1999-01-24

Faculty concert: Bayla Keyes and Lois Shapiro, January 24, 1999

Boston University School for the Arts
Music Division

—presents—

FACULTY CONCERT

BAYLA KEYES, *violin*

LOIS SHAPIRO, *guest artist, piano*

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Sunday, January 24, 1999 at 3:00 p.m.
Tsai Performance Center
685 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts

FACULTY CONCERT

BAYLA KEYES, *violin*
LOIS SHAPIRO, *guest artist, piano*

Sunday, January 24, 1999
3:00 p.m.

PROGRAM

"America: Heart and Soul"

Suite for Violin and Piano (1943) — William Grant Still (1895-1978)

Andante semplice
Lento
Allegretto giusto

Companion Piece (1989) — Marjorie Merryman (b. 1952)

Allegro
Adagio
Little Rhapsody

Sonata for Violin and Piano (1943) — Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

Andante semplice
Lento
Allegretto giusto

—Intermission—

Second Sonata for Violin and Piano (1902-9) — Charles Ives (1874-1954)

Autumn
In the Barn
The Revival

Who Let the Cat out Last Night? (1984) — Paul Schoenfield (b. 1947)

PROGRAM NOTES

William Grant Still (1895-1978)
Suite for Violin and Piano

William Grant Still was born in Woodville, Mississippi to parents of African, Native American Indian, Spanish, Irish, and Scottish ancestry. Teachers and musicians themselves, his parents taught him the value of education and an appreciation of music. Still studied at Wilberforce University and the Oberlin Conservatory. He performed with such greats as W.C. Handy, Paul Whiteman, Artie Shaw, and Eubie Blake's "Shuffle Along" Orchestra.

In October of 1931, Still's Symphony No.1, the *Afro-American Symphony*, was performed under the direction of Howard Hanson at the Eastman School of Music, making Still the first African-American to have a symphony performed by a major symphony orchestra. Another of many firsts for Still was *Troubled Island*: the first opera written by an African-American person to be produced by a major opera company, the New York City Opera.

In his lifetime, Still composed over 150 pieces, including 10 operas, 4 ballets, and 5 symphonies, as well as many chamber, choral, and vocal works, and arrangements of folk-themes. The *Suite for Violin and Piano*, one of the composer's most beloved works, was composed in 1943 and consists of three movements. Paintings by African-Americans served as inspiration for each of the movements. Richard Barthe's dancing figure served to inspire the first movement entitled "African Dancer", Sargent Johnson's portrait of a mother and a child appropriately brought forth "Mother and Child", and "Gamin" was composed from the inspiration of Augusta Savage's mischievous boy. The piece was premiered in Boston 52 years ago by Louis Kaufman, to whom the work was dedicated.

Boston Musica Viva

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Marjorie Merryman (b. 1952)
Companion Piece

Works of Boston-based composer Marjorie Merryman have been commissioned by many orchestras, choruses, wind ensembles, chamber groups, foundations and individuals. Her music has been played throughout the United States, as well as in England, France, Poland, Greece, Russia, Israel and Taiwan. Among her awards are prizes from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Boston League-ISCM, and the WBZ Fund for the Arts. She has received fellowships and grants from Tanglewood, the Bunting Institute, and

the National Endowment for the Arts Meet the Composer program. Her works are published by CF Peters, APNM, and Margun Music.

Companion Pieces, originally a work for flute and piano, was written in 1989 for flutist Alan Weiss. The first movement, *Allegro*, is motivic and rather contrapuntal, with material trading equally between the two instruments. The first few measures of the movement are introductory, and form the basis for most of the thematic elements. The second movement is quite lyrical. The music begins very softly, builds gradually to a short-lived climax, and subsides again, rounding off with references to the opening of the movement. A hushed coda spins the melodic line out to its conclusion. The last movement is quick and light, with rhythmically pulsing sections at the beginning and end. In the middle, brief lyrical interludes provide momentary contrast within the overall context of dancing, motoric rhythm. This third movement was the first to be written, and actually started out as a violin and marimba piece for the duo Marimolin. It seemed a good "companion" to the other two movements, thus completing the three-movement piece and also providing the title.

Marjorie Merryman

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Aaron Copland (1900-1990)
Sonata for Violin and Piano

The fifth child of Lithuanian-Jewish immigrants, Aaron Copland was born and raised in Brooklyn. The lessons for his siblings which surrounded Aaron with domestic music-making were at first denied to him, but this served only to sharpen Aaron's appetite. At thirteen, he told a friend he was going to become a composer; at fourteen, he began serious piano studies with Leopold Wolfsohn; at fifteen, he heard his first piano recital, by Paderewski; at seventeen, he began serious music studies with Rubin Goldmark, a pupil of Dvořák's, who gave Aaron a thorough grounding in traditional theory and counterpoint. Studies with Nadia Boulanger in Paris (1921-24) gave him a taste of the wider musical world of his day. He returned to America with an invitation to play for Serge Koussevitsky, to whom Ms. Boulanger had recommended him enthusiastically. This relationship was to prove fundamental to Copland's success. Koussevitsky became Copland's mentor, premiering and championing many of his works and introducing him to musicians who, like Copland himself, were destined to become musical giants. Copland, an articulate speaker and writer, became a seminal figure in American music. His warm and unpretentious personal style made him beloved by all who knew him, and his music became for many people the symbol of America itself.

In a lecture at Eastman in 1925, the composer remarked: "If we haven't a folksong foundation, we must invent one. What is a folksong after all? I came to the conclusion that in my case it was the songs I heard when I was a child—rather commonplace jazz tunes and music of the "Old Black Joe" variety. These, then, are my material, and I must accept them for what they are. If we have only these elements as essentially American, our music must make the best of it and do the work so well that something worth while will come from the effort." Copland, a painstaking worker, took his European counterpoint training and applied it to his American materials. A believer in music for the trained and untrained, he wrote a wide range of music, including ballets with Western themes drawn from books of Appalachian folksongs, orchestral works using the jazz idioms which he had studied at length, film scores using hymn tunes, and pieces for children based on Negro spirituals. Later he was to write more absolute music such as the Sonata for Violin and Piano. The composer wrote: "The Sonata for Violin and Piano was composed at intervals during 1942 and 1943, partly in New York and partly in Hollywood. The dedication reads: 'To Lt. Harry H. Dunham (1910-43), a friend of mine who lost his life while on duty in the South Pacific.' There are three movements—moderate tempo, slow, and fast. The last two are played without pause. The first movement alternates in mood between a tender lyricism and a more rapidly paced section. The slow movement is bare in outline and poetic in nature. The finale combines light and bouncy material with sections that are more serious in tone. The Sonata ends with a short coda that makes reference to the theme of the opening movement."

Roughly contemporary with the ballet *Rodeo* and indeed incorporating similar materials, the Sonata yet occupies a higher ground. Chordal harmonies convey a grandeur without grandiosity; deceptively simple tonalities give an open, youthful air; and the occasional dissonances lend poignancy and a sense of uncertainty in the journey ahead. Neither romantic nor bravura, this important work reflects Copland's vast knowledge of American idioms in spare, subtle and deeply moving musical language.

Bayla Keyes

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Charles Ives (1874-1954)
Second Sonata for Violin and Piano

Charles Ives always said that his primary music mentor and inspiration was his father George E. Ives—band director and music teacher in Danbury, CT. He was raised on Bach and counterpoint along with Stephen

Foster, and was taught to always experiment and keep his ears open, as well as to value music that was particularly related to human events. He was fascinated by paradox, ambiguity and the serendipitous combinations of disparate ideas.

Indeed, one of the most impressive facts about Ives' music is the wealth and range of its sources. During his career as a performing organist and composer—maintained around the edges of his real livelihood, the insurance business—Ives worked within four separate and distinct musical traditions and eventually synthesized them all in a truly innovative fashion. These traditions were American popular music, American Protestant church music, European classical music, and experimental music.

The second sonata (one of four violin sonatas written between 1902-9) is a marvelous example of Ives' belief that transcendence should be sought in the commonplaces of everyday life. The musical manifestation of this belief is his predilection for a collage-like juxtaposition of vernacular, popular tunes (hymns, Civil War songs and the like) along with the rhapsodic, highly personal commentaries on the experiences they conjure. He characteristically creates a novel kind of cumulative form in which presentation and development of ideas, although present, is subsumed within a narrative shape that gives the effect of themes emerging out of great, abrasive sound masses, causing our ears to slowly recognize the "familiar" buried within the "strange". This process, unfolding here in both first and last movements of the second sonata, leads to a forte, climactic peak experience, followed by a gradual dissolve—a suggestion of self merging with the cosmos.

Ives provided a colorful, suggestive title for each movement. The first, named "Autumn" after Barthelemon's hymn, is a free double-variation on two ideas initially represented by distinctly different tempi—the first, slow; the second, rather quick. In the third statement of the pair of themes, their differences are absorbed in the commonality of a moderate tempo and in an emotionally moving reconciliation of seemingly unbridgeable opposition.

"In the Barn", the second movement, reveals its roots to be in country fiddling music, such as "Money Musk", "Sailor's Hornpipe", and "The White Cockade". Lively dance rhythms turn vertiginously patriotic with George F. Root's "The Battle Cry of Freedom" and a closing whoop of high spirits.

The final, tripartite movement, "The Revival", follows its mystical, improvisatory introduction with a set of free variations on "Nettleton" by John Wyeth. "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing" brings an increase of speed and emotional fervor in a remarkably vivid evocation of the communal religious euphoria. A wisp of "Nettleton" brings the movement to a hushed close-- spent and exhausted but fulfilled.

"I remember something father told me," Ives once said. "He said that if a man knows more about a horse than he does about heaven, he should concentrate on the horse and maybe it would wind up carrying him to heaven." In writing music from the core of his rich, multi-faceted musical experience, this iconoclastic, highly original artist brought us all quite a bit closer to heaven.

Lois Shapiro

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Paul Schoenfield (b. 1947)
Who Let the Cat out Last Night?

Paul Schoenfield is an eclectic, born in Detroit, educated at Carnegie-Mellon University and the University of Arizona, for many years a freelance composer and pianist-entertainer, and for several years a member of a Kibbutz in Israel. His works cover a sound spectrum ranging from immense harmonic complexity and difficulty, through Klezmer music, to ragtime, blues and country fiddle styles. *Who Let the Cat Out Last Night?*, the first of *Three Country Fiddle Pieces*, is a high-spirited romp mixing the composer's dry sense of humor with his obvious affection for the country fiddle style. The work was originally written for electric violin, piano, and percussion.

Bayla Keyes

MEET THE ARTISTS

Violinist **Bayla Keyes** is an active soloist and chamber musician, performing as a member of Boston Musica Viva, the Cambridge Chamber Players, Triple Helix, Sonos, and the Tempest Trio. Recent concert highlights include the Bargemusic series in New York City, solo appearances with the Richmond, Concord, and Ohio Chamber Symphonies, a cycle of the complete Beethoven violin sonatas in Boston, annual recitals presenting American works at Boston University, premieres of concertos by Bernard Hoffer and Richard Festinger, and a recording of Michael Daugherty's *Lex*, a dazzling showcase for electronic violin. Well-known to audiences as a founding member of the Muir String Quartet, with whom she won the Evian and Naumburg Competitions and played over one thousand concerts on the international touring circuit, Ms. Keyes received her Bachelor's Degree from the Curtis Institute of Music, her

Master's Degree from Yale University, and her first professional experience with the acclaimed Music from Marlboro. Her teachers have included Paul Kling, Ivan Galamian, Oscar Shumsky, Felix Galimir, Raphael Hillyer, Karen Tuttle, and members of the Beaux Arts Trio, Budapest and Guarneri Quartets.

Ms. Keyes teaches at Boston University, where she is Co-Chairman of the String Department, and at several summer festivals, most notably the Boston University Tanglewood Institute and the Interlochen Chamber Music Conference. She plays a Gennarius Gagliano violin made in 1740. Ms. Keyes has recorded for Video Artists International, Ecoclassics, CRI, Musical Heritage, EMI-France, and New World Records.

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Lois Shapiro, pianist, has concertized as soloist and collaborative artist throughout the United States as well as abroad. The range of her interests and affinities is reflected in a repertoire of considerable scope, from period instrument performances of 18th century works to premieres of new pieces written for her. A winner of New York's Concert Artists Guild Award, Shapiro has recorded on Afka, Channel Classics, Centaur, and MLAR. She teaches piano and chamber music at Longy School of Music and Wellesley College. She has given numerous masterclasses and lectures on topics such as the music of Robert Schumann within the context of his intellectual and artistic milieu. According to the Boston Globe: "She is a wonderful artist and a dangerous person to work with . . . what makes her dangerous is her imagination and her insight; Shapiro has the great gift of making everything she does sound inevitable even when it is surprising."

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 31 3:00 p.m.	**Boston University Symphonic Chorus and Symphony Orchestra** Ann Howard Jones, *conductor* Bayla Keyes, *violin* Steven Ansell, *viola* Tsai Performance Center 685 Commonwealth Avenue
February 2 8:00 p.m.	**Time's Arrow** Theodore Antoniou, *conductor* Tsai Performance Center 685 Commonwealth Avenue

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