirge - tenor and soprano
- XI. Duet - tenor and soprano
- XII. Finale

Marcus Haddock, Tenor
Joan Heller, Soprano

KONZERTSTUCK

BORIS BLACHER

Born in Newchwang, China in 1903 to German-Russian parents, Blacher attended both German and Russian schools in China, studying piano and violin. He began working at the Irlutsk opera house in 1917 and the Charmin orchestra in 1919. He moved to Berlin in 1922 and studied architecture and mathematics at the Technische Hochschule. In 1924, he began studying composition with Friedrich Ernst Koch, making his living by arranging music for cafe orchestras, copying and composing for films. In 1945, he became professor of composition at the Berlin Hochschule, and from 1953-70 served as its director.

Blacher's music ranges from orchestral works to chamber music and stage works. He generally confines his melodies to pitches of the diatonic scale and usually employs small intervals. Harmonically, Blacher's music is tonal. However, he uses triads freely, often without regard to tonal function, resulting in non-functional progressions and polytonality. Such an effect can be found in the first movement of Konzertstück (1963), where the strings maintain a single A flat throughout the opening 73 measures while the wind quintet progresses freely around it. Blacher uses both rhythm and melody as a means by which to structure his works. In Konzertstück rhythmic and melodic development of motives governs the forms of the movements. In the opening movement, a triplet figure introduced by the oboe is transformed into a complex motif treated canonically in the winds. Konzertstück also displays Blacher's interest in rhythmic variety, manifested by successive meter changes (found throughout the third movement), and by dividing a common meter into different portions, producing three against four against five, for instance. A notable example of the latter effect comes at the conclusion of the final movement when the strings move in four eighth notes against the winds' quintuplets.

HART CRANE SETTINGS

JAMES WILLEY

James Willey was born in Lynn, Massachusetts. He began composing and studying piano at an early age, later attending the Eastman School of Music where his principal composition teachers were Bernard Rogers and Howard Hanson. He has also studied composition with Gunther Schuller at the Berkshire Music Center (Tanglewood). He has received two National Endowment for the Arts Awards, has three times been resident at Yaddo in Saratoga Springs, New York, and was a fellow at the Composers Conference in Vermont. His String Quartets nos. 1 and 2 are available on Spectrum Recordings, played by the Esterhazy Quartet. Other works are published by Lawson-Gould Music Publishers and Seesaw Press. During 1979-80 he was Visiting Professor of Music at Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts. He is currently Professor of Music and Chair for the Dept. of Music at State University College of Arts and Science at Geneseo, New York.

The Hart Crane Settings were written over the course of several years and finally completed in 1984. The texts are from the collections White Buildings ("My Grandmother's Love Letters"), and The Bridge ("The Harbor Dawn"). while "The Broken Tower" was Crane's last completed poem (1933).

WALL STREET

HARIS VRONTOS

Haris Vrontos was born in Greece in 1951. Following completion of his studies at the Hellenic Conservatory of Music, he continued with advanced studies in

counterpoint and composition with composer J. A. Papaionnou and in electronic music as a pupil in the workshop and studio of Günter Becker in Athens. Between 1974 and 1976, Vrontos held posts as a music critic for a national daily newspaper and later on as music critic and journalist for a Greek music periodical. He has composed works for symphony orchestra, chamber orchestra, ensemble, solo instrument, and voice as well as music for the cinema. He is also the author of a book of essays on the contemporary musical scene in Greece.

Of his composition Wall Street, the composer writes:

"Wall Street is a composition derived from the composer's personal feelings and reactions upon visiting the Stock Exchange one winter's day. A quiet, rainy gray morning. Then the sudden change to the boisterous, loud world of the stock exchange... transactions, anxieties, restlessness followed by retreat into the dull gray evening of Winter. Nothing of essence has changed... just another reflection of today's world and society. To emphasize this aspect, Vrontos has utilized in the last movement of Wall Street Ezra Pound's poem, 'Lament of the Frontier Guard' which the poet had originally adapted from an ancient Chinese poem of Rihaku."

SONGS AND DUETS FROM CYMBELINE

CHARLES FUSSELL

Of his work, Mr. Fussell writes:

"Several years ago on a very cold winter evening, I happened to stop in Hartford, Connecticut for dinner. I had noticed, while driving past their theatre, that the Hartford Stage Company was playing Cymbeline, a play unknown to me at that time. The production turned out to be an absolute delight, as was often the case with this fine theatre, and the play seemed full of musical possibilities.

"The songs Hark, Hark, the Lark and Fear no more the heat o'th'sun were ready-made gems; but there was also a battle scene, Jupiter's great appearance, and there were beautiful lyric moments such as Imogen's and Postumus' reconciliation in the finale, all calling for music.

"As the play cooked in my mind for many months, the form began to emerge: an ensemble of nine to ten players with two singers taking various character roles, and a set of numbers (arias or duets) connected by narration. Within twelve musical sections, connected or set-up by a spoken text, the entire story is told.

"The idea to score for bagpipes came early on. What better instrument to suggest the remote, barbaric period which Shakespeare creates and the wild but festive mood which permeates this late romance."

JOAN HELLER, Soprano

Joan Heller is a graduate of Oberlin College, the New England Conservatory, and the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria, where she participated in seminars with Ellen Repp and Gerald Moore. Soprano Heller has taught at the Yale University School of Music and has given master classes at, among others, Harvard University, Yale University Summer School, Wheaton College, and the Berkshire Music Center, Tanglewood, where she began as an assistant to Phyllis Curtin. Ms. Heller has made four recordings and presented many recitals. She has been a soloist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Tanglewood

Festival Chorus, and Collage, among others, and has been soloist with conductors Seiji Ozawa, Michael Tilson Thomas, Gunther Schuller, John Harbison, and Karel Husa. The many premiere performances she has given include works by John Harbison, James Yannatos, Peter Maxwell Davies, Hans Werner Henze, and Joseph Schwantner. She is currently on the voice faculty at the Boston University School for the Arts.

MARCUS HADDOCK, Tenor

Marcus Haddock is a native of Fort Worth and received his education at Baylor, Texas Tech, and Boston University, studying with John Gillas and Phyllis Curtin. He is the 1984 winner of the Metropolitan Opera Auditions, and has appeared in concert at the Met. Mr. Haddock pursues a busy schedule in opera and oratorio throughout New England and the rest of the United States. He has appeared with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Minnesota Orchestra, and the St. Louis Symphony, along with major opera and concert opera companies throughout the country.

MEMBERS OF ALEA III

Flute

Susan Downey

Oboe & English Horn

Barbara Knapp

Clarinet

Diane Heffner

Bassoon

Ronald Haroutunian

French Horn

Ellen Michaud-Martins

Trumpet

Thomas Cook

Trombone

Donald Sanders

Percussion

Jeffrey Fischer

Richard Flanagan

Bagpipes

Jackson Galloway

Piano

John McDonald

Violin

Clayton Hoener

Carlos Flores

Melissa Howe

Susan Holcomb

Loni Alcott

Lisa Lederer

Viola

Scott Woolweaver

Anne Black

Cello

Beth Pearson

Michael Romanul

Double Bass

Robert Caplin

HART CRANE SETTINGS

My Grandmother's Love Letters

There are no stars to-night
but those of memory.
Yet how much room for memory there is
In the loose girdle of soft rain.

There is even room enough
For the letters of my mother's mother,
Elizabeth,
That have been pressured so long
Into a corner of the roof
That they are brown and soft,
And liable to melt as snow.

Over the greatness of such space
Steps must be gentle.
It is all hung by an invisible white hair.
It trembles as birch limbs webbing the air.

And I ask myself:

"Are your fingers long enough to play
Old keys that are but echoes:
Is the silence strong enough
To carry back the music to its source
And back to you again
As though to her?"

Yet I would lead my grandmother by the hand
Through much of what she would not understand;
And so I stumble. And the rain continues on the roof
With such a sound of gently pitying laughter.

The Broken Tower

The bell-rope that gathers God at dawn
Dispatches me as though I dropped down the knell
Of a spent day - to wander the cathedral lawn
From pit to crucifix, feet chill on steps from hell.

Have you not heard, have you not seen that corps
Of shadows in the tower, whose shoulders sway
Antiphonal carillons launched before
The stars are caught and hived in the sun's ray?

The bells, I say, the bells break down their tower;
And swing I know not where, Their tongues engrave
Membrane through marrow, my long-scattered score
Of broken intervals. . . And I, their sexton slave!

Oval encyclicals in canyons heaping
The impasse high with choir. Banked voices slain!
Pagodas, campaniles with reveilles outleaping -
O terraced echoes prostrate on the plain! . . .

And so it was I entered the broken world
To trace the visionary company of love, its voice
An instant in the wind (I know not whither hurled)
But not for long to hold each desperate choice.

My word I poured. But it was cognate, scored
Of that tribunal monarch of the air
Whose thigh embronzes earth, strikes crystal Word
In wounds pledged once to hope - cleft to despair?

The steep encroachments of my blood left me
No answer (could blood hold such a lofty tower
As flings the question true?) - or is it she
Whose sweet mortality stirs latent power? -

And through whose pulse I hear, counting the strokes
My veins recall and add, revived and sure
The angelus of wars my chest evokes:
What I hold healed, original now, and pure . . .

And builds, within, a tower that is not stone
(Not stone can jacket heaven) - but slip
Of pebbles,- visible wings of silence sown
In azure circles, widening as they dip

The matrix of the heart, lift down the eye
That shrines the quiet lake and swells a tower . . .
The commodious, tall decorum of that sky
Unseals her earth, and lifts love in its shower.

The Harbor Dawn

Insistently through sleep - a tide of voices -
They meet you listening midway in your dream,
The long, tired sounds, fog-insulated noises:
Gongs in white surplices, beshrouded wails,
Far strum of fog horns . . . signals dispersed in veils.

And then a truck will lumber past the wharves
As winch engines begin throbbing on some deck;
Or a drunken stevedore's howl and thud below
Comes echoing alley-upward through dim snow.

And if they take your sleep away sometimes
They give it back again. Soft sleeves of sound
Attend the darkling harbor, the pillowed bay;
Somewhere out there in blankness steam

Spills into steam, and wanders, washed away
- Flurried by keen fifings, eddied
Among distant chiming buoys - adrift. The sky,
Cool feathery fold, suspends, distills
This wavering slumber Slowly -
Immemorially the window, the half-covered chair
Ask nothing but this sheath of pallid air.

And you beside me, blessed now while sirens
Sing to us, stealthily weave us into day -
serenely now, before day claims our eyes
Your cool arms murmurously about me lay.

While myriad snowy hands are clustering at the
panes -

your hands within my hands are deeds;
my tongue upon your throat - singing
arms close; eyes wide, undoubtful
dark
drink the dawn -
a forrest shudders in your hair!

The window goes blond slowly. Frostily clears.
From Cyclopean towers across Manhattan waters
- Two - three bright window-eyes aglitter, disk
The sun, released - aloft with cold gull hither.

The fog leans one last moment on the sill.
Under the mistletoe of dreams, a star -
As though to join us at some distant hill -
Turns in the waking west and goes to sleep.

LAMENT OF THE FRONTIER GUARD

By the North Gate, the wind blows full of sand,
Lonely from the beginning of time until now!
Trees fall, the grass goes yellow with autumn.
I climb the towers and towers to watch out the barbarous land:
Desolate castle, the sky, the wide desert.
There is no wall left to this village.
Bones white with a thousand frosts,
High heaps, covered with trees andgrass;
Who brought this to pass?
Who has brought the flaming imperial anger?
Who has brought the army with drums and with kettledrums?
Barbarous kings.
A gracious spring, turned to blood-ravenous autumn,
A turmoil of wars-men, spread over the middle kingdom,
Three hundred and sixty thousand,
And sorrow, sorrow like rain.
Sorrow to go, and sorrow, sorrow returning.
Desolate, desolate fields,
And no children of warfare upon them,
No longer the men for offence and defence.
Ah, how shall you know the dreary sorrow at the North Gate,
With Rihaku's name forgotten,
And we guardsmen fed to the tigers.

by Rihaku

CYMBELINE

V. Scene for Cloten:

Cloten - I would this music would come: I am advised to give her music a mornings, they say it will penetrate.

Come on tune: if you can penetrate her with your fingering, so: we'll try with tongue too: if none will do, let her remain: but I'll never give o'er. First, a very excellent good-conceited thing; after, a wonderful sweet air, with admirable rich words to it, and then let her consider.

VI. Song:

Hark, hark, the lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phoebus gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chalic'd flowers that lies;
And winking Mary-buds begin to ope their golden eyes;
With every thing that pretty is, my lady sweet
arise: Arise, arise.

Cloten - So get you gone: if this penetrate, I will consider your music the better: if it do not, it is a vice in her ears, which horse-hairs, and calves'-guts, nor the voice of unpaved eunuch to boot, can never amend.

VII. Recitative and Arioso

Imo. (Aside) These kind creatures. Gods, what lies I have heard.
Our courtiers say all's savage but at court;
Experience, O, thou disprov'st report.
Th'emperious seas breed monsters; for the dish
Poor tributary rivers as sweet fish:
I am sick still, heart-sick; Pisanio,
I'll now taste of thy drug.

Bel. - We'll leave you for this time, go in, and rest.
Pray be not sick, For you must be our housewife.

Imo. - Well, or ill, I am bound to you.

VIII. Dirge:

Gui. - Fear no more the heat o' th'sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages,
Thou thy wordly task has done,
Home art gone and ta'en thy wages.
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Arv. - Fear no more the frowno' th'great,
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke
Care no more to clothe and eat,
To thee the reed is as the oak:
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning-flash.
Nor th'all-dreaded thunder-stone.
Fear not slander, censure rash.
Thou hast finished joy and moan.
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee and come to dust.

No exorciser harm thee.
Nor no witchcraft charm thee.
Ghost unlaid forbear thee.
Nothing ill come near thee.
Quiet consummation have,
And renowned be thy grave.

XI. Duet:

Imo. - Why did you throw your wedded lady from you?
Think that you are upon a rock, and now
Throw me again.

Post. - Hang there like a fruit, my soul,
Till the tree die.

XII. Finale:

Sooth. - The lofty cedar, royal Cymbeline,
Personates thee: and thy lopp'd branches point
Thy two sons forth: who, by Belarius stol'n,
For many years thought dead, are now reviv'd,
To the majestic cedar join'd whose issue
Promises Britain peace and plenty.
The fingers of the pow'rs above do tune
The harmony of this peace.

Cym.- Laud we the gods,
And let our crooked smokes climb to their nostrils
from our blest altars. Publish we this peace
To all our subjects. Set we forward: let
A Roman, and a British ensign wave
Friendly together: so Through Lud's town march,
And in the temple of great Jupiter
Our peace we'll ratify: seal it with feasts.
Set on there. Never was a war did cease
(Ere bloody hands were wash'd) with such a peace.

