DA CAPO CHAMBER PLAYERS

in recital

Featuring Works by:

Chinary Ung
Daj Fujikura
Paul Lansky
Olivier Messiaen

March 23, 2010, 6:30pm
UNLV Doc Rando Recital Hall

Beam Music Center
Free Admission
PROGRAM

Da Capo Chamber Players
Curtis Macomber, violin
André Emelianoff, cello
Patricia Spencer, flute
Meighan Stoops, clarinet
Blair McMillen, piano

University of Nevada Las Vegas, March 23, 2010

Child Song (1985)
Ms. Spencer, Mr. Macomber, Mr. Emelianoff, Mr. McMillen

Poison Mushroom (2003)
Ms. Spencer

Odd Moments+ (1999, revised 2009)
Ms. Spencer, Ms. Stoops, Mr. Macomber, Mr. Emelianoff and Mr. McMillen
+intermission+

Quatuor pour la fin du temps (Quartet for the End of Time) (1940)

Olivier Messiaen (1908 - 1992)

I. Liturgie de cristal

II. Vocalise, pour l'ange qui annonce la fin du temps

III. Abîme des oiseaux

IV. Intermède

V. Louange à l'éternité de Jésus

VI. Danse de la fureur pour les sept trompettes

VII. Fouillis d'arcs-en-ciel, pour l'ange qui annonce la fin du temps

VIII. Louange à l'immortalité de Jésus

Mr. Macomber, Ms. Stoops, Mr. Emelianoff and Mr. McMillen

This concert is made possible in part with public funds from the NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS which believes that a great country deserves great art

Chinary Ung has one of the most unusual backgrounds of any contemporary composer. Born in Takeo, Cambodia in 2
1942, he was not exposed to Western classical music until his late teens. His interest led him to be one of the first students at the newly opened music conservatory in Cambodia, where he studied the clarinet. He emigrated to the U.S. in 1964 to further his studies, receiving BM and MM degrees in clarinet and conducting from the Manhattan School of Music. He went on to obtain a DMA degree with distinction from Columbia University where his principal teacher was Chou Wen-chung (also a Peters composer).

Scholars have remarked about Ung’s strong sense of commitment to tradition, ingenuity, techniques and imagination. His music relies on his personality, in his refinement of his ideas expressed in lines, shades, perspective and time factors.

He has received numerous prizes, honors and commissions from such prestigious institutions as the American Academy of Arts and Letters, National Endowment for the Arts, Arizona Commission on the Arts, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Aeolian Chamber Ensemble, and the Guggenheim, Koussevitsky, Ford, Rockefeller and Barlow Foundations. In 1989 he received Grawemeyer and Kennedy Center Friedheim Awards.

Ung’s music has been performed by numerous chamber ensembles including the New York New Music Ensemble and the Vermeer String Quartet, and his orchestral work INNER VOICES has been performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra, the American Composers Orchestra and the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, among others. His music has been recorded on the CRI, New World, Sony and London labels, and he has also annotated and featured his Cambodian xylophone (roneat-ek) playing on Folkways and Khmer Studies Institute labels.

Ung has taught at the University of Pennsylvania, Arizona State University in Tempe, Khmer Studies Institute, Northern Illinois University, and is currently Professor of Composition at the University of California, San Diego.

**Child Song (1985)** was originally written for alto flute, viola, cello and harp in 1985, and was commissioned as a birthday gift for the celebration of Jerome Apfel’s 56th birthday in Philadelphia. The work was premiered by members of the Concerto Soloists of Philadelphia, with Chinary Ung’s wife, Susan, playing viola, who was also pregnant with their first child at the time. The version for flute, violin, violoncello, and piano was commissioned by the Chicago Ensemble and funded by the NiA Consortium Program. Child Song was the first piece Chinary Ung composed after a long hiatus from 1974-1985, with the exception of Khse Buon (1980) for solo cello/viola. During that period, for the most part, Chinary Ung was preoccupied with catastrophic events in Cambodia. He taught himself to play the Roneat-Ek, the Cambodian Xylophone of the Pinpeat tradition, and was quite active performing. This was a time when many Cambodian artists and refugees were concerned about preserving this music, especially after the loss of so many of their master artists during the holocaust there. It could be said that of any of the works Ung has written, Child Song most reflects certain aspects and mannerisms of his native musical elements including the Roneat-Ek and the pinpeat tradition.

Although Khse Buon was the first piece to do this, Child Song was also the reflection of Ung’s interest in the music of other cultures, aside from his native culture. The work utilizes various modes from different parts of Asia, although at times, these are mingled with various Western contemporary idioms, and clusters of derivative materials are introduced simultaneously. Ung has also paraphrased a Cambodian children’s song, which is heard in the middle section. The song has an imaginative and fanciful text and is rhythmical in nature. A portion of the text is as follows:

Pour the coconut juice
the rooster’s tail
wears the crocodile coat
the crocodile rides the horse
and, I ride the elephant
(translation by Chinary/Susan Ung)

Dai Fujikura was born in Osaka, Japan in 1977. When he was fifteen he moved to Europe, and studied at Trinity College of Music with Daryl Runswick. He has also studied at the Royal College of Music with Edwin Roxburgh, and is currently studying at King’s College in London with George Benjamin. He has been the recipient of many international awards and prizes, including the Internationaler Wiener Composition Prize (Claudio Abate Composition Award), 2nd Prize in the Toru Takemitsu Awards of 2003, the Kathryn Thomas International Composers’ Competition for Flute with "Ophelia" for solo flute, the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival Young Composers' Award 1998, and the Sercoki International Composers’ Competition. He is also a winner in the 21st Century Young Composers’ Project 2004, a call-for-scores held by the International Contemporary Ensemble. Poison Mushroom was given its American premiere by that ensemble in 2004. Upcoming projects include a commission from the Lucerne Academy for an orchestral work to be premiered by the Lucerne Festival Orchestra in 2005 conducted by Pierre Boulez.
Poison Mushroom (2003) for flute and electronic sounds

About Poison Mushroom, he writes:

"It is all the fault of War..." said by the old woman to Richard Gere at the climactic point of the film "Rhapsody in August".

When I was born, the Japanese economy was at its zenith, the city I grew up in was peaceful. The post war regeneration of Japan had been a success. So when I visited Hiroshima on a school trip, it was hard to imagine something had happened to this beautiful city.

When I went to Junior High I remember that we all had to come to school on the 6th of August. The first time I had to do this I thought it was very strange. In the middle of the summer holidays, I had to go to school. Normally people are going away to see their grandparents, some rich families were going on holiday abroad.

On the 6th of August, we all sat in the big sports hall at school, absolutely boiling, bathed in sweat. This is the day atomic bomb was dropped in Hiroshima in my grandparents' time. So we would mark the anniversary by attending school, watching films about the war atomic bomb, also looking at the photos of the people who had suffered, and were still suffering the after effects of the atomic bomb. Some of the photos were so strong and violent that even as a small child, I remembered them well.

One year I remember this talk: a survivor told us that everyone was jumping into the river after the bomb was dropped. Because of the searing heat, everybody wanted to be doused. They didn't know the water in the river was boiling.

When I was writing this piece, all the visions which I have seen about Hiroshima/Nagasaki/atomic bomb related materials were in my head.

It is our duty to remember.

Dai Fujikura
(Edited by Harry Ross)

Paul Lansky (b. 1944) is one of the pioneers of computer music. Most of his electronic works are available on recording, largely on Bridge Records and have been played and broadcast widely. In 2002 he was the recipient of a lifetime achievement award from SEAMUS (the Society for Electroacoustic Music in the United States) and in 2000 he was the subject of a documentary made for the European television ARTE network, My Cinema for the Ears, directed by Uli Aumueller and now available on DVD. A number of dance companies have choreographed his works, including Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane, Alvin Ailey II, and the Eliot Feld and New York City Ballets.

In recent years he has been increasingly turning his attention to instrumental music. Recent works include Ricercare Plus for string quartet, written for the Brentano Quartet, With the Grain, a guitar concerto written for David Starobin, Enudes and Parodies (horn violin and piano) for Bill Purvis (winner of the 2005 International Horn Society competition) and Threads, written for S6 Percussion. He has recently been writing orchestral music and is currently composer in residence with the Alabama Symphony. He is now completing Imaginary Islands, commissioned, and to be premiered by that group in May 2010.

Odd Moments+ (1999, revised 2009)

Odd Moments, an exuberant and busy job for five players, was written for the Da Capo Chamber Players and is dedicated to my friend and teacher, George Perle. I have been concerned with George's opinion since 1961; when I was a freshman in his 1st year harmony class, and he was really, really hard to please (but I got an A). Later on, as his composition student, as his collaborator, and finally as his friend and colleague, I have always had my heart in his mouth as he listened to my new pieces. (I know him so well that I can tell what he thinks by the way he clears his throat.) Although I long ago reached a stage where I can confidently evaluate my own work, I still have deep respect for his opinions, and learn a lot from them. So, George, I hope you like it, and please forgive the blatant parallel fifths...

---Paul Lansky
Quatuor pour la fin du temps

Then I saw a mighty angel coming down from Heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. And he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the land, and standing on sea and land, he lifted up his right hand to Heaven and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, saying "TIME IS AT AN END"; but in the day of the trumpet call of the seventh angel, the mystery of God shall by fulfilled.

(Apocalypse of St. John, X 1-17)

Conceived and written during my imprisonment, the Quartet for the End of Time had its first performance in Stalag VIII-A, January 15, 1941. This took place at Gorlitz, in Silesia, during an unusually cold spell. The four performers played on damaged instruments: Etienne Pasquier's cello had only three strings. The keys on my piano would fall straight down and not spring back.

While I was a prisoner, the lack of food gave me colored dreams; I was the Angel's rainbow and strange swirlings of color.

As a musician I had worked with rhythm. Essentially, rhythm is change and division. To study change and division is to study Time. Time—measured, relative, physiological and psychological—is divided in a thousand ways, of which the most immediate for us is the perpetual transition of the future into the past. In eternity these things do not exist.

In the name of the Apocalypse, my work has been criticized for its calm and its concern with detail. My detractors forget that Apocalypse contains not only monsters and cataclysms, but also moments of silent adoration and marvelous visions of peace.

I. Crystalline Liturgy
Towards three or four in the morning, a solitary bird warbles, perhaps a blackbird or a nightingale, surrounded by a haze of sound, by a halo of harmony high up in the trees. Transfer that to a religious plane: you will have the harmonious silence of Heaven. The piano provides a rhythmic ostinato (juxtaposition of three Hindu rhythms). The clarinet unfurls the song of the bird.

II. Vocalise, for the Angel who Announces the End of Time
The first part and coda evoke the strength of that powerful angel. The background: the impalpable harmonies of Heaven. Gentle, multi-colored cascades of chords envelop the almost plainchant-like melody of violin and cello.

III. The Abyss of the Birds
Clarinet alone. The Abyss: it is Time, with its sadness, its lassitude. The birds serve as a contrast: they symbolize our desire for light, for stars, for rainbows and jubilant vocalises! The bird calls are written in the fantastic and gay style of the blackbird.

IV. Interlude
A little scherzo, more extroverted in character, but connected to the other movements by various melodic recalls.

V. Praise to the Eternity of Jesus
Here Jesus is considered as the Word. A broad phrase, extremely slow, in the cello, magnifies with love and reverence the eternity of the powerful and sweet Word.

VI. Dance of Fury, for the Seven Trumpets
The four instruments in unison evoke reverberations of the gongs and trumpets of the Apocalypse. Music of stone, formidable granite sonority.

VII. Tangle of Rainbows, for the Angel who Announces the End of Time
Piece dedicated to the Angel, and above all to the Rainbow which envelops him (symbol of peace, of wisdom and of every luminous and sonorous vibration. In my colored dreams, I underwent a whirling intermingling of sounds and color.

VIII. Praise to the Immortality of Jesus
A broad solo for the violin, a counterpart to the cello solo. Why this second hymn of praise? It is the second aspect of Jesus, Jesus the Man, the Word made flesh. It is all love. Its majesty builds to an intense climax, it is the ascent of man to his God, of the child of God to his Father, of the sanctified creature to Paradise.

Olivier Messiaen

(translation from the French by Helen Baker)
Da Capo Chamber Players

"Superb...gripping"

--The New York Times

Since 1970, the Naumburg Award-winning, internationally acclaimed Da Capo Chamber Players has built a reputation on working closely with composers, representing an enormous spectrum of compositional styles. Da Capo's five distinguished artists bring years of creative insight, involvement and artistic leadership to performances of today's repertoire, including well over 100 works written especially for the group.

Da Capo searches for the best new compositions and gives them a unique and dedicated attention, resulting in acclaimed performances consistent with the highest musical standards found in performances of traditional repertoire. Further, the group is committed to bringing American music to a variety of cultures, and conversely, presenting music from all over the world to American audiences.

From Da Capo's beginning, with founding member and pianist Joan Tower, interaction with composers has been part of its identity. Recent concerts have included music of Richard Teitelbaum, Benjamin Broening, Anna Clyne, Lydia Ayers, Judith Shatin, Hans Tutschku, Caroline Mallonée, Daniel Wohl, Raymond Lustig, Missy Mazzoli, David Laganella, Judd Greenstein, Paul Salerni, Louis Karchin, Mario Davidovsky, Chinary Ung, Sebastian Currier and Christopher Rouse. In January 2009, the group celebrated the 100th birthday of Elliott Carter with a performance of his Tempo e tempi, and on the same concert, a 100th birthday salute to Olivier Messiaen with his Quatuor pour la fin du temps. The 2010-2011 season, marking the group's 40th anniversary, will include world premieres by George Tsontakis and Keith Fitch, the New York premiere of Shirish Korde's chamber opera, Bandit Queen.

Da Capo's members are André Emelianoff (cello), Curtis Macomber (violin), Blair McMillen (piano), Patricia Spencer (flute), and Meighan Stoops (clarinet). Da Capo has twice been featured at Moscow Autumn and St. Petersburg Sound Ways festivals, combining American works with seven by Russian composers (six written for Da Capo) and a signature work, Schoenberg's Pierrot Lunaire. For more than two decades, the group has been in residence at Bard College, and since 2006 has been Ensemble in Residence with the composition program of the Bard College Conservatory of Music.

Biographies of Members of Da Capo Chamber Players

Cellist André Emelianoff has toured throughout North America, Japan, Russia, Austria, and England, and as an American Ambassador for the Arts, sponsored by the United States Information Agency, given recitals throughout central Asia and the Mediterranean. Cellist with the Da Capo Chamber Players since 1976, he has also been involved with the Music Today Ensemble. Winner of a 1985 NEA Solo Recitalist Award, he has commissioned works by Aaron Kernis, Joan Tower, George Perle, Richard Wernick, Shulamit Ran, Stephen Jaffe, and Gerald Levinson. He has appeared as a guest artist with the Houston Da Camera, New Jersey Chamber Music Society, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and the Albany Symphony, and participated in the Marlboro, Chamber Music West, and Piccolo Spoleto Festivals. Mr. Emelianoff is on the faculty of the Juilliard School, as well as the Round Top (Texas) Festival and the Perlman Music Program. He has recorded for CRI, Opus One, New World Records, and Pro Arte. In 1997, Mr. Emelianoff made his Salzburg Festival debut in chamber music of Shostakovich.

Praised by The New York Times for his "thrilling virtuosity," violinist Curtis Macomber is recognized as one of the most versatile musicians before the public today, equally at home playing Bach or Babbitt. He has performed in hundreds of premieres of works by Elliott Carter, Mario Davidovsky, George Perle, Charles Wuorinen, and Steven Mackey, among others. From 1982-93, he toured the United States and abroad as a member of the New World String Quartet. Macomber is violinist for the Da Capo Chamber Players, a founding member of the Apollo Trio and violinist for Speculum Musicae. His most recent recordings include Casting Ecstatic (CRI), the complete Grieg Violin Sonatas on Arabesque, and music of Steve Mackey (Interior Design) and the complete Brahms Sonatas, both for Bridge. Macomber is a member of the chamber music faculty of the Juilliard School, where he earned B.M., M.M., and D.M.A. degrees as a student of Joseph Fuchs. He is also on the violin faculty of the Manhattan School of Music and has taught at the Tanglewood, Taos and Yellow Barn Music Festivals.
Blair McMillen has established himself as one of the most sought-after and versatile pianists today. Comfortable as both performer and improviser, his solo repertoire runs the gamut, from late-medieval keyboard manuscripts to challenging scores from the 21st century. He has performed at Carnegie Hall, Miller Theatre, (Le) Poisson Rouge, Aspen Music Festival, Caramoor, Bard Summerscape, CalArts, the Institute for Advanced Study (Princeton), and Bargemusic, and as soloist with the American Symphony Orchestra and the Albany Symphony. His 2004 recording, Soundings, received wide critical acclaim, and more recent solo projects have included Powerhouse Pianists (Lumiere), The Concert Music of Fred Hersch (Naxos), and Multiplicities: Born in '38 (Centaur).

Dedicated to groundbreaking projects, McMillen is intensely committed to commissioning and performing the music of today. In addition to Da Capo, he plays regularly with the American Modern Ensemble, the downtown NYC-based Avian Orchestra, the St. Luke’s Chamber Ensemble, and the Locrian Chamber Players, among others. An active educator, a self-taught jazz pianist, and a fledgling electric guitar novice, McMillen serves on the piano and chamber music faculty at Bard College.

Historic career peaks for flutist Patricia Spencer include premieres of Elliott Carter’s Enchanted Preludes, Karlheinz Stockhausen’s Kathinkas Gesang (US premiere), Harvey Sollberger’s Riding the Wind, and Shulamit Ran’s concerto, Voices. In August 2009 she gave the world premiere of Shirish Korde’s Lalit, written for her and renowned tabla player Samir Chatterjee. Other career highlights include the Boulez Sonatine for the Bard Music Festival, Joan Tower’s Flute Concerto for the National Flute Association Convention in Nashville, and a guest appearance with the Avalon String Quartet in Mario Davidovsky’s Quartetto for the Washington Square Music Society. Recent New York Times reviews have cited her work in Tania León’s Alma, and her “passionate, warm-blooded performance” of the Berio Sequenza.

Spencer has commissioned dozens of pieces, including Thea Musgrave’s now-classic Narcissus and Judith Shatin’s Kairos (Neuma Records). Ms. Spencer has received awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, and the Aaron Copland Fund for Music. She teaches flute and chamber music at Bard College and Hofstra University.

Clarinetist Meighan Stoops has distinguished herself in the classical and new-music realms as a solo, chamber, and orchestral performer. Recent highlights include: Ligeti’s Chamber Concerto with Pierre-Laurent Aimard and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, the premiere of Gunther Schuller’s Three Little Expressions (Homage to Brahms), and a Switzerland tour with the Glass Farm Ensemble. Recent New York Times reviews praised her “vibrant, richly shaded” solo performance of Mario Davidovsky’s Synchronisms No. 12, her “star turn” in Joan Tower’s Wings, and her “impressive agility and a supple sound” in Schuller’s Three Little Expressions.

She has recorded for Bridge, CRI, Naxos, Albany, and Chesky Records, including music for some of the country’s most cutting-edge films. A founding member of the American Modern Ensemble and Walden School Players, Stoops has also appeared with the Gotham Sinfonietta, Wet Ink, Talea Ensemble and Washington Square Chamber Music Society. Ms.’ Stoops teaches clarinet and piano privately and at the Rudolf Steiner School in New York City. She holds degrees from Northwestern and Yale, and is pursuing her doctorate at SUNY Stony Brook.