

MARCH 17, 1984

THE PROGRAM

LECTURE-DISCUSSION

Edward P. Lawson, Chief, Department of Education
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
Stephen Albert, composer, *Treestone*
Marjorie Merryman, composer, *Hidden Boundaries*

CONCERT

Take Me Places (1979)

for flute, clarinet, piano,
percussion, violin and cello

Allan Schindler
(b. 1944)

- I. *The Winds Begin to Rise*
- II. *Soft Hour, that Wakes the Wish*
- III. *Chariot of Fire*

Sara Stern, flutist
Loren Kitt, clarinetist
Lambert Orkis, pianist

Thomas Jones, percussionist
Barbara Sonies, violinist
David Hardy, cellist
Christopher Kendall, conductor

Songs and Dances from Forgotten Lands (World Premiere)

for flute and harp

William Doppman
(b. 1934)

- I. From the Lost Continent of Lemuria
Dithyramb for the First Born of Generation
- II. From Doomed Atlantis
Power-Chant of the Sons of Belial
[the Archipelago of Oz, circa 12,000 B.C.]
- III. From Elysium
In Praise of Forgetfulness (A General Song)
- IV. From Taoi, Citadel of Gold
*Passacaglia for the Coronation of Prince Muzuen;
his Betrayal, Advocacy and Apotheosis*
[Gobi Desert, circa 8000 B.C.]
- V. From Hyperborea
Bacchanale for the Sons and Daughters of Aeolus
(what the North Wind saw, but bruited not)
- VI. From the Blessed Isle of Avalon
Arthur's Eschewal of Immortality: his lament and burial
[Glastonbury, circa 600 A.D.]

Sara Stern, flutist
Dotian Carter, harpist

INTERMISSION

Hidden Boundaries (World Premiere)
Trio for clarinet, cello and piano

Marjorie Merryman
(b. 1952)

- I. Prelude (*Allegro assai*)
- II. Variations and Theme (*starting andante*)
- III. Rondo (*Allegro con spirito*)

Loren Kitt, clarinetist
David Hardy, cellist
Lambert Orkis, pianist

Treestones (World Premiere)
for soprano, tenor and chamber ensemble

Stephen Albert
(b. 1941)

- I. *I Am Leafy Speafing*
- II. *A Grand Funferall*
- III. *Sea Birds*
- IV. *Anna Livia Plurabelle*

Lucy Shelton, soprano
David Gordon, tenor
Sara Stern, flutist
Loren Kitt, clarinetist
David Flowers, trumpet
Daniel Carter, horn
Dotian Carter, harpist

Thomas Jones, percussionist
Lambert Orkis, pianist
Barbara Sonies, violinist
Ann Steck, violinist
Richard Parnas, violist
David Hardy, cellist
Francis Carnovale, contrabass
Christopher Kendall, conductor

THE 20th CENTURY CONSORT
1983-84 SERIES

Remaining Concert:
Saturday, April 21, 5:30 p.m.

The concert is preceded by an informal lecture at 4:30 p.m.;
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Allan Schindler

A member of the composition faculty and director of the Computer and Electronic Music Program at the Eastman School of Music, Mr. Schindler served previously on the faculty of Boston University after completing studies at the University of Chicago under Ralph Shapey, and at Oberlin College. His instrumental and vocal works have been performed by leading contemporary ensembles.

Take Me Places received its first performance in October 1980 at a Musica Nova concert at Eastman. The composer writes of his work:

In *Take Me Places*, I sought to create a chamber work which, while expansive in its musical gestures, also treats the group as a tightly-knit ensemble. During the first movement, rhythmically propulsive themes and punctuations are developed in cyclical fashion. The piano gradually pulls apart from the ensemble into a solo capacity. A similar rhythmic energy pervades the third movement, culminating in a series of "wave upon wave" buildups. By contrast, the second movement and the conclusion of the third center around a hushed musical quality that might be termed introspective, "distant," or perhaps "mysterious." A recurring melodic figure, usually presented by the flute, forms the thread around which various other thematic fragments are interwoven.

Sung, spoken, scat and whispered fragments performed by the players are an extension of instrumental figures, and often serve as a bridge between the two musical poles of the piece. The titles of the individual movements, and the texts of the whispered passages in the third movement, were taken from poems of the English Romantics. As to the title of the work, it simply suggests something that I believe any piece of music should accomplish for the listener.

William Doppmann

"From the annals of poets, mystics and mountebanks, a fabulous geography set forth in divers

original folk-musics, each indigenous to the Kingdoms herein recollected: charted with respect for local habits of surveillance, but ringed round by an ancient admonition: 'here may be *giants!* here, *dragons!* and windward, just to one's left, the *abyss*. . .'"

The six pieces that comprise *Songs and Dances from Forgotten Lands* are arranged in a two-panel construction as follows: Moderate-fast-slow; moderate-fast-slow. Except at mid-point and between I and II, the movements flow one into the next. Each takes its bearing from a legend or mood associated with a mythological land.

In the "Secret Doctrine", as part of her thesis that humanity, in one form or another, has existed since the very beginning, Helen Blavatsky corroborates classical Greek speculation about three lost continents--Lemuria, Atlantis and Hyperborea--all of which pre-date the Egyptian and Sumerian cultures and Noah's flood. After describing earlier methods of human reproduction (by budding, sweating, egg-laying and thought-projection), that grand old lady of the occult reports with a certain Victorian sniffiness that the Lemurian civilization "fell" into sexual generation, the curse of Adam which dogs us to this day. The music of the first piece, however, chooses rather to celebrate this turn of events; after a middle section of mounting excitement, the piece concludes quietly, as it had begun, on middle C.

The legends of Atlantis received amplification during this century in the trance-induced "life readings" of Edgar Cayce, who tells of a hyper-technological society divided in a political struggle between the Sons of Belial and the Sons of the Law of One. The Sons of Belial--the evil magicians--misused a lens of monstrous power and effected the geological cataclysms that dispersed the Atlantean land-mass and returned it to the sea. The

flute music of the second piece traces the rise and fall of the Belial brotherhood to the accompaniment of a rhythmically articulated drone by the harp.

Elysium, a blessed isle of immortality lying somewhere to the West in the ancient Mediterranean world, housed souls who had attained a meritorious eternity after lives of bitter toil and travail. Slow somnambulistic harp arpeggiations surround short meditative phrases in the flute to suggest the suspension of time and desire in this lotus-land.

Part Two opens with a passacaglia for harp; the flute appears only in the middle section. Other readings of Cayce speak of an Eastern pre-Mongolian kingdom where gold was as plentiful and commonplace as the sand later to bury all its splendours, and of a certain Prince Muzuen who reigned there. Muzuen had six fingers on each hand. The music elaborates the tale to include dissension among the Prince's subjects--perhaps an emerging breed of five-fingered folk who chafed under the enlightened pacifism of their ruler. As saviour, Muzuen attains an ecstatic apotheosis when the harp twists the opening coronation theme toward an exultant Mahler-like G flat major chord. Except for the chromatic middle section in which the flute participates, the passacaglia is in C minor.

Hyperborea, a land in the far North, was known to the Greeks as another abode of perpetual happiness, inhabited by a giant race of men. Somewhere below its borders King Aeolus, guardian of the Winds, was reputed to live in a walled castle on a floating island in the Tyrrhenian Sea. Sealed off from mainland Greek culture, his six sons and six daughters, living in uninterrupted indolence and festivity, soon paired off as lovers. In the Latin version of the myth, Aeolus, not a god himself, fears dreadful consequences from the Olympians who regard incestuous liaison as their godly prerogative. For on his return from wind distribution duties, he has discovered himself to be a grandfather, and

in rage and horror he throws the first fruit of his youngest pair of siblings to the dogs and sends to the offending daughter a ceremonial sword. Dutifully she mounts a parapet of the castle, plunges the dagger between her breasts, and the wine-dark sea, outraged in turn, boils up to claim and consecrate her plummeting body. This piece pairs virtuoso flute writing with drumming, glissando and pedal-buzz techniques in the harp part.

Some say King Arthur, mortally wounded, was transported by fairy queens to the isle of Avalon to regain his health, from whence he will come to reign again. Others say his bones are buried in a monastery near Glastonbury. The music of the final piece inclines to the latter view--it is a dirge to his memory. Reminiscences of the Passacaglia and Bacchanale are woven into the strands of the lament. Avalon means "apple", and the music at the end returns us "by a commodious vicus of recirculation" back to Lemurian Eden, the scene of Adam's joyful fall, and the touch-tone of the work--middle C.

--William Doppmann July 1982

Marjorie Merryman

Marjorie Merryman was born in 1952 and received her training at Scripps College and Brandeis University, where she received her Ph.D. A member Phi Beta Kappa and recipient of many prizes and fellowships, she is currently a member of the School of Music faculty in the Boston University School for the Arts.

About *Hidden Boundaries*, the composer writes:

Hidden Boundaries, a trio for clarinet, cello and piano, was written for the 20th Century Consort and completed only a few weeks ago. Its three movements -- Prelude, Variations and Theme, and Rondo -- are motivically somewhat interconnected. They are more formally linked by their endings, which all use the same material and have similar gestures and feeling. This shared material is the Theme

from the second movement, so that the formal scheme works as follows:

- I. Prelude (*Allegro assai*) followed by Variation 1 (solo cello)
- II. Variations 2-5 (starting *Andante*), followed by Theme (piano in octaves)
- III. Rondo (*Allegro con spirito*) followed by Variation 6.

The Theme, mainly a melodic idea, is literally at the center of the piece. It is also poetically and expressively central to the conception.

Hidden Boundaries is dedicated to the memory of my mother, Ann McGee Merryman (1915-1984).

Stephen Albert

"Yes, it is an old story, the tale of Treestone with one Ysold"

The myth of Tristan is one of the more persistent yet elusive themes in James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*. It hovers ghostlike throughout the novel, never wholly perceived but nearly always felt. The story of Tristan is communicated in coded fragments by different persons, challenging our reason and powers of intuition. Our associative memory is forced to the edge, deciphering and piecing together Joyce's abbreviated, irreverent and often deranged version of the tale.

I had already set portions of *Finnegan's Wake* in an earlier song cycle and was somewhat acclimated to the novel's language and thought. After putting the book aside for a couple of years, I began skimming through it again during the fall of 1982, and was intrigued by the recurring allusions to the Tristan and Iseult legend. After a few days jotting down isolated paragraphs, sentences and phrases that seemed associated with their story, a fairly coherent text emerged that centered Tristan and Iseult in a cluster of related themes and images. The resulting text was cast in seven movements, forming in themselves a musical whole which will appear on tonight's program.

The first song, *I am Leafy Speafing* is the voice of the Liffey River as it flows through

Dublin at dawn. The movement opens with an instrumental prologue ("rain music") followed by the soprano's entrance as the "feminine" aspect of the river's voice. She reminds her sister and companion, Dublin, how much joy and grief they've shared as silent witnesses to Mankind's history, closing the movement with ". . .how glad you'll be I waked you! My! How well you'll feel! Forever after!"

The second song, *A Grand Funferall*, comprises a dirge-like march, a children's music-box ditty and rowdy pub music commingled in a single movement. We are really at a wake -- Tristan and Iseult's funeral. It is not outwardly a particularly sad or solemn occasion, but there is a slightly demonic streak present -- an undercurrent of icy fear among the mourners. They try to dignify the event with a funeral march but cannot really escape their own private fears of parting and disconnection.

Sea Birds, the third song, returns in time to a bird's-eye view of Tristan and Iseult's first kiss aboard ship, but it is also the instant of their first curse, ". . .The birds of the sea they trolled out right bold when they smacked the big kuss of Tristan with Isolde. . ."

Songs 4 - 6, not heard on tonight's program, revolve around the chatter of two washer-women scrubbing their linen from dawn to dusk along the banks of the Liffey River. Their gossip about distant cousins emerges instead as a tale of the distant past concerning their ancient kinsmen and spiritual forebears Tristan and Iseult.

The text of the final song is a small portion of the most familiar section of *Finnegan's Wake* and is entitled *Anna Livia Plurabelle*. It is both the "masculine" aspect of the river's voice as well as the interior closing monologue of the older, more dominant of the two washer-women. She feels darkness coming over the river and, perhaps, over her own life as well. Tired of washing, tired of talking, tired of remembering, she ". . .could near to faint away. Into the deeps. I saw home slowly now by by own way, moy valley way. Thinking always if I go all goes."

Life along the river at dusk is becoming more intense and vivid, but her senses are fading. She glances across to the river's

opposite bank and sees her younger companion turning to stone. Her own arms have been transfigured into the limbs of a tree as her body is taking root. She is surrounded by sounds in the night and of the river. . . and the chittering waters. . . of the fluttering bats, field mice. . . all the liffeying waters of. . . dark hawks, the bawk of bats. . . beside the rivering waters of. . ." and

she feels "as old as yonder elm."
Both woman have become transformed into rare enduring parts of nature, one a tree, the other stone, as the river flows between them. The river will always be a source of their own connection but it will also always divide them. The Liffey now makes its way past Dublin and rushes into the sea as night falls.

NOTES ON THE ARTISTS

Francis Carnovale, contrabass, is on the faculty of Montgomery College and the University of Maryland. He is solo bassist for the Theatre Chamber players at Kennedy Center.

Daniel Carter, French horn, is a graduate of the Curtis Institute and a member of the National Symphony Orchestra. He is solo hornist with the National Symphony Brass Quintet.

Dotian Carter, harp, is principal harpist with the National Symphony Orchestra. A graduate of the Curtis Institute, she studied with Carlos Salzedo. She has performed with the Philadelphia Lyric Opera, the Pennsylvania Ballet and the Philadelphia Orchestra.

David Flowers, trumpet, is a member of the National Symphony Orchestra, the Contemporary Music Forum, and the National Symphony Brass Quintet. He is a graduate of the University of Michigan and received his D.M.A. from Catholic University.

David Gordon, tenor, performs in both operatic and orchestral repertoire, having appeared regularly with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, the Boston Symphony and the orchestras of Dallas, Vienna, Baltimore and Salzburg.

David Hardy, cello, is the Assistant Principal Cellist of the National Symphony Orchestra. A graduate of the Peabody Conservatory, he was the top-ranking American prize-winner at the Seventh International Tchaikovsky Cello Competition in Moscow in 1982.

Thomas Jones, percussion, is a graduate of the University of Maryland. A free lance percussionist, he is a member of the faculty at Virginia Commonwealth University Richmond.

Christopher Kendall, conductor, completed musical studies at Antioch College and the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. Founder and lutenist of the Folger Consort, he is also artistic director of Millenium Ensemble, Inc.

Loren Kitt, clarinet, is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, where he studied with David Phillips, Earl Bates and Marcel Moyse. He is principal clarinetist of the National Symphony Orchestra.

Lambert Orkis, piano, is principal keyboardist of the National Symphony Orchestra. A graduate of the Curtis Institute, he is a member of the faculty of Temple University.