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2011-11-13

Music of Rodney Lister, November 13, 2011

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Boston University College of Fine Arts
School of Music
presents

Music of Rodney Lister

Sunday

November 13, 2011

8:00pm

Concert Hall

Founded in 1872, the **School of Music** combines the intimacy and intensity of conservatory training with a broadly based, traditional liberal arts education at the undergraduate level and intense coursework at the graduate level. The school offers degrees in performance, composition and theory, musicology, music education, collaborative piano, historical performance, as well as a certificate program in its Opera Institute, and artist and performance diplomas.

Founded in 1839, **Boston University** is an internationally recognized private research university with 32,557 students participating in undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. BU consists of 17 colleges and schools along with a number of multi-disciplinary centers and institutes which are central to the school's research and teaching mission. The Boston University **College of Fine Arts** was created in 1954 to bring together the School of Music, the School of Theatre, and the School of Visual Arts. The University's vision was to create a community of artists in a conservatory-style school offering professional training in the arts to both undergraduate and graduate students, complemented by a liberal arts curriculum for undergraduate students. Since those early days, education at the College of Fine Arts has begun on the BU campus and extended into the city of Boston, a rich center of cultural, artistic and intellectual activity.

Boston University College of Fine Arts
School of Music

Music of Rodney Lister
The 31st concert in the 2011–12 season

November 13, 2011
Concert Hall

Rodney Lister

Of Mere Being (Wallace Stevens)
Toward a Supreme Fiction
A Clear Day and No Memories
The Snowman
Another Weeping Woman
The Palm at the End of the Mind

Penelope Bitzas, mezzo-soprano
Rodney Lister, Piano

Blue Wine (John Hollander)

James Petosa, narrator
Rodney Lister, piano

Ordinary Heartbreaks and Other Poems
(Michael Blumenthal)
Ordinary Heartbreaks
Prayer to be Recited after a Jacque Derrida Lecture
Cherries
A Man Lost by a River
Trip to Bountiful
Leap Child
The Disappointments of Childhood

Charles Blandy, tenor
Rodney Lister, piano

~Intermission~

Only the Lemon of Desire (Anthony Hawley)

Sarah Back, soprano
Rebecca Fischer, violin
Rodney Lister, piano

Distracted Times

To My Brother, Missing in Action, 1943

(Thomas Merton)

Thoughts on the War (William Shakespeare)

James Demler, baritone

Rodney Lister, piano

The Angel that Troubled the Water (Thorton Wilder)

Martin Near, counter-tenor

Charles Blandy, tenor

David Kravitz, baritone

Rodney Lister, piano

Boston University College of Fine Arts
School of Music presents

**Boston University Symphony Orchestra
and Symphonic Chorus**

Monday, November 21, 8:00pm
Symphony Hall

Verdi Requiem

Ann Howard Jones, conductor

Michelle Johnson, soprano

Daveda Karanas, mezzo-soprano

Clay Hilley, tenor

Morris Robinson, bass

Schoenberg A Survivor from Warsaw

David Hoose, conductor

Frank Kelley, narrator

Tickets: \$25 (\$10 student rush)

www.BostonSymphonyHall.org or 617.266.1200



**BOSTON
UNIVERSITY**

Texts

Of Mere Being

Toward A Supreme Fiction

And for what, except for you, do I feel love?
Do I press the extremest book of the wisest man
Close to me, hidden in me day and night?
In the uncertain light of single, certain truth,
Equal in living changingness to the light
In which I meet you, in which we sit at rest,
For a moment in the central of our being
The vivid transparence that you bring is peace.

A Clear Day and No Memories

No soldiers in the scenery,
No thoughts of people now dead,
As they were fifty years ago,
Young and living in a live air,
Young and walking in the sunshine,
Young and sitting in blue dresses to touch something,
Today the mind is not part of the weather.

Today the air is clear of everything.
It has no knowledge except of nothingness
And it flows over us without meanings,
As if none of us had ever been here before
And are not now: in this shallow spectacle,
This invisible activity, this scene.

The Snowman

One must have a mind of winter
To regard the frost and the boughs
Of the pine-trees crusted with snow;

And have been cold a long time
To behold the junipers shagged with ice,
The spruces rough in the distant glitter

Of the January sun; and not to think
Of any misery in the sound of the wind,
In the sound of a few leaves,

Which is the sound of the land
Full of the same wind
That is blowing in the same bare place

As the listener, who listens in the snow,
And, nothing himself, beholds
Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.

Another Weeping Woman

Pour the unhappiness out
From your too bitter heart,
Which grieving will not sweeten.

Poison grows in this dark.
It is in the water of tears
Its black blooms rise.

The magnificent cause of being,
The imagination, the one reality
In this imagined world

Leave you
With him for whom no phantasy moves,
And you are pierced by a death.

The Palm at the End of the Mind

The Palm at the end of the mind,
Beyond the last thought, rises
In the bronze distance,

A gold-feathered bird
Sings in the palm, without human meaning,
Without human feeling, a foreign song.

You know then it is not the reason
That makes us happy or unhappy.
The bird sings. Its feathers shine.

The palm stand on the edge of space.
The wind moves slowly in the branches.
The bird's fire-fangled feathers dangel down.

Blue Wine

The winemaker worries over his casks, as the dark juice
Inside them broods on its own sleep, its ferment of dreaming
Which will turn out to have been a slow waking after all,
All that time. This would be true of the red wine or the white,
But a look inside these barrels of the azure would show
Nothing. They would be as if filled with what the sky looks like.

Three wise old wine people were called in once to consider
The blueness of the wine. One said: "It is 'actually' not
Blue; it is a profound red in the cask, but reads as blue
In the only kind of light that we have to see it by."
Another said: "The taste is irrelevant-whatever
Its unique blend of aromas, bouquets, vinosities
And so forth, the color would make it quite undrinkable."
A third said nothing: he was lost in a blue study while
His eyes drank deeply and his wisdom shuddered, that the wine
Of generality could be so strong and so heady.

There are those who will maintain that all this is a matter
Of water-hopeful water, joyful water got into
Cool bottles at the right instant of light, the organized
Reflective blue of its body remembered once the sky
Was gone, an answer outlasting its forgotten question.
Or: that the water, colorless at first, collapsed in glass
Into a blue swoon from which it never need awaken;
Or: that the water colored in a blush of consciousness
(Not shame) when it first found that it could see out of itself
On all sides roundly, save through the dark moon of cork above
Or through the bottom over which it made its mild surmise.
There are those who maintain this, they who remain happier
With transformations than with immensities like blue wine.

He pushed back his chair and squinted through the sunlight across
At the shadowy, distant hills; crickets sang in the sun;
His mind sang quietly to itself in the breeze, until

He returned to his cool task of translating the newly
Discovered fragments of Plutarch's lost essay "On Blue Wine."
Then the heavy leaves of the rhododendrons scratched against
Gray shingles outside, not for admittance, but in order
To echo his pen sighing over filled, quickening leaves.

"For External Use Only"? Nothing says exactly that,
But there are possibilities-a new kind of bluing
That does not whiten, but intensifies the color of,
All that it washes. Or used in a puzzle-game: "Is blue
Derived from red or white? emerging from blood-colored
Langens into high freedom? or shivering in the silk
Robe it wrapped about itself because of a pale yellow chill?"
One drink of course would put an end to all such questioning.

" ... and when he passed it over to me in the dim firelight,
I could tell from the feel of the bottle what it was: the
Marques de Tontada's own, EI Corazon Azul. I had
Been given it once in my life before, long ago, and
I tell you, Dan, I will never forget the moment when
It became clear, before those embers, that the famous blue
Color of the stuff could come to mean so little, could change
The contingent hue of its significance: the truer
To its blue the wine remained, the less it seemed to matter.
I think, Dan, that was what we had been made to learn that night."

This happened once: Our master, weary of our quarreling,
Laughed at the barrel, then motioned toward us for a drink; and
Lo, out of the sullen wooden spigot came the blue wine!

And all that long morning the fair wind that had carried them
From isle to isle-past the gnashing rocks to leeward and around
The dark vortex that had been known to display in its whorls
Parts, not of ships nor men, but of what it could never have
Swallowed down from above-the fair wind blew them closer to
The last island of all, upon the westernmost side of
Which high cliffs led up to a great place of shining columns
That reddened in the sunset when clouds gathered there. They sailed
Neither toward this, nor toward the eastern cape, darkened by low
Rocks marching out from the land in raging battle with the
Water; they sail'd around a point extending toward them, through
A narrow bay, and landed at a very ancient place.
Here widely-scattered low trees were watching them from the hills.
In huge casks half-buried there lay aging the wine of the
Island and, weary half to madness, they paused there to drink.
This was the spot where, ages before even their time, Bhel
Blazed out in all his various radiances, before
The jealousy of Kelled to his being smashed, as all
The old tales tell, and to the hiding and the parcelling
Out of all the pieces of Bhel's shining. Brightness of flame,
Of blinding bleakness, of flavescent gold, of deepening
Blush-color, of the shining black of obsidian that
Is all of surface, all a memory of unified
Light-all these were seeded far about. There only remained
The constant fraction, which, even after every sky
Had been drenched in its color, never wandered from this spot.
And thus it was: they poured the slow wine out unmingled with
Water and saw, startled, sloshing up against the insides
Of their gold cups, sparkling, almost salty, the sea-bright wine ...

It would soon be sundown and a shawl of purple shadow
Fell over the muttering shoulders of the old land, fair
Hills and foul dales alike, singing of noon grass or Spanish
Matters. The wooden farmhouses grew grayer and the one
We finally stopped at, darker than the others, opened its
Shutters and the light outside poured over the patio.
Voices and chairs clattered; we were welcomed and the youngest

Child came forth holding with both hands a jug of the local wine.
It was blue: reality is so Californian.

Under the Old Law it was seldom permitted to drink
Blue wine, and then only on the Eight Firmamental
Days; and we who no longer kept commandments of that sort
Still liked to remember that for so long it mattered so
Much that they were kept. And thus the domestic reticence
In my family about breaking it out too often:
We waited for when there was an embargo on the red,
Say, or when the white had failed because of undue rain.
Then Father would come up from the cellar with an abashed
Smile, in itself a kind of label for the dark bottle.
At four years old I hid my gaze one night when it was poured.

Perhaps this is all some kind of figure-the thing contained
For the container-and it is these green bottles themselves,
Resembling ordinary ones, that are remarkable
In that their shapes create the new wines-Das Rheinblau, Chateau
La Tour d' Eau, Romanie Cerulie, even the funny old
Half-forgotten Yin Albastru. And the common inks of
Day and night that we color the water with a drop of
Or use for parodies of the famous labels: these as
Well become part of the figuring by which one has put
Blue wine in bold bottles and lined them up against the light
There in a window. When some unexpected visitor
Drops in and sees these bottles of blue wine, and does not ask
At the time what they mean, he may take some drops home with him
In the clear cup of his own eye, to see what he will see.

Ordinary Heartbreaks

To think that we could have had an ordinary family life with its bickering, broken hearts
and divorce suits! There are people in the world so crazy as not to realize that this is normal
human existence of the kind everybody should aim at. What we wouldn't have given
for such ordinary heartbreaks!

-Nadezhda Mandelstam

Hope Against Hope

The day dawns, and what to do with your one body?
At the door, there are no police.
You are of no great danger
to the tribe you live among.
Every crime language can commit
has already been licensed
toward some greater profit.
You look for a place for your rage,
the guile and pucker of it,
and only the faces of those you sleep with
are able to move you. Sweet world,
you think, with no place for the tragic
but your own house. So you make a mess

wherever mess allows. Suddenly,

a loud rapping on the door rouses you
from your reveries. Someone you love
is coming to get you. Unshackled,
you move slowly toward the door.
You feel a revolution coming,
your own four walls trembling.

Prayer to Be Recited after a Jacques Derrida Lecture

By the word by this text begins...

—François Ponge

By the Word by this text begins, dear God,
Whose first line tells the truth
Of all feeling, which is the truth
We pray you preserve against the lies
Of pure intellect, the neglect of the body.
You can surely judge for your self, O
Lord, our difficulties, living here
In the dark of the mind's vengeance,
Where all that we once knew for certain
Has been de-constructed, and misfortune
Resonates backward from its initial text
To afflict its maker like a mirror
Broken seven years after the bad luck
It originally caused. Compassionate One,
Restore us, once more, to our original
Innocence, let the heart reassert itself
Through the dark of this intelligenced text.
Permit us to see, again, by the clear light
Of its original making. By the word by,
Dear God, return us to the hallowed ground
Of our text's first making. May we never forget,
Lord, what we were first moved by...

Cherries

After Auschwitz, it's been said, it's no longer possible
to write about cherries. But the cherries were there,
across from the abandoned lavender oil extraction stove,

surrounded by fields of poppy and thistle and lemon balm
and thyme, in the old nearly abandoned village of Montmorin
once controlled by the Moors, and, when we went to pick them,

the air smelled of lavender, rosemary and linden blossom
and my son was sleeping against the breast of my wife,
who looked especially beautiful in the late light

of Alpes de Haute Provence, and the cherries were delicious
against our pallets, turning our tongues a purplish red,
their juice dripping down our chins, the magpies hovering

over us like priests, the crows pirating the hayfields,
and I found myself with no choice but to bless
the ambiguous God of cherries and magpies and children

and marriage, to bless the strange God of my eccentric
mother-in-law Yvette, gathering cherries high in the trees,
and to curse the dark God of Auschwitz and Treblinka

and Birkenau and Dachau, relishing the taste of cherries
in my mouth, refusing to believe they are the same God.

A Man Lost by a River

There is a voice inside the body.

There is a voice and a music,
a throbbing, four chambered pear
that wants to be heard, that sits
alone by the river with its mandolin
and its torn coat, and sings
for whomever will listen
long that no one wants to hear.

Boston University College of Fine Arts

NEXT SEMESTER AT THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Feb 23-26

Il Matrimonio Segreto

Music by Domenico Cimarosa
Libretto by Giovanni Bertati
Amy Hutchison, stage director
William Lumpkin, conductor
Boston University Theatre

Apr 2

BU Symphony Orchestra and Symphonic Chorus

David Hoose, conductor
Rachmaninoff *The Bells*
Shostakovich *Symphony No. 11 in G minor, "1905"*
Symphony Hall

Apr 19-22

Dialogues of the Carmelites

Music by Francis Poulenc
Libretto by Francis Poulenc and Emmet Lavery
William Lumpkin, conductor
Sharon Daniels, stage director
Boston University Theatre

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But sometimes, lost
on his way to somewhere significant,
a man in a long coat, carrying
a briefcase, wanders into the forest.

He hears the voice and the mandolin,
he sees the thrush and the dandelion,
and he feels the mist rise over the river.
And his life is never the same,
for this having been lost--
for having strayed
from the path of his routine,
for no good reason.

Trip to Bountiful

It is good to have someone to sit beside
late at night, at the movies
when the lights have dimmed
and the previews are over
and you have pigged out over a large order of popcorn,
and the old woman who has lived unhappily
for twenty-one years with her failed son
and her miserable daughter-in-law takes off
to return to that beautiful small town
where she has always remembered herself
as perfectly happy, only to find
that her one friend, the town's last citizen,
has died that very morning, and that when she returns
to the beautiful house that has remained unaltered
in the scrapbook of her wishfulness,
it is a mere ghost of what it once was,
the curtains rotted against the sashes,
the wood frame sagging like an old scarecrow,
the neighbors' houses all abandoned
by death, ice storms, the vicissitudes
of profit; yes, it is good not to be alone
at times like these, when the woman
sitting beside you (who this very morning
seemed merely a burden) send small sobs
wafting like pollen into the theater
and squeezes your hand and say "It's
so sad, this movie," and you agree, yes
it is very sad, this movie, and this life
in which so much we imagine as inalterable
will be taken from us, in which
there are so many towns where someone
will die, this very day, alone and unclaimed
by any of their loved ones (who have all left
to marry in another country or find their fortunes
in some greed-stricken Houston)
which is why it is good to be here,
even just tonight, in this dimly lit theater,

with a good woman and the scent of popcorn
and a wide bed you can climb into again together,
as if it were the town you originally came from
and you could always go back to it,
as if no one could ever die in the dark alone,
not even you.

Leap Child
for Howard Nemerov, 2/29/20

Born on a day which comes again
but does not come again each year,
he grows old and younger both at once:
Chronology's the music, yet his is
the off-beat of calendar's asymmetry,
jazz step in an otherwise classical tune,
so he measures himself against both
our time and his own, counting four
for every one of ours, one for every four.

And if the year skips like a scratched record
the thought of his birth, it bothers him not:
he goes on graying at the temples either way.
And when February's ice gives way to March,
he waits the border, counting himself blessed
to have been born at all, though the stuttering
years sometimes skip over his good name
without even calling.

The Disappointments of Childhood

Perhaps a bird was singing, and for it I felt a tiny affection, the same size as a bird
—Jorge Luis Borges

Imagine, now, an affection, the same size
as the thing it's felt for—for the seed,
seedlike emoluments of liking, and,
for the rain, droplets of tenderness
clustered in small puddles at your feet.

And now remember how, as a child,
someone is telling you they love you.
How much does Daddy love you? they
ask, and you, childlike, spread
your arms as wide as a child can.
Little do you know it then, but
the rest of your life will be spent
measuring the distance between "that much"
and what love, in fact, is capable of—
the narrow width of a man or a woman,
their terrible thinness,
their small bones
growing constantly inward
from your spreading arms.

Only the Lemon of Desire

a love letter won't get you anywhere
because it talks from the wrong part of the body
the love letter has no idea
never heard one
sticky as it should be
a violin says
the name 'Clara'
you are frightened and moved
to rest your heads
but this poem makes no efforts
to love you
and the cold air outside
is not a letter
does not care to hold you

as if this were not about to break
as if from the cracked pitcher
birds did not fly out
as if across the window they seldom cast their shadow
as if not the goose
than who
would last this
winter in which there is too much
already
as if this winter would have us walk across
as if not once cast a single
shadow as if a shadow were not
allowed as if the new snow wouldn't have it
sound of pitcher about to break
sound of a headache

found a piano
colored blue
some yellow
sounded same
as plastic as
a hurt circus
with it wrote
six whole operas
key of g
key of junkyard
dear videogames
i lost you
on level six
all piano plays
that losing tune

the story of lemon meringue
the diner out of pie
he's had little sleep
she says, remember the photo

indian summer, october fair
the one with the wind in it
someone i never met
a man in a felt hat
carried a browning copy
in his wallet, these are the children
i never met, he said
banana cream
along his moustache
the city is real but not real sadness
only the lemon of desire is

this poem is being operated
by a student driver
normally during class
he steers the sedan
not in the direction red wants him to
but parallel parks his longing
between a convertible and a minivan
the red of the poem wedges him in
steers and commands his little idiot hopes
doesn't bother to give lessons
keeps the speedometer out of control
the gearshift threatening
to race away the trainee's
only sense of ownership

borders broken
weight of secrets
documents
forged
i am not i am not
who i was
yesterday
nor the day after
nor tomorrow
won't recall
a single detail
of me to speak
of not a trace

weathervane
knows more poetry
than thermometer
tells when bones hurt
frosted window
who just took a shower
wind directs
weathervane
language
is not the ghost
of my bath foggy glass
knows more

me than soaps
shampoo too
measure how clean the sentence is

*For My Brother:
Reported Missing In Action, 1943*

Sweet brother, if I do not sleep
My eyes are flowers for your tomb;
And if I cannot eat my bread,
My fasts shall live like willows where you died.
If in the heat I find no water for my thirst,
My thirst shall turn to springs for you, poor traveler.

Where, in what desolate and smokey country,
Lies your poor body, lost and dead?
And in what landscape of disaster
Has your unhappy spirit lost its road?

Come, in my labor find a resting place
And in my sorrows lay your head,
Or rather take my life and blood
And buy yourself a better bed--
Or take my breath and take my death
And buy yourself a better rest.

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When all the men of war are shot
And flags have fallen into dust,
Your cross and mine shall tell men still
Christ died on each for both of us.

For in the wreckage or your April Christ lies slain,
And Christ weeps in the ruins of my spring:
The money of Whose tears shall fall
Into your weak and friendless hand,
And buy you back to your own land:

The silence of Whose tears shall fall
Like bells upon your alien tomb.
Hear them and come: they call you home.

—Thomas Merton

Thoughts on the War
But if the cause be not good,
the King himself hath a heavy reckoning to make,
when all those legs, and arms, and heads,
chopped off in a battle, shall join together at the latter day,
and cry all, 'We died at such a place';
some swearing, some crying for a surgeon,
some upon their wives left poor behind them,
some upon the debts they owe,
some upon their children rawley left.

I am afraid there are few die well that die in a battle,
for how can they charitably dispose of anything
when blood is their argument?
Now, if these men do not die well,
it will be a black matter for the King that led them to it.

—William Shakespeare
Henry V—Act IV, scene 1

The Angel that Troubled the Water
text by Thornton Wilder

A great pool of water.

The pool: a vast gray hall with a hole in the ceiling open to the sky. Broad stone steps lead up from the water on its four sides. The water is continuously restless and throws blue reflections upon the walls. The sick, the blind and the malformed are lying on the steps. The long stretches of silences and despair are broken from time to time when one or another groans and turns in his rags, or raises a fretful wail or a sudden cry of exasperation at long-continued pain. A door leads out upon the porch where the attendants of the sick are playing at dice, waiting for the call to fling their masters into the water when the angel of healing stirs the pool. Beyond the porch there is a glimpse of the fierce sunlight and the empty streets of an oriental noonday.

Suddenly the Angel appears upon the top step. His face and robe shine with a color that is both silver and gold, and the wings of blue and green, tipped with rose, shimmer in the glistening light. He walks slowly down among the shapeless sleepers and stands gazing into the water that already trembles in anticipation of its virtue.

A new invalid enters.

The Newcomer: Come, long-expected love. Come, long-expected love. Let the sacred finger and the sacred breath stir up the pool. Here on the lowest step I wait with festering limbs, with my heart in pain. Free me, long-expected love, from this old burden. Since I cannot stay, since I must return to the city, come now, renewal, come, release.

The mistaken invalid wakes suddenly out of a nightmare and hangs over the brink of the pool, gazing eagerly at the water. He drags himself out of the water and lies dripping disconsolately upon the steps.

The Mistaken Invalid: I dreamt that an angel stood by me and that at last I should be free of this hateful place and its company. Better a mistake and this jeering than an opportunity lost.

He sees the Newcomer beside him and turns on him.

Aie! You have no right to be here, at all events. You are able to walk about. You pass your days in the city. You come here only at great intervals, and it may be that by some unlucky chance you

might be the first one to see the sign. You would rush into the water and a cure would be wasted. You are yourself a physician. You have restored my own children. Go back to your work and leave these miracles to us who need them.

The Newcomer: (Ignoring him; under his breath): My work grows faint. Heal me, long-expected love; heal me that I may continue. Renewal, release; let me begin again without this fault that bears me down.

The Mistaken Invalid: I shall sit here without ever lifting my eyes from the surface of the pool. I shall be the next. Many times, even since I have been here, many times the angel has passed and has stirred the water, and hundreds have left the hall leaping and crying out with joy. I shall be the next.

The Angel kneels down on the lowest step and meditatively holds his finger poised above the shuddering water.

The Angel: Joy and fulfilment, completion, content, rest and release have been promised.

The Newcomer: Come, long expected love.

The Angel (Without turning): Draw back, physician, this moment is not for you.

The Newcomer: Angelic visitor, I pray then, listen to my prayer.

The Angel: Healing is not for you.

The Newcomer: Surely, surely, the angels are wise. Surely, O prince, you are not deceived by my apparent wholeness. Your eyes can see the nets in which my wings are caught; the sin into which all my endeavors sink half performed cannot be concealed from you.

The Angel: I know.

The Newcomer: It is no shame to boast to an angel of what I might yet do in love's service were I but freed from this bondage.

The Newcomer: Surely, surely the water is stirring strangely today! Surely I shall be whole!

The Angel: I must make haste. Already the sky is a-fire with the gathering host, for it is the hour of the new song among us. The earth itself feels the preparation in the skies and attempts its hymns. Children born in this hour spend all their lives in a sharper longing for the perfection that awaits them.

The Newcomer: Oh, in such an hour was I born, and doubly fearful to me is the flaw in my heart. Must I drag my shame, prince and singer, all my days more bowed than my neighbor?

The Angel (Standing a moment in silence): Without your wound where would your power be? It is your very remorse that makes your low voice tremble into the hearts of men. The very angels themselves cannot persuade the wretched and blundering children on earth as can one human being broken on the wheels of living. In love's service only the wounded soldiers can serve. Draw back.

The Angel kneels and draws his finger through the water. The pool is presently astir with running ripples. They increase and a divine wind strikes the gay surface. The waves are flung upon the steps. The Mistaken Invalid casts himself into the pool. He emerges and leaps joyfully up the steps. The Angel smiles for a moment and disappears.

The Healed Man (the no-longer mistaken invalid): Look, my hand is new as a child's. Glory be to God! I have begun again.

The Healed Man addresses the Newcomer, taking him by the arm.

May you be the next, my brother. But come with me first, an hour only, to my home. My son is lost in dark thoughts. I-- I do not understand him, and only you have ever lifted his mood. Only an hour... my daughter, since her child has died, sits in the shadow. She will not listen to us...

They exit.

Rodney Lister

Rodney Lister received his early musical training at the Blair School of Music in Nashville, Tennessee. He was a student at the New England Conservatory of Music (Bachelor of Music degree, with honors) from 1969 to 1973 and at Brandeis University (Master of Fine Arts degree) from 1975 to 1977. In between his stay at those two institutions, he lived in England, where he studied privately with Sir Peter Maxwell Davies. He subsequently was a member of Davies's composition seminar at the Dartington Hall Summer School of Music (1975, 1978, 1980-82). He was a Bernstein fellow at the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood in 1973. His composition teachers, aside from Davies, have been Malcolm Peyton, Donald Martino, Harold Shapero, Arthur Berger, and Virgil Thomson. He has also studied piano with Enid Katahn, David Hagan, Robert Helps, and Patricia Zander.

Mr. Lister was co-founder and co-director of Music Here & Now, a concert series of new music by Boston area composers at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (1971-1973), and from 1976 until 1982 was music coordinator of Dinosaur Annex Music Ensemble. He was a founding member of the Music Production Company in 1982 and continues to work with the group as pianist and composer. Rodney Lister has received commissions, grants, and fellowships from the Berkshire Music Center, the Fromm Foundation at Harvard, the Koussevitzky Music Foundation at the Library of Congress, the Fires of London, the Poets' Theatre, the Virgil Thomson Foundation, the Preparatory School of the New England Conservatory, Dinosaur Annex Music Ensemble, the MacDowell Colony, and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, among others. His works have been performed at Tanglewood, the Library of Congress, the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, and in New York and London, among other places, by performers including Joel Smirnoff, Tammy Grimes, Phyllis Curtin, Jane Manning, Mary Thomas, Michael Finnissy, Kathleen Supove, Jane Struss, Boston Cecelia, the Blair Quartet, and the Fires of London. As a pianist, he has been involved in premieres, first US performances, first UK performances or first Boston performances of works by Virgil Thomson, Peter Maxwell Davies, Milton Babbitt, Michael Finnissy, Philip Grange, Lee Hyla, and Paul Bowles, among others. He is currently on the faculty of The New England Conservatory where he teaches composition and the Preparatory School of the New England Conservatory, where he teaches composition, theory, and chamber music and is co-director of the annual contemporary music festival. He is also a music tutor at Pforzheimer House, Harvard University, and is on the faculty of Newton North High School and Greenwood Music Camp.

Program Notes

Of Mere Being is several poems by Wallace Stevens set as sort of parlor songs. Each one was later turned into a chorus piece.

Blue Wine: John Hollander was visiting Saul Steinberg at his studio when he noticed some wine bottles, with home made labels by Steinberg, filled with a blue liquid. It caused him to write a poem which is a sort of set of variations on the idea of blue wine. My setting was written for the actress Tammy Grimes. I can't remember the exact particulars, but she was involved with a project (which in the end didn't materialize) which was supposed set up a sort of repertory theater company in Boston consisting of fancy famous actors, mostly from New York. Ms. Grimes was doing a sort of outreach program under their auspices, and did my piece on that program. I have since performed it with a number of people, including Phyllis Curtin and the Bishop of Edinburgh. I also recorded it with John Hollander several years ago.

The music of *Blue Wine* is a network of quotation of and allusion to a number of pre-existing pieces by a variety of composers, including Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Purcell, Virgil Thomson, and others, devised in a sort of free-associational reaction to the text, and made use of things I'd learned from pieces for narrator by Earl Kim and Judith Weir.

Ordinary Heartbreaks was written at the Virginia Center for the Creative arts in during August of 1992 for a recital which I was supposed to do with the tenor Ray deVol. Just about the time I finished them Ray died from a massive heart attack after a workout at his gym. The songs, which are dedicated to his memory, didn't get performed for a while. All of the songs are based on material derived from a hymn tune called Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling, which is featured in the music for the movie *The Trip to Bountiful*, the ostensible subject of one of the poems.

Only the Lemon of Desire: Anthony Hawley is a colleague of mine at Greenwood Music Camp, as I his wife, Becca Fischer. When I first knew Anthony he was a poet, plain and simple; since then he's morphed into being as much or more a visual artist. I arranged the poems of Anthony's which I set in an order which is not his, making a more or less symmetrical pattern, according to their moods or subject, around one which I thought of as central "dramatic" scene, all connected by instrumental interludes.

The title *Distracted Times* is lifted from that of a keyboard piece by Thomas Tomkins, *A Sad Paven for these Distracted Tymes*, for two songs which came about as reactions to particular events. The horrific events on September 11, 2001 left me preoccupied with the thought of the desolation of thousands of individual lives. Thomas Merton's poem about his brother, a fighter pilot who was downed in action during the second World War, spoke to that situation. A few years later, it seemed to me that a speech of a soldier on the eve of the Battle of Agincourt spoke to concerns about the, at that time, threatened invasion of Iraq by the United States; the setting of that speech is haunted by a hymn tune by Justin Morgan, whose title is *Amanda*, and whose text begins with the words, "Death like an ever-rolling stream bears us away..."

The Angel That Troubled the Waters is one of a series of plays by Thornton Wilder; each had three characters and was supposed to last for about three minutes. It is not clear that Wilder intended that they would actually be performed. I, on the other hand, did intend my setting of it as a short theater piece...

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Monday, November 14, 8:00pm

Guest Artists Recital
Emanuel Borok, violin
Alina Polyakov, piano
College of Fine Arts Concert Hall

Tuesday, November 15, 8:00pm

Ellalou Dimmock Vocal Award Recital
Tom Curry, baritone
Lea Madda, soprano
College of Fine Arts Concert Hall

Wednesday, November 16, 8:00pm

ALEA III
Charles Ives: The Astonishing Pioneer
Gunther Schuller, conductor
Tsai Performance Center

Thursday, November 17, 8:00pm

Boston University Wind Ensemble
David Martins, conductor
Tsai Performing Arts Center

Friday, November 18, 8:00pm

Boston University Chamber Orchestra
David Hoose, conductor
College of Fine Arts Concert Hall

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Marsh Chapel, 735 Commonwealth Avenue
Tsai Performance Center, 685 Commonwealth Avenue

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