

In Finland the time was finally ripe to allow music that did not try to strengthen the Finnish identity before defining the composer's own.

—Anssi Karttunen, 1997

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Tod Brody, flute
Marilyn Coyne, oboe (Pohjannoro)
William Wohlmacher, clarinet (Bergman, Lindberg)
Peter Josheff, clarinet (Pohjannoro)
Clark Fobes, bass clarinet
Lawrence Ragent, French horn
William Winant, percussion
Paul Binkley, guitar
Jeffrey Sykes, piano
Susan Freier, violin (Bergman, Lindberg)
Heidi Wilcox, violin (Pohjannoro, Lindberg)
Nancy Ellis, viola (Lindberg)
Wieslaw Pogorzelski, viola (Bergman, Pohjannoro)
Stephen Harrison, cello
Steven D'Amico, bass

Donald Palma, Music Director

San Francisco Contemporary Music Players
Monday, April 17, 2000 • 8 pm
Center for the Arts Theater

MADE IN FINLAND

ERIK BERGMAN

Concertino da camera, op. 53 (1961)

KAIJA SAARIAHO

Adjö (1990)

with Karol Bennett, soprano

HANNU POHJANNORO

eilisen linnut (the birds of yesterday) (1994)

— INTERMISSION —

ESA-PEKKA SALONEN

Second Meeting (1992)

William Banovetz, oboe

Jeffrey Sykes, piano

MAGNUS LINDBERG

Clarinet Quintet (1992)

William Wohlmacher, clarinet

Program Notes

ERIK BERGMAN (B. 1911)

For nearly half a century, the cutting edge of Finnish Modernism has been associated with the name of Erik Bergman—at eighty-eight years of age still one of the most colorful and multi-faceted figures in Finnish music.

In Bergman's student days at Helsinki University and Helsinki Conservatory (later the Sibelius Academy), where he studied composition and piano, the prevailing aesthetic was one of national romanticism coupled with lush tonality. The dominant musical model was that of the great Finnish composer, Jean Sibelius, and indeed most of Bergman's student works are in this vein or in the more contemporary neoclassical style of the time. This all changed with a trip to Germany in 1937 for two years of study with Heinz Tiessen at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik. For the first time, Bergman was brought into contact with a broad range of modernistic techniques, including the twelve-tone system.

The seeds were sown. Bergman's first important compositions, of a decidedly expressionistic character, began to appear in the late 1940s. Further lessons in twelve-tone technique from Wladimir Vogel in Ascona, Switzerland in 1949-50 led to his first tentative forays in this

direction, such as a germinal-motif technique employed in the 1950 *Piano Sonatina*. Not until 1957, though, with his orchestral *Tre aspetti d'una serie dodecafonica*, did Bergman finally forge a full-blown, large-scale serialist composition. Finland had seen its share of modernist composers—above all Aarre Merikanto in the 1920s—but Bergman, in his masterful embrace of serial techniques, took things a decisive step farther than his predecessors, removing the last traces of Sibelius-style romanticism from his scores. With abundant intelligence, elegance and power, he help to lay the foundations of modern Finnish music.

Bergman's twelve-tone music possessed many highly personal features right from the start. His tone rows are often remarkably homogenous; that of the 1959 vocal/orchestral *Aton*, for example, is constructed almost entirely of thirds. His rhythms are complex and irregular, often destroying all feeling of a regular pulse, but they also create a compelling sense of energy and forward motion. Tonight's work, *Concertino da camera* (1961) was written during this time.

Like many of his contemporaries, though, Bergman eventually found himself overly limited by the many restrictions imposed by serialist systems, and began to set off in new directions. By the orchestral *Colori ed improvvisazioni* of 1973, he had abandoned strict serial procedures for freer techniques involving controlled improvisation and aleatoric (chance) processes. His notation, impeccably detailed in works like the *Concertino*, gave way to graphic or time-space notation. He also became increasingly attuned to ecstatic inspirations, which

were often kindled by literary stimuli or impressions of nature. Even in all this, however, he continued to impose strict controls over form and to manifest an abiding sense of inner discipline. In 1966 he wrote, "Technique is vital, there's no getting away from it, no compromising, because without it you get lost in daydreaming." At the same time, he strongly emphasized that it is only a means to an end, that "every composer must use his technique to express his innermost being, his very own message."

Searching beyond the borders of Western musical thought, Bergman has taken numerous trips to North Africa and the Near and Far East to study the music of other cultures, and over time has acquired a considerable collection of exotic instruments, especially percussion, which he has not hesitated to employ in his concert works. With choral music occupying a central place in his output (stemming in part from his extensive activity as a choral conductor), he has also drawn many of his texts from other cultures, as in *Bardo Thödol* (1974) which sets certain passages from the Tibetan *Book of the Dead*.

Bergman served as a professor of composition at the Sibelius Academy from 1960 to 1973 and, in 1982, was granted membership in the Finnish Academy. 1961 saw him appointed to the Royal Swedish Academy of Music. In 1965, he received the international Wihuri Sibelius Prize.

Concertino da Camera, op. 53 (1961)

*for flute, clarinet, bass clarinet, percussion,
piano, violin, viola, and cello*

Though the twelve-tone structure of the *Concertino* keeps strictly to the rules, its overall form relies heavily on free association. Bergman does not “study” motifs in the classic twelve-tone manner but rather strives for episodes of striking instrumental character. The effect is lively, even playful: a one-movement work of polyphonic interwoven lines, transparent in texture, with only fleeting moments in which the entire ensemble is playing. Stephen Ellis (*Fanfare*) aptly describes it as “charming expressionism.” The *Concertino* is dedicated to Francis Travis, who commissioned the work and conducted its premiere in 1961.

KAIJA SAARIAHO (B. 1952)

The music of Kaija Saariaho—winner this year of both the Nordic Council’s Music Prize and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center’s Stoeger Prize—does not lend itself easily to analysis. This circumstance is less connected to the particular level of complexity in her works than to the fact that most conventional tools of analysis have arisen in response to another kind of music: one of distinct beginnings and endings, of phrases and cadences, of clear-cut melodic, rhythmic

and thematic ingredients. Saariaho’s music, by contrast, is above all about color, sound surfaces, gradual change.

Saariaho’s first artistic calling was to the visual arts, which she studied for a number of years at Helsinki’s University of Industrial Art (now the University of Art and Design). Not until 1976, already in her mid-twenties did she enter into formal composition lessons with Paavo Heininen at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki. While student works such as *Jing* (1979) for soprano and cello undoubtedly show her teacher’s influence in the expressively atonal melodic lines and angular counterpoint—the cornerstones of contemporary Finnish compositional training (a contrast to Erik Bergman’s student days!)—even at this early stage there is something else: a certain modernistic purism, a fragile, brilliant play of color, a sensual, dreamlike atmosphere, a fondness for visual and poetic associations. Receiving her degree in 1981, Saariaho left Finland for Germany and composition lessons with Klaus Huber and Brian Ferneyhough. She made another move a year later, this time to Paris. It was here in the French capital that her own musical language truly emerged and blossomed. She has made the city her home to this day.

In 1982 at IRCAM (Paris’s famed computer music center), Saariaho produced a work still unique in her oeuvre, and yet in many ways a kind of personal creative manifesto. *Vers le blanc* contains but a single unforgettable gesture: a three-note chord sung by human voices (electronically/miraculously sustained without breath for the

duration) gradually glides over fifteen minutes into another chord. The computer regulates minute changes of timbre, slowly distorting the “human” quality of the voices and then just as slowly restoring it near the end. Computers have remained central to Saariaho’s work over the years, though only rarely for the creation of purely synthetic sounds. Much more, she utilizes them to analyze complex sound spectra (the sum total of all sounding frequencies, many of which we sense only as tone color), most often of traditional concert instruments such as the flute or cello. She uses her findings to create extraordinary new harmonic entities, often folding these back into live vocal or instrumental textures in performance.

In using traditional instruments, Saariaho favors a palette rich in minutiae. Her *Laconisme de l’aile* (1982) for solo flute is an infinitely-hued world of hisses, sung notes, spoken phonemes, inarticulate noises, and sustained pitches. In her string writing, bow placement and pressure are varied to provide an inexhaustible treasury of shades and nuances; *sul tasto* (bowing over the fingerboard) and *sul ponticello* (bowing near the bridge) are not merely sound effects but true color alternatives on a par with normal bowing.

In the later 1980s, melody returned to Saariaho’s music in works such as *Io* (1987) for chamber ensemble and electronics, though instead of expressionist lines, we hear ornamental effusions which rise out of the sound surface and dive back in. The ballet *Maa* (1991) presents the full range of Saariaho’s evolving musical world: a steady

rhythmic pulse transforming into the tinkling filigree of a harpsichord; enigmatic whispers evolving into fluttery flute gestures that climb skyward. The ballet has no plot as such, but archetypal symbols abound: doors, gates, water crossings—entrances into new worlds.

Saariaho’s recent high honors cap a steady rise in her international stature over the past fifteen years. Her works have now been performed by many of the world’s top orchestras. This summer, her first opera *L’amour de loin*, conducted by Kent Nagano and staged by director Peter Sellars, will be premiered at the Salzburg Festival. Alongside numerous recordings, her life and work are now the subject of a CD-ROM, *Prisma*, which combines sound and film samples, visual art, interviews, and essays by her closest collaborators.

***Adjö* (1990)**

for soprano, flute, and guitar

Adjö sets a poem of Solveig von Shoultz (1907-1996), Finland’s great Swedish-language poet (and the wife, incidentally, of composer Erik Bergman). Saariaho’s music here spins a web of sound as spare and gossamer as it is meticulously detailed. Individual syllables seem to struggle one by one into existence. All sense of time is suspended; the atmosphere is chilling, riveting. *Adjö* was commissioned for the Cluster Ensemble by Jeremy Parsons, who provides the following translation of Shoultz’s text:

Hur kan man motstå?	How can you withstand it?
Ingen blick är så strålande och mörkblå	No gaze is so radiant and dark blue
och tränger överallt, i drivan	and penetrates everywhere, into the snowdrifts
som sjunker frasande ihop, i isen	that sink rustling together, into the ice
som står med röda sjöar, och i hjärtat	that stands with red pools, and into the heart
där vintern håller stånd	where winter holds its ground
hur kan man motstå?	how can you withstand it?

Ju lägre solen dess blåare isen,	The lower the sun the bluer the ice,
vassare blå som svärd	sharper blue like a sword
dess rödare alens hängen	the redder the alder's catkins
dess hårdare björkens knoppar i	the harder the birchtrees' buds in
bastuns rök	the sauna smoke
havtornsbusken klamrar stel mot stenen	the buckthorn staples steel to stone
men snön brinner som frisk eld.	but the snow burns like fresh fire.

HANNU POHJANNORO (B. 1963)

Once described as “a composer with one foot firmly in Darmstadt and the other in the muddy waters of a lake in eastern Finland,” Hannu Pohjannoro has captured in his music a supremely delicate dance of old and new, of spontaneous flow and meticulously crafted structures.

A student of Paavo Heininen at the Sibelius Academy in the late 1980s, Pohjannoro demonstrated an early interest in tightly woven miniature forms, typically explored by a single instrument, as in *kuvia*,

heijastuksia (images, reflections, 1992) for solo piano. His artistic thinking was nurtured in summer courses with George Crumb, Brian Ferneyhough, Magnus Lindberg and others, and then in 1993 at the Hochschule der Kunste in Berlin, where his teacher was Diether Schnebel, a close friend of John Cage, and a composer deeply interested in radical new directions in music. Attending four or five contemporary concerts each week during his four month stay, Pohjannoro returned to Finland with a vastly expanded sense of musical possibilities, but also a clear realization that “I just have to find my own path.” A memento of his Hochschule days is the *Berlin Experiment* (1993) “for any ensemble.”

In the years since, Pohjannoro has discovered at least a few steps on that path. Among them is a fascination with organic growth. “A composition should be one whole from the level of single sounds to that of the complete structure. I haven’t discovered any method of reaching this other than by careful listening.” Sounds themselves are also of great interest. The 1994 *saari, rannaton (island, shoreless)* for bass clarinet and tape—the first Finnish studio-produced composition to be selected for performance at the International Computer Music Conference—uses various hard materials such as metal, stone, glass, paper, and sand to achieve a distinctive world of sound. Computers have opened up new vistas. *hämäränpyörre (twilight whirl, 1999)* for solo clarinet and strings, explores intersections in the natural harmonic series of certain low bass notes. Not least, he says he finds delight in “small, clear and intensive things.”

For Pohjannoro, this last penchant also finds expression outside of music, in the realm of nature—for in his private life, the composer is also an amateur bird watcher. “Birds are interesting and beautiful creatures. Many of them are not too easy to get close with, or to identify.” In general, he enjoys wandering in nature, observing “the changes of light from dawn to noon, the changes of certain places during the year.” Compositionally, Pohjannoro has little interest in “illustrating” natural phenomena, but he is often intrigued by nature’s structural puzzles: “For example, what shapes or types of movement does a bird flock form when seen from the distance? How might this sort of similarity-versus-variation principle be applied in music?”

As for his relation to tradition and progress: “It’s worth remembering that the word *radical* comes from the word *radius*, which means *root*. When I’m composing, I worry much less about the possible novelty of my music than whether or not the musical experience is somehow ‘true’ to my artistic nature. If I’m not convinced of that, how can anyone else be?”

Pohjannoro’s composing pen has been quite busy of late, with commissions for such groups as the Corona Guitar Quartet, Alea, the InTime Quintet, the Focus Ensemble and Helsinki’s Zagros Ensemble. Currently a doctoral student in composition at the Sibelius Academy, he is a firm believer that his personal path “will be drawn in trying to find it. Completed compositions are milestones, already left behind.”

eilisen linnut (the birds of yesterday) (1994)

*for flute, oboe, clarinet, horn,
marimba, violin, viola, cello, and bass*

Written in Berlin, in an atmosphere of solitude and plentiful time, *eilisen linnut* possesses an entrancing, lighter than air quality that aptly suits its poetic title. From slow, mysterious single notes and chords there emerges a gentle dancing beat. This in turn serves as backdrop for an arriving “flock” of melodic lines, in which virtually every strand is woven of multicolored instrumental threads. The lines dip and soar, collide and merge. *eilisen linnut* was premiered at the 1994 Tampere Biennale by the Zagros Ensemble conducted by John Storgårds, and is dedicated to the composer’s wife.

ESA-PEKKA SALONEN (B. 1958)

Even while still a student at the Sibelius Academy in the late 1970’s, Esa-Pekka Salonen’s uncommon gifts as a musician and as a communicator set him apart. By 1979, he had stepped with consummate ease to the forefront of Finnish musical activity, primarily as a horn virtuoso and conductor. When he left in 1980 to study composition in Italy with Niccolò Castiglioni and Franco Donatoni, it seemed to many as though a significant part of Finnish musical life went with him. Luckily he was not gone for long, and when he returned a year later, a major transformation had occurred in his composing,

placing it on a par with his other activities. The vibrant *Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra* (1981) has an air of assuredness and maturity. *Baalal* (1982), a radiophonic composition realized in the studios of the Finnish Broadcasting Company, was subsequently selected by Finland for entrance in the Prix Italia competition.

Though the world today knows Salonen primarily as a symphonic conductor, this career was to a certain degree thrust upon him. His first love has always been composition, and his initial aim was to be a composer who conducted his own music. In a dramatic gesture of resolve, he actually sold his French horn to prevent a virtuoso career from interfering with his compositional ambitions. Despite all of this, a masterful performance of Mahler's *Third Symphony*, undertaken at short notice with London's Philharmonia Orchestra in 1983, established him overnight as a composing conductor. Apparently resigned to his destiny, in 1985, he became Principal Conductor of the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra and the same year became Principal Guest Conductor of the Philharmonia Orchestra in London.

Over the next few years, Salonen's creative activities were certainly scaled back, but he did manage to compose a few works, including the widely admired *Floof!* (1988) for soprano, percussion, synthesizer, piano and cello. Penned for the Toimii! Ensemble (which Salonen had earlier helped to found with Magnus Lindberg), this ebullient, histrionic tour de force is based on Stanislaw Lem's book *The Cyberiad*, about a poem-writing machine. Mirroring the story closely,

Salonen's music transforms from rather primitive opening gestures to increasingly complex modes of expression, but at the same time progressively "degenerates" stylistically towards the pop music idiom. *Floof!* won the UNESCO Annual Rostrum of Composers in Paris in 1992 and has since been widely performed and broadcast in Europe and the United States. 1992 also saw the appearance of *Second Meeting* for oboe and piano, which we present tonight. Later that same year, he adapted *Second Meeting* for oboe and orchestra as *Mimo II* (1992), expanding the harmony and adding new materials including a cadenza-like section for the soloist.

After a very successful series of concerts at the Hollywood Bowl in California in 1989, Salonen was invited to become Music Director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, a position which he finally accepted in 1992. The relationship he has forged with this orchestra in the intervening years has been remarkably active and fruitful, based in no small part on his advocacy of new and recent orchestral music. At the 1993 Salzburg Festival, he led the group in highly acclaimed performances of Olivier Messiaen's opera *Saint François d'Assise*. In 1996, he led the first British production of Hindemith's complete *Mathis der Maler* at the Royal Opera Covent. The orchestra received a 1996 Grammy Award for his recording of the Bartók piano concertos with pianist Yefim Bronfman. A recording of Lutoslawski's *Symphony No. 3* won four international awards. Other award-winning albums include works by Debussy, Mahler, Sibelius, Nielsen, Rachmaninoff, Prokofiev, Messiaen, Dallapiccola, and Takemitsu. Recent projects include

György Ligeti's opera *Le Grand Macabre*, a Grammy-nominated CD of film music by Bernard Herrmann, and the original John Corigliano score, featuring Joshua Bell, to the film *The Red Violin*. Not least, Salonen has used his podium to help champion the works of many of his Finnish colleagues, among them Kaija Saariaho and Magnus Lindberg.

In 1996, a fruitful new chapter opened with the Los Angeles Philharmonic's commission and premiere of Salonen's own *LA Variations*. Custom-tailored to the orchestra he now knew so well, this work mixes numerous genres in a virtuoso manner, passing from chamber music-like writing to a huge orchestral sound in a matter of seconds. He also makes use of numerous stylistic allusions to the culture of Southern California (prompting some to find comparison with the oft-noted Finnish propensity for evoking bracing landscapes of their homeland). Both a popular and a critical success, *LA Variations* quickly found follow-up performances with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam and the Berlin Philharmonic. It has served to reenergize Salonen's compositional pen. The years since have brought a new and completely rewritten version of *Giro* (1981/ 1997), the orchestral *Gambit* (1998), composed as a 40th birthday present to Magnus Lindberg, and *Five Images after Sappho* (1999), a song-cycle for soprano and 14 instruments, co-commissioned by California's Ojai Festival and the London Sinfonietta.

From his unquestioned position of authority, Salonen recently declared the intention of confining his conducting to six months of the year, so that he may spend the other six composing. It seems, then, that this "conducting composer" knows how to bide his time. Each new work is eagerly awaited.

Second Meeting (1992)

for oboe and piano

Essentially a set of variations based on seven related melodies, *Second Meeting* focuses now on one aspect and now another of each melody—in effect "freezing" individual elements for closer examination and development. Starting with a slow introduction, the piece surges into a virtuosic presto which transforms short, quirky phrases into long lines and continuous textures. "No gesture is wasted, no effect misfires, nothing sounds contrived, and every detail—no matter how fresh—is perfectly idiomatic." (Roger Evans)

MAGNUS LINDBERG (B. 1958)

In Finland, he already has the reputation of a Saint Magnus, to many young composers an unattainable paragon. In terms of performances abroad, he ranks as the most popular Finnish composer since Jean Sibelius, with large-scale orchestral pieces of considerable difficulty being commissioned and programmed by the world's leading

conductors and orchestras. Noted Finnish music writer Juhani Nuorvala praises Lindberg's works as embodying "the same qualities which I also believe characterize his personality: enthusiasm, curiosity, determination, quickness, a dread of being bored or boring, fearlessness, a non-moralizing attitude, a sense of style." Put even more directly: "Magnus Lindberg is a sparkling person who composes sparkling music."

Born in Helsinki, Lindberg first made his acquaintance with the musical cosmos through early lessons on the accordion. By his teens, however, tangos had given way to mathematical constructions of considerable intricacy. At the Sibelius Academy, where he studied with Einojuhani Rautavaara and Paavo Heininen, the orchestral medium quickly drew Lindberg's attention, above all in its potential for complexity (ironically, his 1975 orchestral score *Donor* was withdrawn after being condemned as unplayable by every orchestral musician who saw it). He was one of the first Finnish composers to adopt serialism, neither as an exciting oddity nor a culmination, but as a starting point. Early students works are of an extremely systematic nature, especially the 1978 song, *Jag vill bred vingar ut (I want to spread my wings)*, text by Gunnar Björling), in which he attempts to subordinate not only the structure of the text, but even its emotional elements, to a strict serial system.

To every reaction there is a counter reaction. Despite these structuralist leanings, Lindberg found himself marveling at the energy of

punk bands such as The Clash, which he heard in London clubs. A few years later, he would find something aesthetically invigorating in the destruction performances of Berlin's Einstürzende Neubauten. A new desire for spontaneous, effective impulses—the "irrational" side of music—began to draw him in. The scores of Italian composer Luciano Berio led him to a new emphasis on surface textures (as opposed to underlying form) in music. He also became fascinated with the idea of puzzles and paradoxes, as in the wind quintet *Arabesques* (1978) which is based on the idea of building clear, musical identities with no other tool than varying the textural solidity—a process that has been compared to writing poetry using a full page of text (rather than a single word) as the smallest unit. In 1980, Lindberg wrote of how a certain level of conflict between materials and the way in which they are molded can give rise to "a nervously intense character, a friction, which to me is not an obstacle but a source of creative inspiration."

Awarded his diploma from the Sibelius Academy in 1981, Lindberg made a decisive move to Paris and lessons with Vinko Globokar and Gérard Grisey (with side trips also to Franco Donatoni's classes in Siena and Brian Ferneyhough's in Darmstadt). From Grisey—a leader of the French "spectralist" movement—Lindberg gained a new appreciation of "how complex the sounds of an instrument really are," and of how much is "hidden" in the acoustic world. In *Linea d'ombra (The Line of the Shadow)*, 1981), he puts these concepts into practice, treating an ensemble of flute, alto saxophone, guitar and

percussion in such a way that the listener hears them all as one strange-sounding, newly-invented “macro-instrument.”

Lindberg’s international breakthrough came with two large-scale works, both written for the Toimii! Ensemble: *Action-Situation-Signification* (1982) for ensemble and live electronics, and *Kraft* (1985). The latter was originally commissioned as a piano concerto, but evolved into a work requiring the entire Toimii! Ensemble as the “soloist”—for only this entity could provide the multi-dimensional character required to distinguish it clearly from the huge, swirling orchestral mass (with chords of as many as seventy different pitches) surrounding it. Writer Risto Nieminen remarks that *Kraft* “gives the feeling of peeping into a volcano.” In 1986, it won first prize in the UNESCO Rostrum and, in 1988, was awarded the Nordic Council’s Music Prize, catapulting the thirty-year-old composer to international stardom.

The later eighties saw Lindberg pursuing fresh post-serialist reinterpretations of classical parameters such as harmony, rhythm, counterpoint and melody—a sort of “modernist classicism.” Each part of his orchestral trilogy, *Kinetics* (1989), *Marea* (1990) and *Joy* (1990), reveals new possibilities for basing pitch structures on the natural harmonic series. Formally, *Kinetics* uses a traditional chaconne-like pattern of repeated chords to provide a simple background structure. *Marea* (*Waves*) contains distant echoes of Debussy, Richard Strauss, and Sibelius. In the rather impressionistic *Piano Concerto* (1991),

Lindberg actually utilizes direct quotations from Sibelius’s *Valse triste* and Debussy’s *Préludes*. The nineties have witnessed a sharpening clarity of melodic ideas, shapes and forms, as well as a growing buoyancy—even humor—not often encountered in contemporary scores. *Coyote Blues* (1993) is replete with friendly touches, as if the listener were overhearing some wonderfully clever joke being exchanged between the instruments.

Having boldly gone where angels fear to tread, perhaps Lindberg has gained a privileged vantage point, one from which there is little to lose and everything to gain. A leading figure of Continental Modernism, he seems possessed of a special knowledge and knack for joyously violating its taboos at will. Having “peeped into the volcano” (and survived), he manages to bring light and mischievous playfulness back to the often severe world of contemporary music. “I am avant-garde if that means being in the front line of modern music, deeply aware of tradition. I do in fact feel specifically that I am continuing the tradition of western art music. It has to be said that much of today’s avant-garde music is terribly superficial. I do not want to compose music that requires smashing the instruments and shooting the audience. That is not interesting.”

Clarinet Quintet (1992)

for clarinet, two violins, viola, and cello

Something of the breathtaking virtuosity of the *Clarinet Quintet* may stem from the fact that it started as two separate solos for clarinet and cello, each accompanied by two violins and viola; eventually these forces found their way together and equilibrium was established.

Lindberg likes to boast that he has never composed a slow movement, and indeed this is a fast and exuberant piece for all. Abundant clarinet abundant trills add a distinctive flavor, while rich harmonies produce a lush orchestral quality that belies the ensemble's modest number.

Some sections are static blocks of multi-layered scales, evoking "the buzzing of insects" (Lindberg). In others, the music is gradually forced to change character as it is pushed toward extremes of speed and register. Written for clarinetist Kari Kriikku, the *Clarinet Quintet* was commissioned by the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival, where it was premiered in 1994.

—*Program notes by John McGinn*

Featured Performers

Karol Bennett's "ravishing tone and fire of imagination" (Boston Globe) have brought her widespread acclaim in performances of lieder, oratorio and opera, as well as contemporary repertoire. In the latter genre, her extensive list of world premieres includes works by Anthony Brandt, Peter Child, Jonathan Harvey, Hans Werner Henze, Earl Kim, Robert Kyr, Tod Machover, John McDonald, Ivan Tcherepnin, and Arlene Zallman. Her recorded voice was a centerpiece of Tod Machover's *Brain Opera*, premiered at New York's Lincoln Center in 1996 and subsequently presented around the world. Her interpretation of Arnold Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* was described by critic Josiah Fisk (The Boston Herald) as "as fine a performance of this work as this listener has ever heard," while the *Boston Globe* called her a "soprano at once crystal clear and full of mysteries," offering "magnificently secure and imaginative musicianship, rare purity and precision of intonation and remarkably complete identification with the inner life of each song." Tonight's performance is her first appearance with the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players.

William Banovetz, principal oboist of the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra and the California Symphony, has enjoyed a career as a soloist and featured player that has taken him all over the world. In repertoire ranging from the Baroque to the Avant Garde, he has performed as principal oboist with such ensembles as l'Orchestre de l'Opera de Lyon, the Hong Kong Philharmonic, the American

Sinfonietta, the Santa Fe Opera Orchestra, the San Diego Symphony, the Minnesota Orchestra and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra.

Banovetz received his Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees from the San Francisco Conservatory, where he is now a faculty member. He became principal oboist of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in 1979. His solo CD, *After a Dream*, is available on the Well-Tempered label.

Jeffrey Sykes, pianist, is co-founder and co-artistic director of the Bach Dancing and Dynamite Society of Wisconsin, a highly acclaimed and innovative chamber music festival. His performing career has taken him from the United States into Canada, Mexico, and Western Europe, where the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* described him as “a commanding solo player, the most supportive of accompanists, and a leader in chamber music.” Sykes holds degrees with honors from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, the Franz-Schubert-Institut in Baden-bei-Wein, Austria, and the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He also serves as Music Director of Opera for the Young, a professional opera company that gives more than 180 fully-staged performances a year to school children in the American Middle West.

William Wohlmacher is principal clarinetist with the Cabrillo Music Festival Orchestra and bass clarinetist with the Oakland East Bay Symphony. He received his Masters degree from the Eastman School of Music and is now Professor and Chairman of the Music Department at California State University at Hayward. He has made two European

tours with the Arch Ensemble for Experimental Music, and has also served as principal clarinetist for the Festival Lirco Internazionale in Italy, as well as for the Tacoma Symphony. Wohlmacher joined the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players as principal clarinetist in 1995.

Music Director

Donald Palma, a long-time advocate of the music of our time, is well-known throughout the international new music community for his work as conductor and contrabassist with such celebrated ensembles as Speculum Musicae, the Group for Contemporary Music and Parnassus. In recent years, Palma has taken a leading role in the artistic direction and conducting of Speculum Musicae, premiering works by eminent and emerging composers at such distinguished venues as the Geneva Festival, the Warsaw Autumn Festival, the Wigmore Hall in London, the Library of Congress, the Kennedy Center, the New York Philharmonic Horizons Festival and on BBC London and Radio Cologne broadcasts. He has also conducted the Da Camera Society in Houston, the White Mountains Festival Orchestra, the Toho School in Tokyo, and is Music Director of the New England Conservatory Chamber Orchestra. He became Music Director of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in 1998. His programming for the 1998-99 season helped win the ensemble an ASCAP/Chamber Music America Award for the Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music.

Palma's vivid and insightful conducting has drawn high praise from the press, including a concert of Ligeti's fiercely challenging *Chamber Concerto*, about which the New York Times raved, "a superb performance." He has performed on nearly one hundred recordings, including numerous premiere recordings. His conducting of Elliott Carter's *A Mirror On Which To Dwell* on the Bridge label attracted critical acclaim, and of his recording of Poul Ruders' *Psalmodies*, Fanfare Magazine proclaimed, "We aren't likely to hear a better new music disc in 1993." In addition, he has recorded the Wagner Ring Cycle with the Metropolitan Opera and was principal bassist for Leonard Bernstein's recording of *West Side Story*.

A virtuoso contrabassist, Palma is soloist for the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, with whom he tours worldwide. He has been a member of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, principal bass of the American Composers Orchestra and the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa and has appeared with the Juilliard Quartet, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Nash Ensemble, and in recital with such luminaries as Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Jean-Pierre Rampal and Jan DeGaetani. Palma is currently on the faculties of the New England Conservatory and Yale University.

Where To Find It

Erik Bergman's *Concertino da Camera*, performed by the Almiviva Ensemble conducted by Ulf Söderblom, appears on an Ondine release devoted to the works of this composer, including *Silence and Interruptions* for wind quartet, string quartet and percussion, *Triumf att finnas till* with soprano Solveig Faringer, and *Lament and Incantation* with soprano Tuula-Marja Tuomela. Hannele Segerstam solos in the *Concerto for Violin*, op. 99 with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Leif Segerstam (Bis), while Jukka-Pekka Saraste leads the same orchestra in *Sub luna* (Ondine). Erkki Pohola directs the Tapiola Choir in *Dreams*, op. 85, also available from Ondine.

Kaija Saariaho's *Adjö* is performed by soprano Tuula-Marja Tuomela and members of the Cluster Ensemble on an Ondine release. The Arditti Quartet performs *Nymphea (Jardin secret III)* on a Montaigne CD, while Tapio Tuomela leads a mixed ensemble in the ballet *Maa* (Ondine). A Meet the Composer/Finlandia recording devoted to Saariaho includes Jukka-Pekka Saraste conducting the Avanti! Chamber Orchestra in *Verblendungen, Lichtbogen* and *Io*, John Whitfield leading the Endymion Ensemble in *Lichtbogen, Jardin secret II* with harpsichordist Jukka Tiensuu, *Petals* with cellist Anssi Karttunen, and the tape piece *Stilleben*. Currently in production is a Sony Music CD combining *Château de l'âme* with soprano Dawn Upshaw and the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra and *Graal théâtre* with violinist

Where To Find It, cont.

Gidon Kremer and the BBC Symphony Orchestra; both works are conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen.

Solveig von Schoultz published thirty books in her lifetime, ranging from poetry and short stories to plays for radio, television, and the stage. A fifty-year retrospective of her poetry is presented in *Snow and Summers* (translated from the Swedish by Anne Born), available from Forest Books.

Hannu Pohjannoro's *eilisen linnut* is recorded by the Avanti! Chamber Orchestra conducted by Leif Segerstam on a CD celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Society of Finnish Composers (Ondine).

Esa-Pekka Salonen's *Second Meeting* is performed by oboist Carolyn Hove and pianist Gloria Cheng on a CD from Crystal Records. The orchestral version of this work, *Mimo II*, with oboist Bengt Rosengren and the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra appears on Daphne Records. *Floof!* has been recorded with soprano Anu Komsu and the Avanti! Chamber Orchestra on a Finlandia CD which also includes *Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra* with soloist Pekka Savijoki and the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra (conducted by Salonen), and the solo works *Yta I, II and III*.

Where To Find It, cont.

Magnus Lindberg's *Clarinet Quintet* is performed by Kari Kriikku and the Arditti String Quartet on a Mouton release. A Finlandia CD features Esa-Pekka Salonen conducting the London Sinfonietta, the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Avanti! and the Toimii! Ensemble in a selection of Lindberg's solo and ensemble works from the 1970s and '80s, including *Zona, Stroke, Twine, Ritratto, Action-Situation-Signification, ...de Tartuffe, je crois, Linea d'ombra* and *Ablauf*. The Ensemble InterContemporain presents the chamber works *Ur, Corrente*, and *Duo concertante* on the IRCAM label. Jukka-Pekka Saraste conducts Avanti! and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra in *Kinetics, Marea*, and *Joy*, and also directs the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra in the more recent *Feria, Corrente II* and *Arena*; both of these CDs are on the Ondine label.

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