

CHATTER 20-21

MUSIC WORTH TALKING ABOUT

Tonight's concert is dedicated to Mary Ann Thiel 1936-2012

A founding member of Chatter, Mary Ann's tenacity and determination built the Chatter board. She passionately, joyfully loved music and especially the musicians who created it. She had a rare combination of spirituality and business sense: her feet on the ground and her head in the clouds. The survival of Chatter is Mary Ann Thiel's legacy. Andrea Walters wrote,

"When I think of Mary Ann her voice comes to me first. Happy was always in her voice. With great frequency this happy voice would speak of possibility – happy possibilities. It was just such talk that lead to the creation of Chatter. Oh, happy day! Thank you Mary Ann."

Thank you, Mary Ann

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The King of Instruments Focus on the Organ

SATURDAY · MARCH 17, 2012 · 7:30PM
KELLER HALL · UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO · ALBUQUERQUE NM

Organ Frederick Frahm	Second Violin Carol Swift-Matton Michael Shu Justin Pollak Cesar Aviles	Violoncello James Holland Eric Walters Melinda Mack
Mezzo-soprano Kathleen Clawson	Viola Christine Rancier Lisa Di Carlo Cherokee Randolph Enrique Victoria	Double Bass Jean Luc-Matton Mark Tatum
Conductor David Felberg	First Violin Megan Holland Debra Terry Steve Ognacevic Barbara Morris Joan Wang	Orchestral Bell Douglas Cardwell

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Daniel Pinkham Organ Sonatas

Sonata I (1943) Andante e molto semplice	Sonata II (1966) Andante sereno Allegro scherzando	Sonata III (1987) Allegro grazioso Allegro ballando Andante dolente Vivace
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Frederick Frahm

Chapels

Chimayó
Acoma
Rosario

INTERMISSION ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Arvo Pärt

Cantus in Memoriam Benjamin Britten

Frederick Frahm

Spaces of Night *World Premiere*

Please see pages 3 and 4 for the libretto by Frederick Frahm
It is in 7 parts and is based on the poems of Stephen Crane

Spaces of Night was commissioned by the
Albuquerque Chapter of the American Guild of Organists

Frederick Frahm

Frederick Frahm has an impressive resume of performing, teaching and composing accomplishments. His catalog of compositions includes works for organ solo, including concert works and chorale preludes; chamber music; art songs and song cycles; music for handbells; and extended works for voices and orchestra including chamber operas and cantatas. A prolific composer, Frahm's music is distinguished by a symmetrical and architectural approach to form, a keen sensitivity to literature and imagery as a source of musical inspiration, and a preference for music with broad tempi, modal tonality, and stark contrasts in texture. A professional church musician for more than 30 years, Mr Frahm currently serves as Director of Music and Principal Organist at St Luke's Lutheran Church in Albuquerque. He regularly performs organ recitals in Albuquerque and Santa Fe and as organist and harpsichordist for the Santa Fe Symphony Orchestra. A past Dean of the Albuquerque Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, Mr Frahm is in demand as a teacher and clinician and is a strong advocate for the creation of new music for organ.

Kathleen Clawson

Kathleen Clawson, mezzo-soprano, is consistently praised for the burnished, bronze beauty of her voice enhanced by an innate musicality and a persuasive, sensuous manner of communication. She has appeared throughout the United States in opera, on the concert stage and recital platform in a wide range of repertoire from Bach and Janáček to Verdi and Wagner. Ms Clawson is a respected, admired and beloved instructor at the University of New Mexico.

The Holtkamp Organ

In order to fully exploit the expressive qualities of Mr Frahm's new work, a significant instrument was required. Therefore, the premiere of *Spaces of Night* is being performed at Keller Hall, home of one of the largest organs in the state, a 1967 Holtkamp with 2,741 pipes, 3 keyboards and 51 ranks.

Daniel Pinkham

Organ Sonatas

Daniel Pinkham, a distinguished American composer who flourished in the Boston music communities was born in Massachusetts in 1923.

Walter Piston, Aaron Copland, Arthur Honegger, Samuel Barber and Nadia Boulanger numbered among his composition teachers. He studied organ and harpsichord with such luminaries as Wanda Landowska and E. Power Biggs.

Pinkham taught for many years at the New England Conservatory of Music and served as the Director of Music for historic King's Chapel in Boston for more than forty years. He was a prolific and versatile composer whose catalog includes four symphonies and other works for large ensembles; cantatas and oratorios; concertos and other works for solo instrument and orchestra for piano, piccolo, trumpet, violin, harp and three organ concertos; theatre works and chamber operas; chamber music; electronic music; and twenty documentary television film scores.

At the time of his death on December 18, 2006, he was one of the country's most active composers echoing a comment by *Boston Globe* music critic Richard Dyer who once wrote that Pinkham's music "doesn't turn up very often on the programs of societies for new music because it doesn't have to live in that ghetto — he is among the most-performed American composers, and people like his music."

The three *Sonatas for Organ and Strings* represent a broad spectrum in the developing artistic voice of Daniel Pinkham. The first sonata, written in 1943 when the composer was in his early 20s, is a single movement work distinguished by brevity, and a gentle if not dreamy character. This music, which has remained one of the most celebrated pieces in Pinkham's catalog, was played at the composer's funeral in 2006. The second sonata is a work in two movements which was composed about 23 years after the first sonata. The music is considerably more complex tonally, and the two movements stand in stark contrast with one another. The third sonata was composed in 1987 and is comprised of four movements. The first movement, *allegro grazioso*, is a highly chromatic dialog between the organ and the string orchestra, the second movement, *allegro ballando* is quirky, rhythmic, and brief. A lush and expressive third movement, *andante dolente*, begins quietly and ends boldly. The final movement, *vivace*, a tour de force for the ensemble, is a splashy rondo with driving rhythmic power.

The three sonatas feature the organ as *primus inter pares* (first among equals) in the musical texture. Essentially chamber music, there is a sense of a musical conversation going on

between such diverse instruments as that of pipes and strings, and the sonatas each readily demonstrate the composer's gift for writing in this genre. It is unusual if not rare to program all three of the sonatas on the same concert, and so tonight we have the opportunity to indulge in a retrospective of sorts through a small but significant portion of this distinguished American composer's work. *Notes by Frederick Frahm*

Frederick Frahm Three Chapels

Chimayó

This iconic site of pilgrimage in Northern New Mexico is famed throughout the world for its sacred earth. The devout believe it offers healing for both physical and mental anguish. Thus the poetic heading, *bearing ills and anxieties, pilgrims crutch the road to peace . . .*

The piece begins with slow, open chords that set a deliberate pace, as of a crowd of worshippers heard advancing in the distance. As they near the chapel, the rhythm becomes more active and more disjointed, as the group begins to dissolve into individual penitents, each with his own burden of pain. The soothing yet commanding chords re-enter in alternation, suggesting the constant flow of those seeking respite and relief.

Acoma

The pueblo of Acoma is located on a high, set-apart mesa west of Albuquerque. Throughout the centuries, it has been the site of triumphs and tragedies—human interactions and battles taking place between earth and sky, walled and roofed only by limitless distance. The chapel itself is huge and empty, an intersection point for Spanish Catholicism of the conquest period, and the pragmatic response of the pueblo natives of the time, who grafted the new religion onto their timeless reverence for nature. And so, *a chapel with no pews, a plateau with no walls, a wind with no sound . . .*

Acoma is dominated by a pulsing, pesante figuration that while sounding polytonal, actually outlines a sequence of changing chords, rather in the style of a French toccata. The insistent figure dominates for some time, but eventually begins quieting, and the ending is peaceful and distant. This represents how Acoma's turbulent past has melted into the serenity of time, which heals wounds as it moves on like an ever-rolling stream

Rosario

Rosario Chapel is on the grounds of Rosario Cemetery, which adjoins the U.S. National Cemetery in Santa Fe. Rosario is a very old burying place, in which you can trace the history of Santa Fe through the memorials of those lying in peace. The past lies calmly on the present here. Besides modern understated headstones, there are 19th and early 20th century family tombs of florid design; a cemetery section devoted to nuns who labored here over the decades; and a section where some Japanese men interned in Santa Fe during World War II have found a resting place.

Rosario Chapel is the only site other than the Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi where the ancient olive-wood statue of Mary, La Conquistadora, is housed: she is carried there and revered during the annual Fiesta de Santa Fe.

This piece is a faithful sonic depiction of the serenity found in the quiet chapel, especially in the presence of the Marian image, as it came to me: *the Conquistadora in stately repose: outside, the vibrant city* . . . Slow-moving chords that suggest the progression of eternity are punctuated by definite but distant hints of the bustling city outside the cemetery's bounds. An A above middle C repeats throughout the work, as a thematic unifier, a bell tolling through time.

Notes on the Three Chapels courtesy of Craig Smith

Arvo Pärt

Cantus in Memoriam Benjamin Britten

Cantus in Memoriam Benjamin Britten is a short canon in A minor, written in 1977 by the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt for string orchestra and bell. The work is an early example of Pärt's *tintinnabuli* style, which he based on his reactions to early chant music. Its appeal is often ascribed to its relative simplicity: a single melodic motif dominates and it both begins and ends with scored silence.

The cantus was composed as an elegy to mourn the December 1976 death of the English composer Benjamin Britten. Pärt greatly admired Britten, whom he described as possessing the "unusual purity" that he himself sought as a composer. Pärt viewed the Englishman as a kindred spirit; however, he only gained access to the latter's music in 1980, after emigrating from Soviet Estonia to Austria, four years after Britten had died. When Britten died, Pärt felt that he had lost hope of meeting the only contemporary composer

whose musical outlook, he believed, resembled his own.

While Pärt is known primarily for his religious music, *Cantus* is a fully secular work, in that it forms a spare lament to a fellow composer not based on biblical texts. It is perhaps Pärt's most popular piece. Due to its evocative and cinematic feel, the piece has been used extensively as background accompaniment in both film and television documentaries.

Frederick Frahm

Spaces of Night

The Albuquerque Chapter of the American Guild of Organists has commissioned *Spaces of Night*, an 18-minute song cycle in seven parts for mezzo-soprano, strings and organ. Originally, the Chapter Program Committee and I had discussed my writing an organ concerto. I was a little hesitant with this idea as I had just completed my first organ concerto, and had already sent to the score on to my publisher.

But as talks progressed, the idea of song cycle presented itself. This really seemed perfect. I love setting poetry, and as larger pieces for voice, organ, and strings, where the organ part is more than just continuo are not exactly numerous, I felt this would be a challenge worth pursuing. I settled on a selection from the works of American poet Stephen Crane (of the *Red Badge of Courage* fame) . . . yes, he wrote some amazing poems.

The libretto works through what can be seen as an exasperation with the institutional church, which is a familiar theme in Crane's poetic writing. He asks some hard and relevant questions the answers to which can be found with equal measure either within or without the church. I continue to be surprised with how poignant his reflections are 100 years later.

A voice and organ-only version is planned so that the work can be performed without an orchestra. The piece in general is a fusion of sorts between an organ concerto and a song cycle. In a way, it could be considered a double concerto as the vocal soloist and the organist are featured prominently and at times equally.

Spaces of Night Libretto

The libretto is adapted by Frederick Frahm from poems of Stephen Crane:

The Black Riders and Other Lines (1895)
War is Kind (1899)

If I should cast off this tattered coat,
And go free into the mighty sky;
If I should find nothing there
But a vast blue,
Echoless, ignorant —
What then?

God fashioned the ship of the world carefully.
With the infinite skill of an All-Master
Made He the hull and the sails,
Held He the rudder
Ready for adjustment.
Erect stood He, scanning His work proudly.
Then — at fateful time — a wrong called,
And God turned, heeding.
Lo, the ship slipped slyly,
In noiseless travel down the ways.
Forever rudderless, it went upon the seas.
Ridiculous voyages.
Quaint progress.
Turning as with serious purpose
Before stupid winds.
And there were many in the sky
Who laughed at this thing.

In the night

Grey heavy clouds muffled the valleys,
And the peaks looked toward God alone.
"O Master that movest the wind with a finger,
Humble, idle, futile peaks are we.
Grant that we may run swiftly across the world
To huddle in worship at Thy feet."

In the morning

A noise of men at work came the clear blue miles,
And the little black cities were apparent.
"O Master that knowest the meaning of raindrops,
Humble, idle, futile peaks are we.
Give voice to us, we pray, O Lord,
That we may sing Thy goodness to the sun."

In the evening

The far valleys were sprinkled with tiny lights.
"O Master that knowest the value of kings and birds,
Thou hast made us humble, idle, futile peaks.
Thou only needest eternal patience;
We bow to Thy wisdom, O Lord —
Humble, idle, futile peaks."

In the night

Grey heavy clouds muffled the valleys,
And the peaks looked toward God alone.

IV

Two or three angels
Came near to the earth.
They saw a fat church.
Little black streams of people
Came and went in continually.
And the angels were puzzled
To know why the people went thus,
And why they stayed so long within.

V

There was a great cathedral.
To solemn songs,
A white procession
Moved toward the altar.
The chief man there
Bore himself proudly.
Yet some could see him cringe,
As in a place of danger,
Frightened glances into the air...
Threatening faces of the past...

VI

A slant of sun on dull brown walls,
A forgotten sky of bashful blue.
Toward God a mighty hymn,
A song of collisions and cries,
Rumbling wheels, hoof-beats, bells,
Welcomes, farewells, love-calls, final moans,
Voices of joy, idiocy, warning, despair,
The unknown appeals of brutes,
The chanting of flowers,
The screams of cut trees,
The senseless babble of hens and wise men –
A cluttered incoherency that says at the stars:
"O God, save us!"

VII

The silvered passing of a ship at night,
The sweep of each sad lost wave,
The dwindling boom of the steel thing's striving,
The little cry of a man to man,

A shadow falling across the greyer night,
And the sinking of the small star;
Then the waste, the far waste of waters,
And the soft lashing of black waves
For long and in loneliness.

Remember, thou, O ship of love,
Thou leavest a far waste of waters,
And the soft lashing of black waves
For long and in loneliness.

Remember, thou, O ship of love,
remember...

VIII

If I should cast off this tattered coat,
And go free into the mighty sky;
If I should find nothing there
But a vast blue,
Echoless, ignorant –

What then?

Ensemble Music New Mexico
is grateful for the financial support received
during the past 12 months. Thank you.

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