

*GUEST ARTIST AND  
FACULTY RECITAL*

*THE CLINTON/NARBONI DUO*

*MARK CLINTON, piano*

*NICOLE NARBONI, piano*

*RICHARD BROWN, percussion*

*DOUG SMITH, percussion*

*and students of the  
The Shepherd School of Music*

*Thursday, September 23, 1999*

*8:00 p.m.*

*Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall*

RICE UNIVERSITY

the  
Shepherd  
School  
of Music

## PROGRAM

**Portals** (1982/1997)

Randall Snyder  
(b. 1944)

**Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion** (1937)

Béla Bartók  
(1881-1945)

*Assai lento*

*Lento, ma non troppo*

*Allegro non troppo*

*The Clinton/Narboni Duo*  
*Richard Brown, percussion*  
*Doug Smith, percussion*

## INTERMISSION

**Hommage à Rameau** (1964)

Germaine Tailleferre  
(1892-1983)

*(partita pour deux pianos et percussion)*

*Lent – Allegro brioso*

*Andante cantabile*

*Allegro spiritoso*

*The Clinton/Narboni Duo*    *John Andress, percussion*  
*Richard Brown, percussion*    *Karen Slotter, percussion*  
*Doug Smith, percussion*    *Adam Green, percussion*

**Concerto for Two Pianos, Percussion,  
and Winds** (1947)

Paul Bowles  
(b. 1910)

*Allegro*

*Presto*

*Andante*

*Galop*

*The Clinton/Narboni Duo*  
*Richard Brown, percussion*    *Karen Slotter, percussion*  
*Doug Smith, percussion*    *Jamie Kent, trumpet*  
*Rochelle Oddo, clarinet and bass clarinet*  
*Monica Fosnaugh, oboe and English horn*

*All of the works for this program have been recorded  
by The Clinton/Narboni Duo and members of the Shepherd  
School Percussion Ensemble for École Percussion (CD 000101)*



## PROGRAM NOTES

The musical encounter between two pianos and percussion is a uniquely modern concept. Although the piano is technically a percussion instrument (its strings being "struck" by felt-covered hammers), it was viewed by composers primarily as a melodic instrument until the twentieth century. Around the turn of the century, composers like Debussy, Stravinsky, and Bartók began to extend the expressive potential of the piano by exploring a wide variety of new sonorities. Attack, timbre, and rhythm were elevated to a level of importance previously reserved for melody and harmony. In his monumental **Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion**, Béla Bartók became the first composer to combine this new approach to piano writing with the timbral and rhythmic richness of percussion instruments. Although all of the works on this program take the combination of two pianos and percussion as their point of departure, they represent four distinct compositional approaches to this extraordinary medium.

**Portals** is cast in eight well-defined sections that alternate stratified toccata-like tremolando passages embedded in fixed registers with slower music leading to *senza misura* antiphonies. The static nature of the piece is offset by an internal evolution in which the music grows both faster and slower, with each of the toccata sections increasing in speed until unmeasured tremolandi are reached, and with the free *senza misura* music becoming more dominant in the lengthening slow sections. The piece derives its title from the double and triple octave gateways that begin each of the slow sections. Virtually all of the pitch material is derived from an eight-note source mode (B, C-sharp, F-sharp, G-sharp, B-flat, C, E-flat, F), with each note serving at some point as a pitch center. All of the toccata sections are based on the untransposed mode, and each portal begins a transposed version originating from one of the original pitches. **Portals** was originally composed in 1982 as **Sonata for Two Pianos** in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Igor Stravinsky. The 1997 version for two pianos and percussion was created for the Clinton/Narboni Duo.

— Note on **Portals** by the composer

Bartók's **Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion** (1937) dates from an extremely productive time in the composer's life which included the **Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celeste** (1936), **Violin Concerto No. 2** (1938), **Divertimento for Strings** (1939), and **String Quartet No. 6** (1939). The work was premiered in Basel, Switzerland, on January 16, 1938, with Bartók and his wife Ditta Pásztory at the pianos. After the performance, Bartók remarked that "the whole thing sounds quite unusual, but the Basel people like it anyway, and it had a tremendous success." One of the masterpieces of the twentieth-century piano repertoire, the work requires the utmost precision between the two pianos and percussion and demands a pianistic virtuosity that is orchestral in nature. The Sonata is written in the traditional three-movement structure. An extended first movement begins with a foreboding slow introduction, which erupts into the fleeting brilliance of C major triads. The movement is constructed from three contrasting themes (rhythmic, melodic, and contrapuntal) which appear episodically throughout. The elegiac second movement begins with a funereal melody that melts into a middle section dominated by a nervous quintuplet figure. The opening melody returns in the second piano amid a haze of figurations from the first piano, before once again dissolving into the quintuplet figure at the end of the



movement. The finale is a predominantly diatonic rondo with a folk-inspired main theme. With its wit and humor, the high-spirited rondo brings this monumental work to a close on an unadulterated C major triad.

Germaine Tailleferre, despite a long and productive career, is often considered a historical footnote as the only female member of the twentieth-century French composers called "Les Six." While studying at the Paris Conservatory, Tailleferre was awarded the highest prizes in counterpoint, solfège, and accompanying — surpassing such famous contemporaries as Darius Milhaud, Arthur Honegger, and Georges Auric. Tailleferre's musical style was greatly influenced by the neo-classicism of Igor Stravinsky as well as the harmonic language of Maurice Ravel and Gabriel Fauré. It is unmistakably French, distinguished by its spontaneity, innocence, freshness, and sophistication. Throughout her life, Tailleferre often professed an affinity for the works of the 18th-century clavecinistes, and the *Hommage à Rameau* for two pianos and percussion (dedicated to Georges Auric) was written in 1964 to commemorate the bicentennial of the death of the French composer Jean-Phillipe Rameau. The concise, three-movement work begins with a somber introduction which quickly accelerates into the animated Allegro brioso. Light, clearly articulated piano writing imitates the harpsichord and also serves to sustain a relentless rhythmic drive throughout the movement. Thematic material is shared by the pianos, xylophone, and celesta, while the rest of the percussion ensemble provides melodic coloring and rhythmic punctuation. The slow movement is a sarabande that weaves its pensive melody through a series of lush harmonizations. The spirited finale is a perpetuum mobile in which the pianos provide the rhythmic drive. In the midst of this whirlwind activity, the composer indulges in a bit of understated humor with two fleeting references to ragtime syncopations. The movement ends as the perpetual motion vanishes into thin air.

The *Concerto for Two Pianos, Winds, and Percussion* was commissioned in 1947 by the famed American duo team of Arthur Gold and Robert Fizdale. It was first performed on their Town Hall (New York) concert on November 14, 1948, with an ensemble conducted by Lukas Foss. Despite its title, the work is actually a septet for clarinet (bass clarinet), oboe (English horn), trumpet, two pianos, and two percussionists. The composer most likely chose the title concerto because of the richness of the piano writing and the fact that the winds and piano tend to play in a concertante relationship. Perhaps the most outstanding characteristic of this work is its eclecticism. The first movement begins with writing for the pianos and percussion that evokes the sounds of gamelan music. At the same time, a blues inflected melody is heard in the winds. The asymmetrical meter throughout the movement creates a flexible environment which allows the composer to change moods with great rapidity. The brilliant scherzo is scored only for pianos and percussion. An agitated opening theme quickly tumbles into a jazzy middle section, which just as quickly reverts to the opening theme and finally evaporates into nothingness. The wind soloists open the third movement with a return to a blues influenced melody. When the rest of the ensemble joins in, a languorous melody transports the listener to faraway places. In the finale, the composer once again fuses a variety of musical styles into a rollicking musical pastiche. Musical suggestions from Harlem, the music halls of Paris, and Middle Eastern belly dancers combine to bring this remarkable work to a rousing finish.

— Notes by Mark Clinton



## BIOGRAPHIES

With the 1997 release of their debut compact disc, MARK CLINTON and NICOLE NARBONI have established themselves as one of the world's leading piano duos. The successful recording, **Works for Two Pianos and Piano Four-Hands by Germaine Tailleferre** (Élan #82278), received high praise from Gramophone magazine, which declared the Clinton/Narboni duo "... absolutely first-rate, with an immensely engaging spirit, delicacy, variety of touch and subtle shadings." Gramophone described the recording as "an irresistibly joyous disc," and offered it as an "Editor's Choice" selection in November 1997.

Their second compact disc, titled **Works for Two Pianos and Orchestra by Tailleferre, Poulenc, and Snyder** (Élan #82298) was released in October 1998 and has been similarly well received. BBC Music magazine gave it a five-star rating for the world premiere recording of Tailleferre's **Concerto Grosso for Two Pianos and Orchestra**. Their third recording, **Works for Two Pianos and Percussion by Tailleferre, Bartók, Bowles, and Snyder**, was released in June 1999.

Clinton and Narboni's performances in such cities as Houston, New York, Washington, D.C., Chicago, San Antonio, and Paris have also garnered stellar reviews. The duo has been featured on many radio and television broadcasts, including National Public Radio's Performance Today. The San Antonio Express-News characterized a recent Clinton/Narboni performance as "polished, fluent [and] brimming with color and nuance."

The successful duo team captured top prizes in the 1994 ProPiano New York Recital Series, the 1995 NFMC Ellis Competition for Duo Pianists, and the 1996 Concorso Internazionale "Carlo Soliva" in Casale Monferrato, Italy. They also received the Alvin Perlman Prize at the Fifth Murray Dranoff International Two-Piano Competition for their performance of **Six Variations for Two Pianos** by Ned Rorem.

Clinton and Narboni maintain an active performance schedule as recitalists and guest soloists with orchestra. Their 1999 concert calendar includes performances in Prague (Czech Republic), Montreal, Houston, Washington, D.C., and Nice (France).

Mark Clinton received his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in 1989 and Nicole Narboni received her Master of Music degree in 1988, both from The Shepherd School of Music as students of John Perry. Since August 1995, they both have held faculty positions at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln.

Mark Clinton and Nicole Narboni are Steinway artists.

RICHARD BROWN, a native of Philadelphia, earned his Bachelor of Music degree from Temple University, Philadelphia, where he studied with Charles Owen, and his Master of Music degree from Catholic University, Washington, D.C. He is Associate Professor of Percussion at The Shepherd School of Music, as well as Chairman of the Winds, Brass, Percussion, and Harp Department. He started his career in 1968 playing percussion with the Chamber Symphony of Philadelphia. He was in the United States Army Band in Washington, D.C., and then moved to Houston to play with the Houston Symphony, a position he held for eight years. While in Houston, he established the Percussion Department at the Shepherd School.

*Richard Brown left the Houston Symphony to establish a free-lance career in New York City. He worked in the recording studios playing for film scores, records, and radio and T.V. jingles, played several Broadway shows, including the 1980 revival of Leonard Bernstein's **West Side Story**, and worked with the Metropolitan Opera, The Orchestra of St. Luke's and the New York Philharmonic. He travelled around the world with Ann Margret as percussionist in all her live stage performances. In the summer, he is Principal Percussionist of the Grand Teton Music Festival Orchestra in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, as well as the Personnel Manager for that Orchestra. In 1985, Mr. Brown accepted the position of full-time professor of percussion at the Shepherd School and returned to Houston where, in addition to his teaching duties, he is the Principal Percussionist with the Houston Grand Opera Orchestra and plays regularly with the Houston Symphony.*

*DOUG SMITH earned a Bachelor's degree from Central Missouri State University and a Master's degree from The Shepherd School of Music. Mr. Smith was winner of the Aspen Solo Percussion Competition and second place winner of the Music Teachers National Association Percussion Competition. He has toured throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe with groups including the International Youth Orchestra, American Wind Symphony Orchestra, and the Madison Scouts Drum and Bugle Corps. He is currently teaching at the St. Louis Symphony Music School.*

*The Shepherd School of Music has one the country's most active and productive percussion studios. Members of the studio comprise the SHEPHERD SCHOOL PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE, and they are carefully selected from both graduate and undergraduate applicants to work under the full-time guidance of its director, Richard Brown. Former students are presently performing with important symphony orchestras and have won places in numerous major summer festivals throughout the U.S.*



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