



College of Fine Arts

presents a

STUDENT RECITAL

Bryan Curt Kostors, composer

Bronson Foster, conductor

PROGRAM

MIGRATIONS

Bryan Curt Kostors
(b. 1979)

Sculptures (2007)

Jae Ahn-Benton, piano

Bryan Curt Kostors
Jae Ahn-Benton, piano

Small Piano Piece for Carma, No. 1 (2011)

Bryan Curt Kostors

Migrations (2009, World Premiere)
Bird
Man: Worker, Nomad, Pilgrim
Whale

Elizabeth Bedrosian, violin	Brock Norred, bassoon
Jae Ahn-Benton, piano	Jordan Rush, horn
David Chavez, viola	Jeremy Russo, cello
Sammi Ciarlo, violin	Ben Serna-Grey, oboe
Tim Harpster, bass	Tallyn Wesner, clarinet
Chrissy McHugh, flute	

Saturday, November 10, 2012

7:30 p.m.

Dr. Arturo Rando-Grillot Recital Hall
Lee and Thomas Beam Music Center
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

PROGRAM NOTES BY THE COMPOSER:

Sculptures (2007)

This solo piano work was inspired by the balanced stone sculptures of a friend in Washington State, built along the shore of the Columbia River. Musically, I have tried to give narrative to this idea by stacking pitches upon each other in ascending order, and then letting them fall back down after working them into a concrete phrase or motive. The interval of a perfect fifth is presented as a representation of balance, and many phrases work towards or within that interval.

Small Piano Pieces for Carma: No. 1 (2011)

This piano piece was written for my fiancé, Carma Roper, on her birthday, as part of a continuing set of pieces. Time with Carma is a gift, one that I am thankful for every day, and this piece was my way of expressing that thanks with music. Is the piece as beautiful as she is? Not a chance. But I'll keep trying to make it there nonetheless...

Migrations (2009)

Movement one, *Bird*, was inspired by the sight of thousands of snow geese pausing in a field in Washington State during their migratory trip south. The sight of all these birds traveling together was a powerful one, and as they took flight, all at once, it was incredible to watch them continue their journey.

As is the case for each movement, the piano is central to *Bird*. The repeated motif suggests the constant work of a bird in flight while covering thousands of miles. As this piano motif continues, other melodies circle around in the winds and strings.

In the middle of the movement, a new motif is introduced, along with new harmonic material and meter. This central section of the movement was inspired by the dances that some migratory birds perform to impress potential mates. While there is a strong tendency toward a triple meter – which suggests a waltz – the meter continually changes and the resulting sound is a bit off-kilter. As impressive as these dancing birds may try to be, they always seem a bit awkward in the end.

The last third of the movement is a musical representation of those thousands of snow geese all taking flight at once. This scene had a sense of urgency to it, but because of the sheer number of animals acting together, the event seemed to happen almost in slow-motion. The constant raising motif in the ensemble reflects this takeoff, and by the end of the section, all the instruments have come together in formation to take the listener to the next step of the journey.

The second movement, *Man*, concerns itself with different types of travels people make. The first section, *Worker*, was inspired by the relentless back-and-forth of business employees on the trains of Paris, as witnessed while living in the city and writing this piece. This miniature migration to and from work seemed to be as vital to survival as any migration animals make for food or shelter; the urgency of its commencement never waning from one day to the next.

The second section is *Nomad*. Having moved eleven times in the last ten years, perhaps this idea resonated with me, although my experience is nothing like that of true nomadic peoples. I imagined the small families of central Asia, constantly on the move, and the overall feel of this section is simply my attempt to put what I think that must be like into music.

The third section, *Pilgrim*, focuses on religious travels, many made yearly, or at least somewhat regularly, to pilgrimage sites throughout the world. It felt like this type of movement, by certain groups of people, was also made out of necessity, as a migration, to serve a specific purpose. The music in this section reflects some personal ideas on pilgrimage: The shimmering, ambiguous quality of the music at the beginning reflects what I imagine must be a great sense of wonder and excitement for those beginning such a journey. As it develops, however, it becomes more unsettled. I think a religious pilgrimage would begin with the intent of having questions answered, but might very well end up leaving the participant with even more questions in the end. At its conclusion, the lack of closure is a reflection of this idea.

The third and final movement, *Whale*, takes a look at one of the most famous migratory animals of the ocean. Although I have been diving in the past, I have never had the opportunity to witness a whale up close and personal in the water. My ideas of this experience are, admittedly, formed fully from the cinematography of nature documentaries. Regardless, the imagery central to this movement is that of a whale passing. It emerges slowly in the distance, taking shape out of the blue, is astounding in its size and power as it passes, then disappears back into the sea much the same way it came. The movement comes and goes in this fashion – appearing slowly, passing by, and then retreating away.

Migrations, at its core, is about small, repeated musical patterns. Each idea always led me back to this musical representation – snow geese use the relentless movement of wings to travel thousands of miles; humans move from one step to the next; blue whales, with a slow wave of their bodies, travel literally around the globe. These movements are vital to existence, and from departure to destination, each animal relies on the smallest, simplest of gestures, repeated countless times.