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Faculty Recital Series: Jennifer Bill, April 23, 2012

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Boston University College of Fine Arts
School of Music
presents

Faculty Recital Series

Jennifer Bill, saxophone

with guests

Yoshiko Kline, piano

Michael Kregler, piano

Monday

April 23, 2012

8:30pm

CFA Concert Hall

Boston University College of Fine Arts
School of Music

Faculty Recital Series

Jennifer Bill, saxophone

The 227th concert in the 2011–12 season

April 23, 2012

CFA Concert Hall

David Maslanka
(b. 1943)

Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Wind Ensemble
I. Song: Fire in the Earth
III. Song: Dear Jesus, what have you DONE?!
V. Song: Mortal, have you seen this?

Michael Kregler
(b. 1977)

Two Reflections on Poems from
"The Awful Rowing Toward God" by Anne Sexton
I. Reflection on "The Earth"
II. Reflection on "Riding the Elevator Into
the Sky"

Edward Gregson
(b. 1945)

Saxophone Concerto

Performers Biographies:

Saxophonist and conductor, **Dr. Jennifer Bill** performs solo and chamber music with a variety of groups around New England, including BRUSH|REED and the Chagall Performance Art Collaborative. She has performed contemporary chamber music with a variety of artists including vocalists, clarinetists, cellists, flutists, taped media, percussionists and dancers. Currently she is working with a visual artist (Linnea Doyle) in the experimentation of the auralvisual in a collaboration named BRUSH|REED. She has participated in numerous world premieres for saxophone including **Two Reflections on Poems by Anne Sexton** by Michael C. Kregler in 2012 and 2007, *Shift Shaf* by Claudio Gabriele and *Dreams for Mazes* and *Sax Quartet* by David Krebs in 2009, *The Miraculous Tale* for saxophone and derabucca by Halim El-Dabh as part of World-Wide Concurrent Premieres in 2007, and works by Howard Frazin and Shih-Hui Chen as part of Worldwide Concurrent Premieres in 2005. In December of 2005, Dr. Bill was a guest soloist with the Boston University Wind Ensemble, performing John Harbison's *San Antonio*. She has participated in national and world conferences including the World Saxophone Congress, the North American Saxophone Alliance national conference, and the North American Saxophone Alliance regional conference. Dr. Bill is currently a Classical Artist/Educator endorser for Alexander Reeds.

As a conductor Dr. Bill currently leads the Boston University Concert Band and the Providence College Symphonic Winds. In May of 2011 she led the PC Symphonic Winds in a performance tour of Italy with performances in Napoli, Maiori, and Monte Porzio Cantone (Roma).

Dr. Bill is currently Faculty at Boston University (saxophone, chamber music, director of concert band, and class woodwinds), a Special Lecturer in Music at Providence College (conductor of symphonic winds, director of new music ensemble, theory, ear training, music appreciation, saxophone, and chamber music), and a Faculty member at The Boston Conservatory (liaison between Boston Conservatory and the Boston Arts Academy). She is the saxophone instructor, wind ensemble coordinator, and assistant director of the saxophone workshop for the Boston University Tanglewood Institute. Dr. Bill also serves on the Board of Directors for World-Wide Concurrent Premiers and Commissioning Funds, Inc.

Dr. Bill received her education from Providence College (BA), The Boston Conservatory (MM) and Boston University (MusAD).

Artist **Yoshiko Kline** performs as recitalist, soloist, and chamber musician throughout Japan and the New England area. Recipient of several awards throughout Japan, Yoshiko was presented the opportunity, as a grand prizewinner, to perform her solo debut in the Tokyo Bunka-kaikan Hall. Her performances have been reported as "carefully colored and musically refined ... with a sensitive ear, relating sound to musical expression... Her remarkably unique interpretations were the charm of her performance..." Since her debut concert, she has returned to Japan by invitation to perform on various concert series.

She has been invited to several summer festivals, including The New York Keyboard Festival and The Aspen Music Festival as a two year fellowship. Yoshiko's performances have been broadcast live from the studios of Boston radio stations WGBH & WMNB and Aspen, CO Radio KAJX. In addition to her classical interests, she excels as contemporary artist performing and premiering new works for resident composers and ensembles. Yoshiko received her BM at Toho-Gakuen Conservatory of Music and MM, with honors, at New England Conservatory of Music. Principal teachers have included Gabriel Chodos, Yoriko Takahashi and Tamiko Ishimoto.

Michael Kregler was born in New York, New York. A freelance composer and accompanist, Mike has widespread experience in classical, jazz, pop, and theater styles. He earned his bachelor and graduate degrees from the University of Miami. As a composer, Mike has composed and arranged for orchestra, choir, chamber ensembles, big band, solo piano, theater productions, film, and for other various ensembles and projects. Mike's most recently prevalent works are his art songs, written on the poetry of Frost, Dickinson, Hughes, as well as original texts. His most recent choral composition, "A Choral Tapestry" featuring the poetry of Emily Dickinson and Dorothy Parker, was written on a generous commission by the Rhode Island College Chorus under the direction of Teresa Coffman. Several of Mike's other choral compositions have been published by Walton music and GIA. As accompanist, Mike has played for choirs, instrumentalists, and vocalists in the RI, MA, NJ, NY areas. He is currently full-time faculty at Providence College and

the accompanist/assistant music director for the Rhode Island Civic Chorale and orchestra. He has also worked extensively as a solo jazz pianist, with small jazz groups, and has accompanied popular and theater styles.

Mike now freelances in the Northeast and lives in Rhode Island with his wife Mary and son James Joseph.

Program Notes:

David Maslanka was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts in 1943. He attended the Oberlin College Conservatory where he studied composition with Joseph Wood. He spent a year at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria, and did masters and doctoral study in composition at Michigan State University where his principal teacher was H. Owen Reed.

Maslanka's music for winds has become especially well known. Among his 40-plus works for wind ensemble and band are Symphonies 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9, 12 concertos, a Mass, and many concert pieces. His wind chamber music includes four wind quintets, two saxophone quartets, and many works for solo instrument and piano. In addition, he has written a variety of orchestral and choral pieces. David Maslanka's compositions are published by Carl Fischer, Inc., David Maslanka Publications, Kjos Music Company, Marimba Productions, Inc., the North American Saxophone Alliance, OU Percussion Press, and TrevCo Music, and have been recorded on Albany, Reference Recordings, BIS (Sweden), Naxos, Cambria, CRI, Mark, Novisse, AUR, Cafua (Japan), Brain Music (Japan), Barking Dog, and Klavier labels. He has served on the faculties of the State University of New York at Geneseo, Sarah Lawrence College, New York University, and Kingsborough Community College of the City University of New York, and since 1990 has been a freelance composer. He now lives in Missoula, Montana. David Maslanka is a member of ASCAP.

Maslanka writes of his Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Wind Ensemble:

"This concerto turned out to be a good deal larger than I would reasonably want. As I got into the composing, the ideas became insistent: none of them would be left out! The format of Songs and Interludes arises from my other recent works for saxophones ("Mountain Roads" for saxophone quartet and "Song Book" for alto saxophone and marimba) and suggests a music that is more intimate than symphonic. There is a strong spiritual overtone with quotes from Bach Chorales, and from my own works "Hell's Gate" and "Mass." A story is hinted at which has the Crucifixion right smack in the middle - the climax of the third movement quotes the "Crucifixus" from the "Mass." I don't know what the story is, only that it wants to be music, and not words.

I. Song: "Fire in the Earth"

Walking through a Montana field on a brilliant late fall day, three images came in rapid succession: a distant row of red plant stems caught by the morning sun,

snow on the surrounding high mountains, green grass at my feet. The following poetic image came:

Fire in the earth

Snow in the heavens

New green grass in the middle of November

This is a quiet, emotional music – sometimes not so quiet – contained by a very simple song form.

III. Song: "Dear Jesus, what have you DONE?!"

This music grows out of the chorale "Herzliebste Jesu, was hast du verbrochen" ("Dearest Jesus, what law did you break"). The chorale is the starting point for a huge upsurge of powerful emotion, cresting with the climax of the "Crucifixus" in the "Mass." Dear Jesus, what have you done to get yourself crucified?... And then you drag the rest of us up there with you!!

V. Song: "Mortal, have you seen this?"

In the Book of Ezekiel, the prophet has a vision of a man "whose appearance shone like bronze." The "Bronze Man" shows him the Holy City. He then leads him into a deep and very wide river that cannot be crossed, and says "Mortal, have you seen this?" Where the river enters the sea the water becomes fresh; everything will live where the river goes; trees along the river will not wither, their fruit will be for food, their leaves for healing.

This movement is an echo of the third. It opens and closes with what has been called the "coronation" music from my composition "Hell's Gate" – in this case played very softly and inwardly."

Michael Kregler writes: "Reflection on 'The Earth'" and "Reflection on 'Riding the Elevator Into the Sky'" were conceived as vehicles to present poems by the confessional poet Anne Sexton without the use of vocal settings. Rather, the composer's musical "reflections" follow a recording or live reading of each poem. These pieces were written for esteemed saxophonist Jennifer Bill.

"The Earth"

God loafs around heaven,
without a shape

He would like to smoke His cigar
or bite His fingernails
and so forth.

God owns heaven
but He craves the earth,

the earth with its little sleepy caves,
its bird resting at the kitchen window,
even its murders lined up like broken chairs,
even its writers digging into their souls
with jackhammers,
even its hucksters selling their animals
for gold,
even its babies sniffing for their music,
the farm house, white as a bone,
sitting in the lap of its corn,
even the statue holding up its widowed life,
but most of all He envies the bodies,
He who has no body.

The eyes, opening and shutting like keyholes
and never forgetting, recording by thousands,
the skull with its brains like eels--
the tablet of the world--
the bones and their joints
that build and break for any trick,
the genitals,
the ballast of the eternal,
and the heart, of course,
that swallows the tides
and spits them out cleansed.

He does not envy the soul so much.
He is all soul
but He would like to house it in a body
and come down
and give it a bath
now and then.

"Riding the Elevator Into the Sky"

As the fireman said:
Don't book a room over the fifth floor
in any hotel in New York.
They have ladders that will reach further
but no one will climb them.
As the New York Times said:
The elevator always seeks out
the floor of the fire
and automatically opens
and won't shut.
These are the warnings
that you must forget

if you're climbing out of yourself.
If you're going to smash into the sky.
Many times I've gone past
the fifth floor,
cranking upward,
but only once
have I gone all the way up.
Sixtieth floor:
small plants and swans bending
into their grave,
Floor two hundred:
mountains with the patience of a cat,
silence wearing its sneakers.
Floor five hundred:
pages and letters centuries old,
birds to drink,
a kitchen of clouds.
Floor six thousand:
the stars,
skeletons on fire,
their arms singing.
And a key,
a very large key,
that opens something —
some useful door —
somewhere —
up there.

Edward Gregson is a composer of international standing, whose music has been performed, broadcast, and commercially recorded worldwide. He studied composition with Alan Bush and piano at the Royal Academy of Music from 1963 - 1967 winning five prizes for composition. Since then he has worked solely to commission and has written orchestral, chamber, instrumental and choral music, as well as music for the theatre, film and television.

His commissions have included, amongst others, orchestral music for the English Chamber Orchestra, the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, the BBC Philharmonic, and the Hallé, with performances by many other orchestras and ensembles around the world. Of particular significance in his orchestral output is the series of nine concertos (for horn, tuba, trombone, trumpet, clarinet, piano, violin, saxophone, and cello) which he commenced in 1970 and is still ongoing. His most recent work for orchestra was commissioned by BBC Radio 3 for the 'Mahler in Manchester' Festival - Dream Song was premiered by the BBC Philharmonic under Gianandrea Noseda in 2010 and received great critical acclaim. Gregson is also internationally renowned for his contributions to the wind and brass repertoire.

In 1988 he was nominated for an Ivor Novello Award for his title music for BBC Television's Young Musician of the Year programmes and in the same year he was commissioned by the Royal Shakespeare Company to write the music for a major cycle of the Shakespeare history plays. In 2002 a major retrospective of his music was held in Manchester which coincided with the release of a CD of his orchestral music (including the clarinet and violin concertos) on the Chandos label. A second volume (including the concertos for piano, saxophone and trumpet) was released in 2008, whilst a third will be released in 2011.

Edward Gregson retired from an academic career in music in the summer of 2008, latterly as Principal of the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, a post he held for 12 years. He still serves on a number of important boards relating to music education and the music profession and has been honoured with many Doctorates and Fellowships from English universities and conservatoires.

Gregson writes: "My Saxophone Concerto was commissioned by Nobuya Sugawara, one of the leading saxophonists in the world today. The work is scored for alto saxophone, doubling soprano saxophone in the second movement, and symphony orchestra, with important parts for piano and kit percussion. The work lasts for some 24 minutes and is cast in three linked movements. Although the movements have no formal titles they do express certain ideas, so that the first movement could be described as *of the city*, the second movement *of love*, and the third movement *of life*.

The work opens in a slightly unusual way which I shall not reveal here. However, the mood of the slow introduction is rather improvisatory – a sort of interplay between the soloist and various sections of the orchestra. The movement proper is fast, rhythmic, sometimes jazzy, sometimes violent, and expresses the diverse landscape of an urban environment. The more relaxed second subject is calmer in mood and more obviously tonal, although each time this settled harmonic world is invaded by subversive elements.

As in the transition from the introduction to the first movement proper, the held pitch of C on the violas links to the reflective slow movement where the solo soprano saxophone gradually develops a lyrical melodic expression. Initially this is set against a background of chromatic harmony, but as the movement progresses, so the harmonic context becomes simpler until the final 'song' expresses a heartfelt sadness in modal C minor. Once again, the held pitch of C links directly to the final movement.

This final movement is a buoyant *motu perpetuo* which exploits the virtuoso side of the alto saxophone, both in technique and character. The movement is structured around a repeated quaver ostinato, which moves through each note of the chromatic scale until, eventually, it returns to C, but this time reaching a harmonic and tonal resolution in C major, pointed by a simple but expansive melody towards which the piece has been heading, and ending in a blaze of joyful colour."