



center for new music

D. Martin Jenni, *director*
David Gompper, *music director*

Elizabeth Bell and Michael Twomey, *guest composers*
Marcia Roberts, *guest performer*

Sunday, December 6, 1992, 8:00 p.m.
Clapp Recital Hall
The University of Iowa School of Music

Program

Logo III

Laurie MATZKO - clarinet
Duane GUGEL - piano
Michael GEARY, Tony OLIVER - percussion

Eugene KURTZ

Mirabai Songs

Laura KOENIG - alto flute
Marla FEENEY - clarinet
Pam WEEST-CARRASCO - harp
Michael GEARY - percussion
Mitchell JOHNSON - violin
Amy GETTER - viola
Jennifer NEUMAN - violoncello
Mario CHIARELLO - Double Bass
Marcia ROBERTS - soprano
David GOMPPER - conductor

John HARBISON

-intermission-

As Cassandra Laughed...

Laurie MATZKO - clarinet
Shenobu SAITO - violin
Joseph ROVINE - violoncello
Mark MARTIN - piano

Michael TWOMEY

Spectra

Karen BERGQUIST - flute
Trevor JOHNSON - oboe
Marla FEENEY - clarinet
Dulane AABERG - bassoon
Michael GEARY - percussion I
Edwin HILL - percussion II
Michael MILLER - piano/celesta
Gene DOWDY - violin I
Shenobu SAITO - violin II
Michele MEININGER - viola
Emily GOSMA - violoncello
David GOMPPER - conductor

Elizabeth BELL

Program Notes

Eugene KURTZ (b. Atlanta, Georgia) studied composition with Bernard Rogers at The Eastman School of Music where he received the diploma of Master of Arts in Music in 1949. In the same year, he went to Paris to continue his studies with Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud and subsequently with Max Deutsch, a former Viennese pupil of Arnold Schoenberg. Serial technique and the discovery of the music of Charles Ives proved to be the two most important influences on the composer's musical thought during these formative years. Kurtz has always maintained residence in Paris but has returned to the United States on different occasions to teach at The University of Michigan, The Eastman School of Music, The University of Illinois at Urbana, The University of Texas at Austin and the Hartt School of Music in Hartford, Connecticut.

Kurtz has written music for the theater, radio, television and cinema. His works for orchestra and chamber ensemble have been widely performed both in the U.S. and Europe. He has received commissions from The Musical Arts Association of Cleveland, O.R.T.F., Radio-France and the French Ministry of Cultural Affairs. He has been honored by Radio-France with "Eugene Kurtz Day." He is the recipient of a grant from the National Endowment of the Arts and an award from The American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. Kurtz teaches privately in Paris and is a consultant for the music publishing house, Editions-Jobert.

According to most dictionaries, **logo** is an abbreviation of **logogram** and is defined as a *character* or *symbol* used to represent a word or a phrase. With the advent of television, for example, the American public has become familiar with the representational signs or logos for the three national networks, as well as those for certain products in the advertising world. The pop-artist, Robert Indiana, has also used the term in reference to a number of his paintings.

Each of the two movements, INTRODUCTION and BREAKDOWN, is a sort of logo in itself. Each represented precise and perhaps contradictory ways of thinking at the time I was writing the piece. Five-note rhythmic figures and the permutations of three notes—diatonic as well as chromatic—constitute the basic material for both movements. INTRODUCTION tries on occasion to recall certain nocturnal sounds that fascinated me when I was a child, and is in turn meditative, poetic and assertive. It advances in a somewhat discontinuous flow in the form of a dialogue between the clarinet and the other instruments—a dialogue that is enriched with moments

of silence and ever-changing patterns of thought. The title of the second movement, **BREAKDOWN**, comes from an obscure and supposedly frenetic African-American dance of the 19th century. Nothing remains of the dance but its name, so I felt completely free to deal with the rhythmic element according to my own fancy. Following the first movement without pause, **BREAKDOWN** is in complete opposition to **INTRODUCTION**. It is minimal as regards musical material, obsessive in character and inexorable in its rhythmic flow. The principles of ostinato and repetition are exploited. The piano part alternates between diatonic and chromatic clusters, and the clarinet might remind one of the riffs played by Benny Goodman in some of the recordings he made in the 1930s and 40s.

There are, in fact, three versions of the work: **Logo I**, for clarinet, piano and percussion quartet, was commissioned by Radio France and was premiered in Paris in October 1979; **Logo II**, for clarinet and piano alone, was written for Dave Harman and David Liptak, and was premiered at the University of Illinois in September 1980; **Logo III** is an arrangement of the original version calling for two percussion players instead of four, made by Peggy Benkeser in 1991, and premiered in September of the same year by the ensemble *Thamyris* at Clayton State College, Georgia.

E.K.

John HARBISON (b. 1938, Orange, New Jersey) studied at Harvard College and Princeton University before joining the faculty of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1969. He is the first permanent holder of the Class of 1949 Professorship at MIT. From 1982 to 1984, at the request of Andre Previn, he was composer-in-residence with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, and from 1985 to 1987 held the same position at the Los Angeles Philharmonic, continuing his association with Previn.

Harbison has received commissions from the Koussevitzky, Fromm, Naumburg, and Rockefeller foundations, as well as from many performing organizations, including anniversary commissions for the Boston Symphony (100th), New Haven Symphony (90th), and San Francisco Symphony (75th). His music has been performed by such organizations as the Aspen and Berkshire festivals, the San Francisco Opera, the New Opera Company (England), the New York Philharmonic, and the Fires of London. Recordings of Harbison's music are available on Nonesuch, CRI, Northeastern and New World.

Harbison's cantata, *The Flight into Egypt* received the Pulitzer Prize for music in 1987.

Mirabai Songs (1982) are based on the ecstatic religious poetry of Mirabai, a legendary poet of sixteenth-century India. When Mirabai was twenty-seven, her husband was killed in a war. Instead of joining him on his funeral pyre, as was the custom, she left her family compound, wrote her poems to Krishna, the Dark One, and sang and danced them in the streets. Where most European traditions tend to isolate the spiritual insight into a solitary, contemplative experience, Mirabai achieves her ecstatic state amidst the dusty, crowded streets and markets of India. She is alternately exultant, angry, mournful, seductive and reflective.

Harbison, fascinated by the works of the Indian poet, found a small-press edition of six Mirabai poems adapted by Robert Bly, and began to compose musical settings. He explains that "the combination of the religious and erotic, so seldom encountered in our culture, first drew me into these settings."

Marcia ROBERTS, mezzo-soprano, has compiled an impressive concert and oratorio repertoire, including works of Bach, Copland, Elgar, Handel, Mozart, Rossini and Vaughan Williams. She has performed with the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, the American Symphony, the Bach Aria Festival at Stony Brook and the Aspen Music Festival. Co-founder of the *Bach 131 Chamber Ensemble* and an accomplished recital artist, Roberts often features instrumental and chamber music and a wide variety of American music, as well as traditional repertoire. She has premiered works by Chester Biscardi, Gloria Coates, David Ott and James Ure, and presented the world premiere of several Charles Loeffler songs at New York's Merkin Concert Hall. A graduate of the University of Wisconsin, Roberts is a member of the School of Music faculty at DePauw University.

Michael TWOMEY (b. 1963, Butte, Montana) began musical studies on the violin, cello and piano at age 11. He began composing at 12, and made his conducting debut at 15. He was the youngest recipient of a Montana Arts Council Grant for composition at 17, and was a prize winner in the MTNA Student Composers Competition. He holds degrees in composition from The University of Montana (with high honors), and Northwestern University. He is currently completing the Doctor of Musical Arts degree at Peabody Conservatory. He has studied with Donald Johnston, Stephen Syverud, Alan Stout, and Morris Cotel.

As a violist, he has played with many ensembles in Montana, Indiana, Virginia, Chicago and Baltimore. Among his awards in composition and performance are the William Faricy Award for creative music; SCI Composition Competition First

Prize; the Virginia Carty DeLillo Composers Competition Second Prize; a Community Concert Association Young Artist Fellowship; the Great Falls Symphony Concerto Competition; a Peabody Institute Career Development Grant and a grant from the Urban League for Contemporary Arts in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

As Cassandra Laughed...

"Behold! I am tired of my wisdom, like a bee that has gathered too much honey; I have need of outstretched hands."

—from *Zarathustra's Preamble*
(Nietzsche)

The work was written in 1991 in Baltimore. Conceptually, its format is similar to the Strauss tone poem, *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, in the sense that while the music is programmatic, it does not attempt to capture the details of the story. Rather, the function of the music is to invoke images associated with the story or character. Laughter is not an image commonly associated with Cassandra, the priestess of Apollo, who is given the gift of prophecy. She was also given a curse: no one would believe her.

This piece uses the image of Cassandra meeting *Zarathustra* in the underworld. She tells him of her disbelieved visions, and he responds by telling her jokes. The end section of Cassandra is modeled after the rhapsodic ending section of *Zarathustra*, "Das Nachwandlerlied" (The Song of Those Who Came Later).

M.T.

Elizabeth BELL (b. 1928, Cincinnati, Ohio) studied piano from an early age; she received her BA as a Wellesley Scholar from Wellesley College in 1950, and continued her training at the Juilliard School, where she studied under the late Peter Mennin and Vittorio Giannini, and received her degree in composition in 1953. She has also studied at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, and privately with composer Paul Alan Levi in New York.

Her works include orchestral, chamber, solo instrumental and vocal music, and have been performed throughout the United States, and in Japan and Russia and on the radio in Australia. She has had three retrospective concerts of her works: one in 1973 at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, one in 1985 in Cincinnati, the third in October, 1991, in New York City. She was music critic for the Ithaca Journal from 1971 to 1976. She has appeared on public radio, has been a guest on educational TV, and has lectured on the role of women composers in the twentieth

century. A BMI composer and member of American Composers' Alliance, she is one of the founders and officers of New York Women Composers, Inc.

Bell has received commissions from the Ithaca High School Orchestra, Inoue Chamber Ensemble, New York State Council on the Arts, Putnam Valley Arts Council, Bradshaw and Buono duo-pianists, Max Lifchitz, North/South Consonance, and Vienna Modern Masters. Her works have been recorded on CRI, Classic Masters, and Vienna Modern Masters.

Spectra - Dream; Dance; Song; March; Storm

This piece is about rainbows: about the dividing up of light (or sound) into its various wavelengths; about the gradual development (as in my husband's "Spectra" Polaroid camera) of an image from a blank page into faint gray outlines, the color coming little by little until the full range of the rainbow is alive; about the promise of calm after a storm.

The five movements are short, and mainly in simple classical forms. They begin with the highest ranges of the instruments, adding depth as they progress until the last movement stretches the whole length of the keyboard. The tonal centers also descend, by minor thirds, from C down to C again. The music is tied together with the "rainbow music" that begins and ends the piece and is interpolated at various other points along the way. The final movement, *Storm* (which is connected to the fourth movement by a drum-roll), is not classical; it was inspired by the many thunderstorms I heard during the nights of the unusually stormy spring and summer of 1989.

Spectra was written to celebrate the tenth anniversary season of North/South Consonance Ensemble, and was premiered by them in New York City in January, 1990.

E.B.