

Vāsava (Lord of the Spheres) for brass ensemble was written between December 2008 and January 2009. After a trip to the Asian art museum in San Francisco, I was reminded of my interest in Indian culture and their systems of organization in music. This work largely incorporates the Indian desi-tala system of rhythmic cycles, which are treated relatively strictly throughout the entire work. While visiting the museum and reading Hindu mythology, I became intrigued by the idea of writing a series of character pieces for various instrumentation based on Hindu deities. The title is Sanskrit, and its English translation is "Lord of the Spheres". This name is often used interchangeably with the more commonly known "Indra", the god of thunder, lightning and rain. The title Vāsava is in reference to Indra's position as leader of Vasus, name for a group of Hindu (Vedic) gods. They are considered eight deities attendant on Indra, comprising day, dawn, fire, moon, pole star, sun, water, and wind. This work was commissioned by Takayoshi "Tad" Suzuki and the UNLV Brass Ensemble for a performance in May 2009.

The Gods of Pegāna (A suite from the tone poem for nine musicians; Mov. I-VII, X) is based on a 1905 fantasy/ alternative creation novel of the same title by Irish author Lord Dunsany that proposes: "There are in Pegāna Mung and Sish and Kib (the gods of death, time and life), and the maker of all small gods, who is MANA-YOOD-SUSHAI, who made the gods and hath thereafter rested. And none may pray to MANA-YOOD-SUSHAI but only the gods whom he hath made... Because he was weary after the making of the gods, and because of the drumming of Skarl, did he grow drowsy and fall asleep... But at the last will MANA-YOOD-SUSHAI forget to rest, and will destroy the gods whom he hath made... And there shall be only MANA-YOOD-SUSHAI. But, when at the last the arm of Skarl shall cease to beat his drum, silence shall startle Pegāna like thunder in a cave, and MANA-YOOD-SUSHAI shall cease to rest...." This suite for nine musicians encompasses the first eight of thirty-two chapters, and is the first installment of a larger tone poem for chamber orchestra.

Jason Thorpe Buchanan (b. 1986) is an American composer of contemporary concert music, film, rock and jazz. Currently a master's degree candidate and instructor of composition and music theory at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, he began his study of music theory and composition at age fourteen at the College of San Mateo, CA. Mr. Thorpe Buchanan holds two degrees, in Composition and in Music Technology, with a minor in Film, from San José State University, where he was awarded the Outstanding Graduating Senior award (2008). As an undergraduate he was commissioned by the SJSU Concert Choir, co-founded melosmusic.com and held positions as music supervisor, composer, arranger and sound engineer for films including the Best Feature award winner at the Miami Beach International Animated Film Festival (2009). Jason has studied composition with Virko Baley, Jorge Grossmann, Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon, Pablo Furman, Daniel Wyman, Kevin Puts and Robert Aldridge, as well as conducting with maestro Takayoshi "Tad" Suzuki.

Mr. Thorpe Buchanan has been awarded the Mu Phi Epsilon International Sterling Achievement Award (2008), fellowships by both the Nevada Encounters of New Music festival (2009) and the Brevard Institute of Music festival (2009, 2010), and was announced winner of both the UNLV Cristina Valdés solo piano composition competition (2009) and the Mu Phi Epsilon international composition competition (2009). Additionally, he has been the recipient of several grants and merit scholarships from UNLV, the Brevard Institute of Music, and Mu Phi Epsilon (2009). Jason has participated in masterclasses, seminars and private lessons with composers such as Koray Sazli, Lei Liang, David Crumb, Joel Hoffmann, Shih-Hui Chen, Tom Flaherty, and Augusta Read Thomas. His first work for large ensemble - *A Zarzuela & Other Lost Works* (2007) was premiered and recorded in June 2009 by the Tad Wind Symphony in Tokyo, with a CD released on the Windstream label in Japan. Jason is currently in the final round of consideration for a Fulbright fellowship in Hamburg, and will be attending the Eastman School of Music as a PhD candidate in the Fall of 2010. -- <http://www.melosmusic.com>



College of Fine Arts ~ Department of Music

Presents

JASON THORPE BUCHANAN

A Graduate Composition Recital

Monday, March 8, 2010

8:00pm

UNLV Doc Rando Recital Hall

Beam Music Center

Free Admission

Jason Thorpe Buchanan is a student of both Virko Baley and Jorge Grossmann. This performance is offered in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the Master of Music Degree in Composition.

JASON THORPE BUCHANAN

GRADUATE COMPOSITION RECITAL

~ PROGRAM ~

Kārttikeya (Study No. 1) for solo piano

Anna Kijanowska, piano

Songs of Moonlight & Shadows

Christina Douglas, soprano
Emilee Wong, alto flute
Mert Sermet, violoncello
Ryan Simm, percussion
Anna Kijanowska, piano
Virko Baley, conductor

Vāsava (Lord of the Spheres) for brass ensemble

Allison McSwain, trumpet
Travis Higa, trumpet
Aaron DeLaHuerta, trumpet
Thomas Brecheisen, trumpet
Jenni Kearns, horn
Jordan Rush, horn
Chris Kase, horn
Fred Stone, horn
Rusty Koester, trombone
Noe Otani, trombone
Dustin Stevens, trombone
Saxon Lewis, bass trombone
Emily Lawlor, euphonium
Leanne Stamp, euphonium
Steven Needham, tuba
Corene Peltier, timpani
Daniel Alameda, percussion
Melody Loveless, percussion
Marcus Lewis, conductor

The Gods of Pegana (A suite from the tone poem for nine musicians; Mov. I-VII, X)

Emilee Wong, flute/piccolo
Kanade Oi, clarinet/bass clarinet
K.C. Chai, bassoon
Fred Stone, horn
John Pollock, viola
Mert Sermet, violoncello
Daniel Alameda, percussion
Melody Loveless, percussion
Ryan Simm, percussion
Anna Kijanowska, piano
Virko Baley, conductor

Kārttikeya (Study No. 1) for solo piano was written in December of 2008, and is the first in a series of character pieces for solo piano based on Hindu deities. This work utilizes the Indian desi-tala system of rhythmic cycles to generate rhythmic material. Each of the 120 ancient talas have specific cultural, spiritual and emotional associations and are used for specific events and situations. Kārttikeya is evoked through talas chosen for having characteristics closely associated with his character. Kārttikeya is a Hindu god of war and the eldest son of Shiva and Parvati. He is usually depicted with six faces and twelve arms, born to defeat the *asura* (demon) Taraka and restore order to the universe. In addition to talas chosen with characteristics to evoke the image of Kārttikeya, there are several structural elements that specifically use the number twelve. This work utilizes the 12-tone system, with a total of 12 permutations of the row. After writing the initial sketch with 12 recurring motivic gestures, they were graphed into 12 regions. The sketch was then revised so that without departing from relatively strict serialism, the entrances of these 12 recurring gestures occur symmetrically throughout the work.

Songs of Moonlight Shadows for soprano, alto flute, cello, piano and percussion was written in Fall 2008. These four songs are settings of texts by the Austro-German Expressionist poet, Georg Trakl. During World War I, Trakl served as a medical officer and suffered greatly from depression, which was compounded by his experiences attending to wounded soldiers. Trakl wrote these poems between 1909 and his death in 1914. After his first attempt at suicide, he was hospitalized and although he did seek out help, he was later found deceased, having ended his own life from an overdose of cocaine. For myself, these songs are something of an exploration into a darker psyche, which is exposed by utilizing an ensemble of a somewhat darker timbre as a composite organism.

I. Silence

*Over the forests the moon
Gleams pale, which makes us dream,
The willow by the dark pond
Weeps soundlessly into the night.
A heart is extinguished - and placidly
The mist floods and rises -
Silence, silence!*

II. In the East

*Like the wild organs of winter storms
Glides a people's dark wrath,
The crimson wave of the battle of defoliated stars.
With broken brows and silver arms,
The night beckons to dying soldiers.
In the shadows of the autumnal ash tree,
The spirits of the slain sigh.
Thorny wilderness girds the city.
From bleeding steps the moon
Harries the frightened women.
Wild wolves have broken through the gate.*

III. The Evening

*The Moon shone with so blue a light over the City,
Where a decaying generation lives cold and evil -
A dark future prepared for the pale grandchild.
Its moon devours shadows
Sighing in the empty crystal of the mountain lake.*

IV. Melancholy

*Bluish shadows. O their dark eyes,
that gaze at me gliding past.
Guitar chords gently accompany autumn
In the garden, dissolved in brown lyes.
Death's serious somberness
is prepared by nymph-like hands,
decayed lips suck at red breasts
and in black lyes
The sun-children's moist curls glide.*

Please visit www.jasonthorpebuchanan.com for more information.