



presents works by

Arthur Gottschalk

Earl Kim

Robert Sirota

and Chen Yi

Tuesday, April 4, 2000

8:00 p.m.

Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY

the
Shepherd
School
of Music

PROGRAM

Qi (1997)

Chen Yi
(b. 1953)

Leone Buyse, flute
Norman Fischer, cello
Jeanne Kierman, piano
Richard Brown, percussion

Politically Correct (2000) (Premiere)

Arthur Gottschalk

Daybreak in Alabama (Langston Hughes)

(b. 1952)

The One Who Stayed (Shel Silverstein)

Sun Song (Malcolm Brodwick)

An Aged Woman (Mina Loy)

Hemos Perdido Aun (We Have Even Lost) (Pablo Neruda)

Karol Bennett, soprano

The Gotham String Quartet

Quan Jiang, violin

Lun Jiang, violin

Sheila Browne, viola

Cheng-Hou Lee, cello

INTERMISSION

Now and Then (1981)

Earl Kim
(1920-1998)

On the meadow (Anton Chekhov)

thither (Samuel Beckett)

Roundelay (Samuel Beckett)

Among the deepening shades (W.B. Yeats)

Karol Bennett, soprano

Leone Buyse, flute

Karen Ritscher, viola

Paula Page, harp

Trio (1998)

Robert Sirota

(b. 1949)

I. *Allegro non troppo*

Interlude 1

II. *Adagio*

Interlude 2

III. ♩ = 120

Kenneth Goldsmith, violin

Norman Fischer, cello

Jeanne Kierman, piano

PROGRAM NOTES

Qi Chen Yi

Commissioned by the New Music Consort of New York, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association with a grant provided by the Meet The Composer/Reader's Digest consortium commissioning program, the quartet is titled Qi. I try to use a mixed combination of western instruments to create the sound from the East, to express my feelings of the "Qi" abstractly – it's so untouchable, so mysterious, but so strong and powerful. It melts into air and light, it's like the space in Chinese paintings, it's filled into the dancing lines in Chinese calligraphy, it's the spirit in the human mind. In my composition, I translate my general feeling of the "Qi," the element of nature, into my musical language in a quite free and slow tempo. There are also exaggerated textures with tension, in which I try to sound the inner voices and spirit of human beings, to experience this eternal power.

— Note by the composer

Politically Correct Arthur Gottschalk

This song cycle is dedicated to tonight's performers, Karol Bennett and the Gotham String Quartet, and was written for the Pierrot Plus 2000 project, a series of collaborations between composers and performers resulting in new chamber works being composed, performed, and recorded. Performances of this project are presented on the series SYZYGY, New Music at Rice, Rice University's long-standing concert series for the presentation of contemporary music.

Politically Correct is a tongue-in-cheek allusion to the religious and ethnic diversity of the writers whose poems were used in the cycle. It has nothing to do with the content of the poems nor the nature of the cycle itself, which is to examine a few of the complexities of intergender relationships. The first song, "Daybreak in Alabama" (Langston Hughes), serves as a celebratory paean to the act of creation. The second, Shel Silverstein's "The One Who Stayed," serves as a reminder of the consequences one may suffer if one elects to avoid natural instincts. The "Sun Song" of Malcolm Brodwick attempts to portray the emotional whirlwind that often accompanies the beginning of relationships. "An Aged Woman" (Mina Loy) studies the jagged and unintended consequences of love, seen from the distance of many years. "Hemos Perdido Aun" (We Have Even Lost) by Pablo Neruda portrays mature passions and lost love, remembered through the faint fire of twilight.

The shape of the cycle is projected through tempo (slow, medium, fast, medium, slow) and tonal center (G, F-sharp, G/C-sharp/F-sharp/C, C, and C-sharp). Linear and vertical leitmotifs carried through the cycle lend cohesiveness. The soprano is integrated into the quartet as a part of an ensemble — each of the five act as soloists, and though attention is often necessarily focused upon the voice as the primary purveyor of text, the strings most often act as the interpreters of meaning. The semitone, used as the main structural device of the cycle, represents the dichotomy of the sexes, two sides of the same burning coin.

— Note by the composer

Now and Then Earl Kim

While serving as a combat intelligence officer in the U.S. Army Air Force, I flew over Nagasaki on August 10, 1945, just twenty-four hours after the bomb was dropped. On August 8, 1981, some thirty-six years later, almost to the day, *Now and Then* was completed in its first version for voice and piano. Although each of the songs was conceived in a day, the years that intervened between Nagasaki and their completion seemed to have been necessary before they could be set down.

The texts which I finally settled on cover a range of poetic images dealing with the death of friends, the innocence and vulnerability of daffodils, the loneliness of one's final moment, and Chekhov's prophetic vision of an earth which for thousands of years... has borne no living creature.

*The present version of **Now and Then** for soprano, flute, harp and viola received its first performance in Chicago on January 22, 1982, with Elsa Charleston, soprano, and the Chicago Contemporary Chamber Players, Ralph Shapey, conductor. It was commissioned by the Department of Music of the University of Chicago and dedicated to Paul Fromm in celebration of his seventy-fifth birthday. The dedication is uniquely appropriate for a man who has given life-long support to the creation and performance of new American music.*

— Note by the composer

Trio Robert Sirota

*Generally speaking, I compose rather quickly, but the Trio is an exception. In the summer of 1987, Norman and Jeanne Fischer introduced me to the Peabody Trio. We were all working at the Tanglewood Music Center, where the Peabody Trio was ensemble-in-residence. After hearing a performance by the Fischer Duo of my new **Cello Sonata**, the Peabody Trio asked me if I would compose a piece for them. I immediately said yes and began to jot down some ideas. About a year later, I got a call from Seth Knopp, pianist of the Peabody. He told me that their cellist had left the trio and that they would not be performing new works until they found a new cellist. I put my sketches in a folder, and put it away. It wasn't until 1995, when I became Director of the Peabody Institute, that I reconnected with the Peabody Trio, now with a brilliant new cellist, and got back to work on the piece. It was completed in 1998 and had its premiere at Peabody in October of that year.*

*The **Trio** consists of three movements and two interludes. The first movement is the most rhetorical: a running conversation among the three instruments, which exchange a rather wide variety of ideas and moods. This is followed by the first interlude, a brief dramatic outburst, leading to the second movement, which is a kind of blues nocturne. The second interlude is the negative image of the first one; the piano plays what the strings were playing in Interlude I, and vice versa. The third movement is my version of a vigorous Latino dance.*

— Note by the composer