

Stanford Continuing Studies

Presents

EARTH TONES:
A FUSION OF JAZZ AND CLASSICAL MUSIC

Lenny Carlson, Composer

Frederick Harris, Pianist

January 29, 2010 7:30 p.m.

Campbell Hall, Braun Music Center

PROGRAM

Sonata #14 in C# Minor, "Moonlight", Opus 27 #2

by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827)

Prelude #1 in B Flat, "Danseuses des Delphes"

by Claude Debussy (1862 – 1918)

"Day Dream"

"Take the A Train"

Music by Billy Strayhorn (1915 – 1967)

with Lenny Carlson, guitar

INTERMISSION

"An Accumulation of Virtues"

"The Drill"

"Elena Goes to Middle School"

by Lenny Carlson

Earth Tones

Movement #1: "Stretch"

Movement #2: "Waltz on the Edge"

Movement #3: "The Poet"

Movement #4: "Odetta"

Movement #5: "Shop Talk"

Movement #6: "Knuckles"

A question and answer period will follow the concert

NOTES ON THE MUSIC

Beethoven: Sonata #14 in C Sharp Minor. Completed in 1801. The name “Moonlight” was the creation of music critic Ludwig Rellstab. In three movements, the Sonata follows a structural experimentation of Beethoven’s. He chose to make the final movement the most significant structurally by utilizing strict Sonata Allegro form: Exposition, Development, Recapitulation in it. (In the 18th Century, the *Allegro* was typically the first movement.) Beethoven marks the first movement “Quasi una fantasia”, utilizing an elusive, altered Sonata Allegro form.

Debussy: Prelude #1 in B Flat. The first from the first set of twelve preludes comprising Book I, composed in 1909-1910. The piece summarizes the “French sound” of parallel melodic and harmonic linear crafting. It also foreshadows the innovations of “Jazz harmony” to come, by such composers as James P. Johnson, Duke Ellington, George Gershwin ... and even Lenny Carlson! Debussy marks the tempo *Lent et grave*, and constructs melodic lines, layers and textures through harmonic progressions, predominantly organized in a homorhythmic, chorale-like procession throughout. The effect is very atmospheric. FH

Strayhorn: “Day Dream” and “Take the A Train”. Pianist, composer and arranger Billy Strayhorn was closely associated with Duke Ellington and his organization from 1939 until Strayhorn’s untimely death in 1967. Although little known to the general public and very much in Duke’s shadow, Strayhorn is loved and revered by the musicians who have known and performed his work over the decades. He was considered Duke’s alter-ego, but he was also a wide-ranging influence on modern jazz in his own right. These two are among his most characteristic compositions. “Day Dream” (1940) is a beautiful ballad with impressionistic harmonies. “A Train” (© 1941 but composed earlier) is a swing classic and was Ellington’s theme from that date forward.

“An Accumulation of Virtues”. A 24-bar blues in 3/4, and the main theme of the first of *Three Episodes for Quintet* (2008). When Ellington was once asked about the bags under his eyes, he replied, “They aren’t bags; they’re an accumulation of virtues.”

“The Drill” (2006). A musical description of an event from my childhood, in which I drilled 52 holes in the floor of a room in our family house. It begins as a simple rag.

“Elena Goes to Middle School” (2001). Written for my older daughter, now 19, when she was entering 6th grade. An accomplished vocalist, she played trumpet at the time, and though very talented, she was too shy to ever perform it.

Earth Tones (2009) was composed for Frederick Harris. **Movement #1: “Stretch”** is a modern theme and variations based on the structure of the 12-bar blues. **Movement #2: “Waltz on the Edge”** is a pleasant melody that accelerates, perhaps too much. **Movement #3: “The Poet”** was written for my wife, Lisa Rosenberg. It’s a Brazilian-flavored theme in 5/4 meter. **Movement #4: “Odetta”** is a Classic Blues of the type sung by Bessie Smith, in tribute to the folk singer Odetta Holmes (1930 – 2008), a major

figure in the Civil Rights Movement. **Movement #5: “Shop Talk”** is an avant-garde theme based on the sounds of conversation. The second section has a latin flavor and explores some of the musical ideas stated earlier. **Movement #6: “Knuckles”** is a mix of Ragtime, Tango, Stride and a two-part invention, in tribute to Scott Joplin, Jelly Roll Morton, James P. Johnson and John S. Bach. LC

The Artists

Frederick Harris began piano studies at age 4, and holds both a B.M. and an M.M. in Piano Performance from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. He has earned a reputation as both a superb soloist and a sympathetic accompanist. Over his 20-year career he has given numerous classical recitals and has performed throughout the United States and Europe with many great names in the jazz world, including Dizzy Gillespie, Billy Higgins, Barbara Morrison, Regina Carter and Chico Freeman. Mr. Harris is Music Director of St. John Coltrane African Orthodox Church, and is on the faculty of the Stanford Jazz Workshop. He also teaches private students at his home studio in San Francisco.

Lenny Carlson has taught in the Music Department at City College of San Francisco since 1997. He holds an M.A.T. in Music from Portland State University. He has been active professionally since the 1970s as a composer and guitarist, and earned a 1985 Grammy nomination for Best Jazz Instrumental Composition. In 2008, he released two CDs of original music: *Seat of the Pants*, featuring drummer Eddie Marshall, pianist Rebeca Mauleon and classical bassist Barry Green, and *Echolocation: Six Movements for String Quartet*. His most recent chamber work, *Three Episodes for Quintet*, was presented in lecture/demonstration and concert at CCSF in February, 2009. He is currently composing an extended work for Jeff Sanford’s Cartoon Jazz Orchestra.

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