California State University, Long Beach
College of the Arts — Department of Music
Instructionally-Related Activities
present

New Music Ensemble
Faculty

in concert

Justus Matthews, director

Justus Matthews, clarinet
Mark Robertson, violin
Michael Bayer, 'cello (guest artist)
Mark Uranker, piano

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 1995
8:00 p.m.

Gerald Daniel Recital Hall

P R O G R A M

Three movements from *Repères* (1995) — Keith Lee

Branches I
Branches II
Branches III

World Premiere

Six Melodies for Violin and Piano (1950) — John Cage

Cantéyodjayâ (1949) — Olivier Messiaen

I N T E R M I S S I O N

Trio for Clarinet, Cello, and Piano (1992) — Michael Bayer

I. Adagio ma non troppo—Andante
II. Allegro molto
III. Con moto

NOTES

Three movements from *Repères*

Repères ('landmarks', 'references') is a collection of five works for solo clarinet, the first and last of which are written for bass clarinet while the inner pieces are for Bb clarinet. *Repères* constantly pays homage to the extraordinary body of music written for the clarinet during the twentieth century. This is achieved through allusion to some of these works, which function as a series of landmarks that propel the entire work forward. At times a quotation from a particular work is immediately evident, such as the opening of 'Branches III' which directly recalls that of Berg's *Four Pieces for Clarinet,* op. 5 (1913), a melodic figure which is already foreshadowed in the opening of 'Branches I', while in other instances the a specific reference is present solely in the background and can only be detected after many listenings, such as the quotation near the end of 'Branches III' from the first of Stravinsky's *Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo* (1918), or the numerous arabesques so characteristic of the solo clarinet writing of Luciano Berio and Pierre Boulez. The ideal is to provide a sort of indicator which points to the new century of music soon to come while at the same time reflecting on what has gone by.

Keith Lee is an alumnus of CSULB, having received the Master of Music degree in Composition in 1991. After graduating from CSULB he spent time in Europe furthering his studies in composition and computer music. He currently resides in Torrance.

Six Melodies for Violin and Piano

Like many of his work written prior to his famous *4'33"* (1952), John Cage's charming *Six Melodies* is fully notated in the traditional manner, and detailed in its dynamic, articulation and tempo markings. The "melodies" as a whole are restricted to a tiny vocabulary of sounds, in this case 23 (18 in the violin, and 12 in the piano, some of which always appear in combination). The listener should strive to hear the melodies as monophony—"thickened" in instances where simultaneities occur, but monophony nonetheless. The instruments consequently should be heard as a single composite instrument projecting this monophony.

Six Melodies is but one of a number of Cage's works written between about 1939 and 1956 that employ a specific rhythmic structure (in this case $3^1/_2$, $3^1/_2$, 4, 4, 3, 4), and that thus reflect the composer's belief at the time that intentional durational structure is a necessary element of composed music. Although the rhythmic scheme of *Six Melodies* is hardly manifest in some obvious way (Cage does not expect the listener to "figure out" the scheme), its appearance directly determines large and small details such as sectional proportions and phrase lengths. The composer does not divert the listener from his primary concern—the rhythmically structured monophony—with musical or dramatic developments, or with theatrical, aggressive gestures, or with rich attractive sonorities. Instead, he specifies that the violinist play throughout without vibrato and with minimum weight on the bow. The strings on which each note should be played are specifically indicated by the composer. The dynamic range is limited, almost completely marked *piano* and *pianissimo*. The resultant "melodic lines without accompaniment, employ single tones, intervals and aggregates requiring one or both of the instruments for their production." The melodies, insistently simple and pentatonic, project a field of gentle sounds, quietly suggesting, perhaps, an ancient, proportioned, dance-like music. The result with its quiet and beguiling repetition of rhythmic patterns and its resonating open fourths and fifths in the piano, is as hypnotic as an Indian *raga*.

Cantéyodjayâ

Born in Avignon in 1908, Olivier Messiaen began to compose music at the precocious age of eight and entered the Paris Conservatory in 1919 at the age of eleven. Among his teachers were the organist Marcel Dupré and the composer Paul Dukas. His first music to be published was *Le Banquet Celeste* for organ in 1928. Already the musico-philosophical tenets that were to become so important as to compel Messiaen to place his work "at the service of the dogmas of Catholic theology" were beginning to assert themselves, as this piece is concerned with a very Roman Catholic concept — the "Last Supper" shared by Jesus with his disciples. A set of piano *Preludes* followed in 1929 and the first orchestral work in 1930. In the following year Messiaen was appointed organist at the Church of La Trinité in Paris and he became somewhat notorious for treating Sunday worshippers to tradition-defying improvisations.

In 1936, reacting against the neo-classicism of French composers of the 1920's, Messiaen, along with Daniel Lesur, Yves Baudrier and André Jolivet, formed an avant-garde group dedicated to "new" Romantic principles called *Le Jeune France*. In the same year Messiaen began to teach at the École Normale de Musique and the Scola Cantorum. His pedagogical career was interrupted, however, in 1939 by the war and service in the French army. A year later Messiaen was captured by the Germans and was incarcerated in a prison camp. Under these very difficult conditions he still manage to write music and in 1941 produced the *Quatour pour la Fin du Temps*. After his liberation in 1941 he resumed his teaching, becoming professor of harmony at the Paris Conservatory.

Following the war, Messiaen began to gain a reputation outside France as both composer and teacher (among his students were pianist Yvonne Loriod — later to become his wife, Serge Nigg, Pierre Boulez, and Karlheinz Stockhausen), and shortly thereafter he became recognized as one of the most significant composers of the twentieth century.

Messiaen was always very interested in many aspects of non-Western musics, and *Cantéyodjayâ* dates from the period during which the composer was primarily concerned with new rhythmic and modal procedures which he had recently devised from his study of these non-Western musics. The title *Cantéyodjayâ* refers to the Hindu rhythm upon which the recurring principal theme of the work is based. Though Messiaen's deep study of various Indian rhythmic systems had influenced his earlier musical language, this work integrated a veritable catalogue of Indian rhythms with his other experiments in rhythmic modes. Variously described as a rondo or a collage, the piece nonetheless bears an unconventional yet ecstatic shape. In the words of the composer, "during the summer of 1949 I found myself at Tanglewood at the Berkshire Music center, where Serge Koussevitzky had asked me to teach courses in composition and musical rhythm. I held classes every afternoon, and participated in concerts in the evenings. My mornings were free: and it was during these mornings that I wrote *Cantéyodjayâ*.

The work is chiefly interesting on account of its rhythmic explorations. There are many deci-tâles (Hindu rhythms) of ancient India: notably "lakskmiça" (the peace which descends from Lashmi), and "simhavîkrama" (the power of the lion as well as the power of Shiva). Again there are chromatic scales of durations: forward, with a progressive acceleration of durations — and backward, by the progressive slowing of duration — the two directions being superimposed. Finally, towards the second third of the work one hears a mode of durations, of pitches, and of intensities, distributed in three tiers of tempi, in which each pitch possesses its own duration and intensity. The unity of the piece is ensured by a very short refrain."

Trio for Clarinet, Cello, and Piano

The *Trio for Clarinet, Cello, and Piano* was written in 1992 and was a result of my long friendship with Kalman Bloch, the principal clarinetist emeritus of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. For a long time Kalman had asked for a large work he could program either with the Beethoven or Brahms Trios. So, in the shadow of these works and the Beethoven Quartet, op. 132, I acquiesced and wrote this piece for him. It is an attempt to expand the possibilities of the rather narrow expressive limits of minimalism by the juxtaposition of contrapuntal devices and vernacular musical elements. The outer movements are laced with canons and invertible counterpoint, while the middle movement uses harmonic progressions and gestures from popular music. In the end, this is music written in friendship and speaks of the joys and tragedies experienced together by friends. It is a tribute to a clarinetist who has been a champion of new music, a supporter of composers, and, simply, a great musician.

— Michael Bayer