

Club Concert

7:30 | MAY 2, 2011 | CLUB OBERON

STRATIS MINAKAKIS	“À 6” FOR SOLO SOPRANO (2010)
RUDOLF ROJAHN	“HEDDA” FOR SOLO VIOLIN (2007)
PAUL MÉFANO	“INVOLUTIVE” FOR SOLO CLARINET (1958)
ROGER ZAHAB	“REACHING AFTER” FOR SOLO CELLO (2003)
JULIA WERTZ	“FIVE VIGNETTES FROM THE GARDEN BY THE SEA” FOR VIOLIN AND CELLO (2009)
KATARINA MILJKOVIC	“FOR AMY” FOR BOHLEN-PIERCE CLARINET AND ELECTRONICS (2010)

AMY ADVOCAT, clarinet

JENNIFER ASHE, soprano

GABRIELA DIAZ, violin

DAVID RUSSELL, cello

Hosted by the **SCORE BOARD**

PROGRAM NOTES

By Julia Wertz

Welcome, everyone, to the final BMOP Club Concert of the 2010–2011 season! It has been a real treat to work with the musicians, planning tonight’s program. We will hear five pieces composed by local composers within the past eight years, plus one from long ago and far away—a 1958 piece by French composer Paul Méfano.

The opening gasp of Stratis Minakakis’s **À 6** is a perfectly dramatic way to begin the evening, especially in a theater venue such as this. This startling piece draws from the scene at the end of *Oedipus at Colonus* by Sophocles, in which the messenger has rushed to Athens to pass on the news of Oedipus’s death. It is the third in a series of works, all together titled “Aggeloi,” that deal with messengers and “fundamental gestures.” Minakakis writes in his notes that *à 6* “depicts a bewildered messenger who is struggling to articulate the extraordinary event to a possibly disbelieving audience.” The astonishment and hesitation are conveyed through the various gasps, stutters, sudden harsh dynamic shifts, and vowels and consonants that burst in and out of view throughout, punctuating what is otherwise continual forward momentum in both dramatic and melodic lines.

Rudolf Rojahn’s **HEDDA** also has dramatic, literary origins, drawing from Henryk Ibsen’s play, *Hedda Gabler*. Rojahn writes: “The various, clichéd female archetypes that Hedda adopts to exploit the men around her provided the source material for the temporal emotional realities the piece inhabits.” The idea of creating contrasting female personas depicted with a single violin line is rich with possibilities, due to the instrument’s range and sonic flexibility. We hear lilting (even flirtatious?) passages full of glissandi, as well as passages of harsh, quarrelsome textures, jovial, syncopated figures, soulful and searching melodies in the high register, and a subdued concluding passage (perhaps reflecting the tragic end of the play). Though the “emotional realities” shift throughout, the piece works like a single monologue, speech-like and theatrical.

Composer Paul Méfano, though widely celebrated in France, is not yet well enough known in the US. His more recent music, featuring microtones and other extended techniques, has more fluid edges and nuanced textures than this very early piece, **INVOLUTIVE**, written during a time when Méfano was steeped in the world of serial music. This piece shows some of the urgency of that period (and perhaps also of his young age), for example in the dense, virtuosic, and angular middle section. Despite its age, we chose *Involutive* because it is such a fruitful exploration of the clarinet, and a potent musical statement. I am eager to present Méfano’s work to the Boston audience, and I hope you will keep an eye out this fall for news of a visit and performance at the New England Conservatory by Méfano; he will be celebrating the release of a retrospective CD of his music by the legendary Ensemble 2e2m, which he founded in 1972.

Much of Roger Zahab’s **REACHING AFTER** feels more like intimate dialogue than monologue, as he sets in intermittent opposition figures or entire passages that contrast registrally, motivically, and temporally. A few minutes after the animated opening, a very still and pensive passage begins in double stops, using harmonics, with paired motivic figures of thirds, fourths, and fifths folding inward and outward to almost meet at the half step or major seventh. These gestures become a personality of sorts, returning periodically for commentary during the music of subsequent sections, such as the deep and lyrical low melody that follows, or the busy, staccato section after that. The work’s title is Zahab’s translation of the term “ricercare,” and is not intended so much to identify the contrapuntal form as it is to refer to the idea of “researching the past through memories or objects left behind...and the image of reaching after phantoms from the past or glimmers from the future.” The leftover memories, objects, and phantoms he refers to are earlier works from the history of the cello (including works of his own). He points out that he is not quoting, but simply alluding to, past cello works. (Are the Bach cello suites among the allusions, in the opening?)

My own **FIVE VIGNETTES FROM THE GARDEN BY THE SEA** portray August at my family’s house. They could be called impressionistic, not because of any particular musical techniques, but because each one is an attempt to capture a single characteristic image or sensation from the garden during that month:

- I The sea changes in the afternoon.
- II Magpies fly in the trees.
- III Three figs are eaten.
- IV A shield bug clings to the tree for hours.
- V Everyone is away.

Like most of my music, this piece uses quarter-tones, sixth-tones, and twelfth-tones, as a way to expand melody and harmony.

Katarina Miljkovic’s **FOR AMY** was composed for the Bohlen-Pierce clarinet, an instrument built to produce the pure, untempered intervals of the harmonic series, minus all of the octave repetitions—this last feature meaning that no pitch is duplicated in any other register. Miljkovic has chosen the smallest-number frequency relationships of the Bohlen-Pierce scale 1:3:5:7:9:15 and applied these ratios to her temporal structures as well, centering around A440 in the pitch domain and a one-second duration in the time domain. Both of these elements act as in a sense like mirrors, according to Miljkovic. This could be just projection on my part, but I *hear* mirrors in this piece, between the clarinet and the electronics, and the clarinet and itself, mirrors that when paired create a vast space as they bounce their images back and forth. The infinite space and dream-like world she creates seem a fitting way to send you off into the night.

Composer Julia Wertz is Artistic Director of the Boston Microtonal Society, and co-founder of their chamber ensemble NotaRiotous. Her music has been performed at concert series and festivals around the Northeastern United States and Europe, and she has published several articles on microtonal and other topics in contemporary music. She teaches Microtonal Composition and Performance, and other theory courses, at the New England Conservatory.

GUEST ARTISTS

AMY ADVOCAT, clarinet, hailed as “dazzling” by *The Boston Globe*, is an avid performer of new music having performed with the Firebird Ensemble, BMOP, The New Fromm Players at Tanglewood, Callithumpian Consort, Fifth Tier New Music Ensemble, Brandeis New Music, and the Second Instrumental Unit. She has also performed with the Boston Pops, Opera Boston, Boston Philharmonic, and the Virginia Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Advocat was a fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center for two summers and participated at the New York String Orchestra Seminar, Spoleto USA Festival, and Virginia Arts Festival. Ms. Advocat was named the first recipient of the Boston Woodwind Society’s Harold Wright award and is a Hadar Foundation Scholar. She received her Bachelor of Music and Master of Music Degrees from the New England Conservatory, where she was a recipient of the Tourjée award, a scholarship awarded to one outstanding NEC graduate who returns for a second degree. Her principal teachers include Simon Aldrich, Thomas Martin, David Weber, William Wrzesien, and Craig Nordstrom.

JENNIFER ASHE, soprano, described as having “the kind of vocal velvet you don’t often hear in contemporary music” and displaying “rock solid technique” (*Boston Phoenix*), has been hailed by *The Boston Globe* as giving a performance that was “pure bravura...riveting the audience with a radiant and opulent voice.” Ms. Ashe is a familiar face in the Boston new music scene, frequently performing on series such as Harvard Group for New Music, New Gallery Concert Series, and the Fromm Festival at Harvard. She is a senior member of the Callithumpian Consort and the soprano for the Boston Microtonal Society’s chamber ensemble NotaRiotous. She is a founding member of the flute and soprano duo Prana with Alicia DiDonato Paulsen. Prana was chosen as a semi-finalist at the 2007 Gaudeamus Interpreters Competition. Recent projects include the role of Sarah Palin in the premiere of *Say It Ain’t So, Joe* by Curtis Hughes, with Guerilla Opera. She also sings with Blue Heron Renaissance Choir. She holds a DMA in Vocal Performance and an MM in Vocal Pedagogy from New England Conservatory and a BM from the Hartt School of Music in Voice Performance and Music Education. She was previously a member of the faculty at College of the Holy Cross. She is currently an Assistant Professor at Eastern Connecticut State University.

GABRIELA DIAZ, violin, began her musical training at the age of five, studying piano with her mother, and the next year, violin with her father. Shortly before her sixteenth birthday, she was diagnosed with Hodgkin’s Disease, a type of lymphatic cancer. As a cancer survivor, Ms. Diaz is committed to cancer research and treatment, and has lent her talents to related programs and organizations, including the American Cancer Society, the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, and many hospitals around the country. Devoted to contemporary music, Ms. Diaz has been fortunate to work closely with many significant living composers on their own compositions, namely Pierre Boulez, Magnus Lindberg, Frederic Rzewski, Alvin Lucier, Steve Reich, Brian Ferneyhough, John Zorn, Osvaldo Golijov, Lee Hyla, and Helmut Lachenmann. Boston critics have called Ms. Diaz “a young violin master,” and Lloyd Schwartz of the *Boston Phoenix* noted “Gabriela Diaz in a bewitching performance of Pierre Boulez’s 1991 *Anthèmes*.” Others have praised her “vivid” and “elegant playing,” and “polished technique.”

DAVID RUSSELL, cello, hailed as a “superb cellist” and “sonorous and panoramic” by *The Boston Globe*, maintains a vigorous schedule both as soloist and as collaborator in the US and Europe. He was appointed to the teaching faculty of Wellesley College in 2005 and currently serves as Director of Chamber Music. He served as Assistant Principal cello with the Tulsa Philharmonic and on the teaching faculty of Oklahoma City University from 2001 to 2003. As a member of the Grammy Award-nominated Eaken Trio, formerly in residence at Dickinson College in Carlisle, PA, he has toured extensively in France, Germany, Italy, and England. A strong advocate and performer of new music, Mr. Russell has performed with such ensembles as Phantom Arts Ensemble for American Music, Dinosaur Annex, Collage New Music, BMOP, Music on the Edge, AUROS Group for New Music, Firebird Ensemble, NotaRiotous, and the Fromm Foundation Players at Harvard. With violinist Rolf Schulte and pianist Geoffrey Bursleson, he is in residence at the Composers’ Recording Institute at Cleveland State University. Mr. Russell can be heard on recordings with Albany Records, New World Records, and CRI.

THE SCORE BOARD is a group of New England-based composers serving as BMOP’s vanguard of composer-advocates through volunteerism, direct support and activities, community-building, and curating BMOP’s annual Club Concert series.