

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

New Music Ensemble

in concert

Justus Matthews, director

Monday, November 27, 1995
8:00 p.m.

Gerald Daniel Recital Hall

P R O G R A M

Head Talk (1987)
(for drums without shells)

Mark Ford

David Gerhart
Angela Tabor
Keith Palmer
Michael Miley
Axel Clarke

Duos for flute and clarinet (1990)

Robert Muczynski

- I. Andante sostenuto
- II. Allegro risoluto
- III. Moderato
- IV. Allegro ma non troppo
- V. Andante molto
- VI. Allegro

John Barcellona, flute
Justus Matthews, clarinet

Rain Dance for flute and magnetic tape (1993)

Mark Phillips

John Barcellona, flute

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

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

Sextet (1984-85)

Steve Reich

David Gerhart
Angela Tabor
Keith Palmer
Axel Clarke
Mark Uranker
Cheryl Cook

NOTES

Rain Dance

Mark Phillips (b. 1952) won the 1988 Barlow International Competition with his orchestral composition *Turning*, which has been performed by the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, the Cleveland Orchestra and the NHK Symphony Orchestra of Japan, with Leonard Slatkin conducting. He has been the recipient of numerous awards and prizes, and his works have been widely performed through the U.S. and abroad. Phillips joined the composition faculty at the Ohio University School of Music in fall 1984. From 1982-84 he was a Visiting Instructor of composition at the Indiana University School of Music. Born in Philadelphia, he holds a B.M. degree from West Virginia University and both M.M. and D.M. degrees from Indiana University.

In the words of the composer, "*Rain Dance* has four main contrasting sections or movements which are linked together and performed without pause. The first and third sections are related by both their accompaniment and the lyrical nature of the flute line. The second section is pointillistic and builds to a grand climax where the soloist must struggle to avoid drowning. A brief flute cadenza links the third movement to the rollicking, rondo-like finale, which features a very brief (and very 'wet') tape music 'cadenza'.

"Nearly all the sounds in the tape music accompaniment for *Rain Dance* are derived from half a dozen flute sounds and a couple of different water sounds. Mostly I chose flute sounds such as key clicks, flutter-tonguing, tremolos, blowing air without producing a tone, etc.—rather than ordinary flute tones. In addition, a few white noise and percussion sounds are used.

"The title and the nature of the sounds on the tape are meant to be evocative merely in a general way. There is no strict programmatic intent nor does the work derive inspiration from any specific culture or ritual. The idea for combining water sounds with the flute sounds, which were the original basis for the composition, grew out of what I perceived to be a complementary sonic relationship between water drops and some of my transformed key clicks. However, as the piece began to develop and the title took hold, some very peculiar national weather patterns set in. I had the eerie experience of being 'immersed' in the sounds of this composition as the Mississippi River Valley endured the flood of the century, while much of the East, including my part of Ohio, suffered a severe summer-long drought."

Sextet

Sextet is in five movements played without pause. The relationship of the five movements is that of an arch form A-B-C-B-A. The first and last movements are fast, the second and fourth moderate, and the third slow. Changes of tempo are made abruptly at the beginning of new movements by metric modulation to either get slower or faster. Movements are also organized harmonically with a chord cycle for the first and fifth, another for the second and fourth, and yet another for the third. The harmonies used are largely dominant chords with added tones creating a somewhat darker, chromatic, and more varied harmonic language than in my earlier works. Both the cyclical movement structure and the general harmonic language were suggested by my . . . *Desert Music* (1984).

Percussion instruments primarily produce sounds of relatively short duration. In *Sextet* I was interested in overcoming that limitation. In the second movement, the use of the bowed vibraphone, not merely as a passing effect but as a basic instrumental voice, was one means of getting long tones. The use of the synthesizer as electric organ supplied long continuous sounds not possible with piano. The mallet instruments (marimba, vibraphone, etc.) are basically instruments of high and middle register without a low range. To overcome this limit the bass drum was used, doubling piano or synthesizer played in their lower registers, particularly in the second, third, and fourth movements.

Compositional techniques used include some introduced in my music as early as *Drumming* in 1971. In particular, two or three players on identical instruments substituting beats for rests to build up repeating patterns in canon with each other, is used extensively in the first and last movements. Sudden change of rhythmic position (or phase) of one voice in an overall repeating contrapuntal web first occurs in my *Six Pianos* of 1973 and occurs throughout this work. Double canons, where one canon moves slowly (the bowed vibraphones) and the second moves quickly (the pianos), first appeared in my music in *Octet* of 1979. Techniques influenced by African music, in which the basic ambiguity in meters of 12 beats between three groups of four and four groups of three, appear in the third and fifth movements. A rhythmically ambiguous pattern is played by the vibraphones in the third movement and accented sometimes in four and sometimes in three by the pianos. This occurs similarly in the fifth movement, but at a much faster tempo. The result is to change the perception of what is in fact not changing. Another related, more recent technique that appears near the end of the fourth movement is to gradually remove the melodic material in the synthesizers, leaving the accompaniment of the two vibraphones to become the new melodic focus. Similarly, the accompaniment in the pianos in the second movement becomes the melody for the synthesizers in the fourth movement. The ambiguity here is between which is melody and which accompaniment. In music that uses a great deal of repetition, I believe it is precisely these kinds of ambiguities that give vitality and life.

Sextet was co-commissioned by Laura Dean dancers and Musicians and by the French government for the Nexus ensemble. The scoring is for three marimbas, two vibraphones, two bass drums, crotales, sticks, tam-tam, two pianos, and two synthesizers.

— Steve Reich