



MUSIQUE NOIRE
OCTOBER 27, 2010 ~ THE KOSMOS

David Felberg violin ~ **Jesse Tatum** flute ~ **Melissa Peña** oboe
James Shields bass clarinet and conductor ~ **John Marchiando** and **Brynn Rector** trumpet
Peter Ulfers French horn ~ **Carson Keeble** and **Byron Herrington** trombone
Douglas Cardwell and **Jeff Cornelius** percussion ~ **Edward Robie** piano

Alban Berg ······ **Sonata for Piano, Op. 1** (1910)
Mr. Robie

Ingram Marshall ······ **September Canons** (2010)
Mr. Felberg

Phillip Bimstein ······ **Half Moon at Checkerboard Mesa** (1997)
Melissa Peña

~ ~ ~ INTERMISSION ~ ~ ~

Morton Feldman ······ **Bass Clarinet and Percussion** (1981)
Mssrs. Shields, Cardwell and Cornelius

James Shields (Premiere) ······ **Of Observation and Experience** (2010)
Mses. Tatum, Peña and Rector ~ Mssrs. Marchiando, Ulfers, Keeble,
Herrington, Cardwell and Robie ~ Mr. Shields, conductor

This concert is sponsored in part by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts
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PROGRAM NOTES

ALBAN BERG (1885–1935)

Berg, along with Arnold Schönberg and Anton Webern, are collectively known as the Second Viennese School. The reference of this appellation to the First Viennese School of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven conveys the key role these three early 20th century composers played in the ongoing development of music. Like his teacher Schönberg, with whom he studied for eight years beginning at the age of 19, Berg's early works were late Romantic in style. The music of the late 19th and early 20th centuries includes much chromaticism, which in itself negates a tonal center. A logical extension was the development of 12-tone composition, or atonality in which all notes are of equal importance. The Second Viennese School composers were among the foremost exponents of this style, though not all of their works are so systematically conceived. Berg's major works include the operas *Wozzeck* (1922) and *Lulu* (1935), two string quartets, *Lyric Suite* (1926); *Three Pieces for Orchestra* (1915); and a violin concerto (1935).

The *Piano Sonata* was Berg's first published work (1910) and is his only work to have an opus number. It is in one movement with B minor as its tonal center, though major and minor chords appear infrequently. The use of chromaticism, whole-tone scales, and the augmented chord (e.g. c-e-g#) create an improvisatory feeling. However, the work's form reflects the tradition of an opening exposition, which is repeated as was the case with works by the First Viennese School composers, a "developing variation" section (as Schönberg called it), and a recapitulation, with the entire work based on the two opening gestures.

INGRAM MARSHALL (b1942)

Marshall studied at Columbia University until 1970 when he accepted a graduate assistant position

with Morton Subotnik at Cal Arts, from which he received an MFA in 1971 and stayed on to each for several years. He first gained recognition for his electroacoustic pieces, which he often performed by himself on synthesizer, with tape looping, on the gambuh (Balinese flute) or singing. His acoustic music frequently incorporates tape delay or digital delay, while also using his own falsetto voice. Marshall calls himself an expressivist post-minimalist composer who reflects an interest in world music, particularly the Balinese gamelan tradition, as well as the influence of minimalist composers Steve Reich Terry Riley and John Adams. Perhaps surprisingly he also counts Jean Sibelius as a prominent influence and often includes samples of Sibelius' symphonies and tone poems in his works.

September Canons, premiered this past January, is for violin with electronic processing and is a "lamentation on the events of September 11, 2001". Even though there is something deeply moving in associating its sweeping lines with the memory of that strange, terrible, clear blue morning in New York, the music in no way needs that charged storyline in order to have a bracing impact on the listener. A reviewer of a recording of the work writes that in Marshall's "hands the watercolor vision of light and innocence is washed over at turns with much darker and more troubled hues."

PHILLIP BIMSTEIN (b1947)

Beimstein is a graduate of the Chicago Conservatory of Music. In the 1980s he led the new wave band, Phil 'n' the Blanks, which were college and MTV hits. After further study in composition at UCLA, he took a hiking trip to Utah and never left. He lives in Springdale, Utah, where he has served two terms as mayor. *Outside Magazine* called Bimstein "America's

only all-natural politician-composer” and a *Parade Magazine* article dubbed him “The Man Who Brought Civility Back to Town”. So, it is not surprising that, as an advocate for protection of the environment, much of his music includes sounds from nature.

Half Moon at Checkerboard Mesa was composed in 1997 for solo and recorded animal sounds. The soloist can be oboe, trombone, violin or French horn.

MORTON FELDMAN (1926–1987)

A very important composer in his own right, Feldman had incredible connections with seminal early 20th century composers: Wallington Riegger, his first composition teacher who had studied with Arnold Schönberg; Stefan Wolpe who had studied with Anton Webern; John Cage, whom he met in the lobby as they were leaving a New York Philharmonic performance of Webern’s Symphony Op. 21 (and did not want to stay to hear a Rachmaninoff work); and through Cage Henry Cowell, Virgil Thomson and George Antheil. Important visual artists were also an influence, including Robert Rauschenberg, Jackson Pollack, Philip Guston, Frank O’Hara and Mark Rothko.

With encouragement from Cage, Feldman began to write pieces which had no relation to compositional systems of the past, such as the constraints of traditional harmony or the 12-tone technique. He experimented with non-standard systems of musical notation, often using grids in his scores, and specifying how many notes should be played at a certain time, but not which ones. Feldman’s experiments with the use of chance in his composition in turn inspired John Cage to write pieces like the *Music of Changes*, where the notes to be played are determined by consulting the I Ching.

Bass Clarinet and Percussion is scored for bass clarinet and two percussionists, who play sets of gongs and cymbals, marimba, xylophone, vibraphone, and timpani. The music is quiet

throughout and explores the power of timbral variation and subtle rhythmic shifts.

JAMES SHIELDS (b1983)

Shields is a native of Austin, Texas and a graduate of The Juilliard School and received his Master of Music Degree in Composition from the University of New Mexico in 2010. He is currently Principal Clarinet of the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra and has performed as principal clarinet with the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, Aspen Music Festival, the Astoria Music Festival (Astoria, OR), and the Interlochen Arts Festival’s World Youth Symphony Orchestra. He is, along with David Felberg, Co-Artistic Director of Albuquerque’s Church of Beethoven.

“*Of Observation and Experience*, written for flute, English horn, piano, vibraphone and brass quintet, was born out of an obsession with a single chord taken from my earlier work ‘Use Your Words’. This vertical object seemed to contain a depth of information within it and eventually began to suggest the broader motivic and harmonic language of the work, its expressive content, and even the unusual instrumentation utilized. This sonority is set in motion through an odd marriage of serial techniques, post-minimalist formal architecture, and bebop style writing for winds and keyboards. Formally, the work is comprised of a set of variations, which gradually point more and more forcefully toward a unified dramatic arch. After the climax of this arch, the music begins to run backwards through the previous material of the work, eventually concluding with a single musical line stated by the woodwinds.”

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