

presents

NEXTET

The New Music Ensemble for the 21st Century

Virko Baley, music director and conductor

Tim Hoft, piano

An Evening of Ukrainian and Ukrainian-American Piano Music

PROGRAM

Virko Baley
(b. 1938)

Nocturnal No. 1 ("Mirrors") (1958)

Boris Lyatoshynsky
(1895–1968)

Reflections – Seven Miniatures for piano, Op. 16 (1925)

Maestoso e con fermezza

Velutato assai

Tempestoso

Disperato e lugubre

Come di lontananza

Ironicamente, misurato assai

Con agitazione

Valentin Silvestrov
(b. 1937)

Sonata No. 2 (1975, rev.1999)

INTERMISSION

Valentin Bibik
(1940–2003)

From 34 Preludes and Fugues, op. 16 (1973-78)

Preludes and Fugues Nos. 1, 3, 18, 9, 33, 14

Alexander Shchetynsky
(b. 1960)

Double Reflection - Prelude in memory of D. Shostakovich (2006)

Virko Baley

Nocturnal No. 4 (1971; 1987)

Toccata

Thirteen Interludes

Caccia

Thursday, September 25, 2014

7:30 p.m.

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

PROGRAM NOTES AND BIOGRAPHIES

A pianist of unique versatility, **Timothy Hoft** is in demand as a soloist and chamber musician. In recent years, Hoft has given performances in the concert halls of France, Italy, Czech Republic, England, Scotland, and the U.S., including Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (Washington D.C.), the Phillips Collection (Washington D.C.), the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts (Houston), the Piano Salon at Yamaha Artist Services (New York), and the Smith Center-Cabaret Jazz (Las Vegas). He has performed as a concerto soloist with the Detroit Civic Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestra of St. Peter by the Sea, the Peabody Camerata, the Peabody Wind Ensemble, the UNLV Wind Orchestra, and the Henderson Symphony Orchestra.

An active accompanist and chamber musician, Hoft has collaborated in chamber performances with members of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, and Las Vegas Philharmonic. Hoft frequently performs with virtuoso flutist, Anastasia Petanova, having given performances in numerous venues such as The Phillips Collection, the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts, l'Hotel d'Assezat in Toulouse, France and The New York University in Florence, Italy.

Hoft earned a Bachelor's of Music Degree in piano performance from the University of Michigan, as well as Master's of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts Degrees from the Peabody Conservatory of Music. His primary interests include collaborating with composers and performing unfamiliar repertoire. Current projects include performing and recording the music of Ukrainian composers Boris Lyatoshynsky, Valentin Silvestrov, Valentin Bibik, and Virko Baley.

In 2012, Hoft joined the music faculty at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas as Assistant Professor of Piano and Accompanying. Previous to his appointment at UNLV, he was a visiting assistant professor at SUNY-Fredonia. Timothy Hoft is very grateful for the mentorship of his wonderful teachers-Logan Skelton and Benjamin Pasternack.

BALEY: Nocturnal No. 1. In 1958 I discovered Jean Cocteau's *Orphée* and it changed my whole view of art. Much of what happens in Nocturnal No. 1 is based on mirror reflections. One mirror changes and mutates the image of the other mirror. In other words, although certain principles are exact mirror images (left-right, dark-light, high-low), the two mirrors themselves are peculiarly individualistic. There is a scene in Dryer's wondrous film *Vampyr* in which the shadow of one of the undead refuses to act in concert with its source, or primary image. It follows the action of the body, but in its own fashion, independently and in its own time. In Nocturnal No. 1, I was hoping to do something like that: the reflections are sometimes melodic and sometimes harmonic. The form is that of two long arches, the first ending with the shattering of one of the mirrors. The second arch becomes a sort of a remnant over which various new tropes (brilliant and sudden bursts of *feux d'artifice*) are overlaid on a soft, hazy restatement of the theme. The piece ends with a short phrase that suggests, perhaps, a gust of wind.

LYATOSHYNSKY: Reflections. Boris Lyatoshynsky was born on January 3, 1895 (new style), in Zhytomyr, Ukraine and died in Kyiv on April 15, 1968. In 1913 he began to study jurisprudence at Kiev University, while at the same time studying composition with R. Gliere, first privately, then at the newly opened Kyiv Conservatory, where he later taught (1919-1968, as professor from 1935). From 1922-1925 he was head of the national Association of Contemporary Music that promoted the music of leading 20th century composers. He was also professor of orchestration at the Moscow Conservatory from 1935-37 and 1943-44. In addition, he was president (1939-41) and then a board member of the Ukrainian Composers' Union. After World War II he traveled extensively, often as a member of international competition juries: Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow (1958, 1962), the Belgian Quartet Competition in Liege (1956, 1959, 1962) and the Lysenko Competition in Kyiv (1965, as president). His many awards included two State Prizes (1946, 1952), the Polish prize awarded 'for the strengthening of Russo-Polish friendship' (1963) and, posthumously, the Shevchenko prize (1971). A number of his students achieved national and international recognition, among them V. Silvestrov, L. Hrabovsky, Vitaliy Godziatsky (Godziatsky) and Y. Stankovych. *Reflections* is an example of his fully mature style and stylistically belongs with such other works as the two piano sonatas, trio no. 1, violin sonata and symphony no. 2. The music begins with an intense highly expressionist Intrada (which he reuses over 30 years later as the main theme of his Symphony No. 4). Tense, and with hints of apprehension, the themes unfold gradually, propelled by insistent rhythms and extreme dynamics. His melodies are essentially shy: they are woven out of short phrases, full of romantic ecstasy, and seemingly incomplete. It is the structure of the composition that forces the music to emerge. The effect is achieved by placing the motives on rhythmic and dynamic waves that cajole the music to open up. Stylistically, his primogenitors are Scriabin with a strong swerve from Bergian expressionism.

BIBIK: Preludes and Fugues (selection)

Valentin Savych Bibik (sometimes the name is transliterated as **Valentyn Bibyk**), Ukrainian composer, was born on July 19, 1940 in Kharkiv, Ukraine. In 1966 he graduated from the Kharkiv Conservatory, where he had studied composition under the eminent composer Dmytro L. Klebanov. Even the first decade of his independent work reveals a musician of vivid and mature talent and came into prominence in the mid 1970s. In February of 1994 Valentin Bibik moved with his family to St. Petersburg, Russia, at the invitation of the University of St. Petersburg, where he was head of the Department of Recording Arts. A few years later, he and his family moved to Tel Aviv, Israel and resided there until his death in 2003. Many composers working in the former Soviet Union wrote Preludes and Fugues; a few, such as Dmitri Shostakovich, whose 24 Preludes and Fugues are an agon with J. S. Bach, made it more than just an academic exercise. In my opinion, **Valentin Bibik's** set of 34 Preludes and Fugues (1973-1978) is the other great cycle that attempts to take Bach on with considerable success. Bibik's solutions are sonically more original than Shostakovich's since as composer, Bibik was much more dedicated to exploiting the resources of post-1945 modernism. Lutoslawski's **Seven Preludes and a Fugue** for strings, composed in 1972 may have served as a stylistic model. The cycle has two important quotes: in Prelude No. 11, a theme from Lutoslawski violoncello concerto; Fugue No. 33, played this evening, quotes Shostakovich's Fugue No. 16. Valentin Bibik's art is one that attempts to maximize the coloristic and formal dimensions of each musical gesture being portrayed; it makes use of a wide range of techniques, including massive canons, tone clusters and simultaneous employment of multiple tempi, as exemplified in two of his best known large scale works, Symphony No. 4 (1976) and Symphony No. 7 (1982). The result is a style that exhibits the contrasting of immobility and motion, of quietude and tempestuous outbreaks, of contemplation and activity. The effects are often achieved with the principal of continual variation -- of troping -- which is applied in a slow and inexorable manner that gives his music both weight and a feeling of suspension, as if one were listening in a giant aquarium.

SHCHETYNSKY: Double Reflections. Ukrainian composer Alexandert Shchetynsky (b. 1960) has compositions in many forms ranging from solo instrumental and chamber music to orchestral music, choral pieces, and operas. They have been presented in most European countries and in North America, performed by such internationally acclaimed ensembles as the Moscow opera house *Helikon-Opera*, the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra, the children's choir *Maîtrise de Radio France*, the Arditti String Quartet, the Moscow Contemporary Music Ensemble, Ensemble Wiener Collage, Ensemble Klangforum, Ensemble Continuum (New York), New Juilliard Ensemble, musikFabrik, and the Stockholm Saxophone Quartet, and by artists such as pianist Yvar Mikhashoff, soprano Phyllis Bryn-Julson, and cellist Alexander Rudin, among others. Two CDs of his music have been released in the USA and France. His next CD with choral works was released on NAXOS label in March 2011. Shchetynsky received awards at six international composer's competitions in Austria, France, Luxembourg, Poland, and Switzerland. Among the jury members at these competitions were A. Dutilleux, M. Rostropovich, K. Penderecki, S. Palm, E. Denisov. In 2000, his chamber opera *Annunciation* was awarded the Russian National Theatrical Prize, *Gold Mask*, in the category of Innovation. Inspired by the Soviet musical avant-garde (especially E. Denisov, A. Schnittke, and A. Pärt) and the Second Viennese School, as well as by O. Messiaen and G. Ligeti, he developed his personal post-serial style based on a combination of quasi-serial procedures and special attention to the attractiveness of sound material and to melody as a source of expression. Another fundamental feature of his music is its rhythmic, structural, and formal flexibility that suggests a "self-development" of the initial micro-thematic patterns. Modern spirituality was an impulse for many of his vocal and instrumental compositions and especially his three operas and his choral works. In these newest compositions, he moves towards post-modernistic aesthetics and aims at finding a new meta-style that integrates stylistic elements of various epochs. He does not, however, consider eclecticism a part of his vocabulary. The composer wrote: "The piece reflects my perception of music, personality and life of Dmitry Shostakovich. Being a target of absurd criticism under Stalin regime and later an official showcase of Soviet culture, in his music Shostakovich expressed deep and sincere resistance to any violence and inhumanity. In my piece, two images are confronted: unbalanced brute force and out-of body meditation. In the last section I used the simple tune of 9-year-old Shostakovich that was cited by the author in his late Suite on verses of Michelangelo Buonarroti."

SILVESTROV: Piano Sonata No. 2. Written in 1975, Sonata No. 2 is dedicated to the pianist A. Lubimov who premiered it in Kiev during the 1976 season. The sonata is in one movement, and, although clearly in definite sections, its overall structure is dominated by a variety of triplet patterns and a mysterious chord (g-minor and a-flat minor) that serves as a leit-motif of sorts. The division into sections is as follows: an abridged sonata-allegro followed by a chorale, then a "scherzo", the only violent section, which leads into a transitional section culminating in the finale - a kind of sublimation of what preceded: a quiet and reposeful coda, the mercurial triplets now angelic. The transition consists of a long arioso evoking a *sopilka* (wooden flute) played over a *drymba* (mouth drum). The last few moments bring back a skeleton of the opening in

the form of a question. In this work one can hear Antonin Artaud's words of "...a mind ceaselessly taking its bearings in the maze of its unconscious". The sonata is marvelously conceived in pianistic terms and much is made of the *una corda* (soft) pedal. Its texture is sparse (in terms of number of notes being played simultaneously) but very rich in overtones and full of extraordinary pedal effects: from full, 1/2, 1/3 and vibrato pedal to harmonics. The composer's insistent *una corda* directions gives the sonata a *sotto voce* quality reminiscent of many passages in Schubert (the work as a whole owes much to Schubert's concept of form and lyrical use of the piano); it imparts to the whole work a submerged, dream-like hue. Valentin Silvestrov began as a genuine avant-garde composer, taking many creative risks in the process. This sonata, as many of his more recent compositions, reflects a desire to synthesize some of the contradictory aesthetic positions of the sixties and seventies, many of which he helped develop. As a result, his has become a completely original voice.

BALEY: Nocturnal No. 4 (1971; 1987) This piece is one of a completed series of seven piano pieces bearing the title *Nocturnal*. Basically contemplative in character, they belong to the now rich tradition (or genre) of "night music." The **Toccata** and **Thirteen Interludes** (first and second movements of **Nocturnal No. 4**) were written in 1971, the **Caccia** remaining a sketch of 13 measures. After the opening movement was withdrawn, the middle movement remained by itself as a nocturnal. The *Caccia* was completed in 1987, and the opening *Toccata*, slightly revised was reintroduced. The pianist to whom it is dedicated, Juliana Osinchuk, premiered it in 1987 at Alice Tully Hall in New York. *Nocturnal No. 4* is a work in three parts, delineating the following plan: from cluster to monody to polyphony. The model, to a certain extent, is the Baroque multi-leveled *toccata*. There also was a desire to rescue the *toccata* from the one-dimensional virtuosic profile that has haunted it since Schumann composed his famous opus. The first section, **Toccata**, is a rhythmic incantation by the piano as a digital instrument, full of sound and fury, but also of utilizing a variety of pianistic devices in attempt to capture its radical mood swings. The second section is, **13 Interludes**, is an instrumental realization of the famous Wallace Stevens' poem, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird". This middle section (the longest of the three) is a dramatization of a single monodic line by means of 13 haiku-like phrases. The single line unfolds through 13 different sections, each with its own climax and repose, each an attempt to find the correct inward sensibility -- and each followed by its own resonance into silence. Progression from one section to another depends on some form of pitch-play (and pun): the idea expressed in the first section has to be commented on or developed in some way in the next, or a later, section. Each section is linked in some way (pitch, register, dynamics, rhythm, mood, etc.) to all sections. While the work was being composed certain phrases of Wallace Stevens' "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" assumed musical connotation; the phrases appear at the beginning of each interlude:

- I. "...the eye of the blackbird" (*tenuto*; *repentimento!*)
- II. "...a fear pierced him" (*staccatissimo*)
- III. "...cry out sharply...(an indecipherable cause)" (*lugubre*)
- IV. "I was of three minds/Like a tree" (*cantabile*)
- V. "It was evening all afternoon" (*come di lontananza*)
- VI. "...the edge/Of one of many circles" (*ironicamente*)
- VII. "The blackbird whirled in the autumn wind" (*leggiero e virtuoso; fantasioso*)
- IX. "A man and a woman are one" (*con calore*)
- X. "...the blackbird whistling" (*strepitoso; tutta la forza*)
- XI. "Why do you imagine golden birds?" (*dolce; con alcuna licenza*)
- XII. "I know noble accents/And lucid, inescapable rhythms" (*tempo rubato e malinconico*)
- XIII. "Icicles filled the long window/With barbaric glass" (*quasi campanelle*)

The piece ends with a short **Caccia**, a chase. This *caccia* is built on three lines, related, like siblings, but separate, which follow each other to the end of the piece.

– Notes by Virko Baley, unless otherwise specified.

The next NEXTET concert will be on October 20, 2014.