

In recognition of the
INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF CANADIAN MUSIC

THE WEBERN TRIO

CAROLYN HART, soprano
PAUL BENDZSA, clarinet
PETER HIGHAM, guitar

Sonatina op. 205

Allegretto grazioso
Tempo di Siciliana
Scherzo-Rondo

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco
(1895-1968)

Drei Morgenstern-Lieder

Die Trichter
Das Knie
Das Nasobēm

Mátyás Seiber
(1905-1960)

Three Pastorales

Solitude
Quebec May
Twilight

Brian Tate
(1954-)

Drei Lieder op. 18

Schatzerl klein
Erlösung
Ave, Regina

Anton Webern
(1883-1945)

INTERMISSION

The Grey Islands op. 33

Michael Parker
(1948-)

1. *the island*
2. *grey silk we sway on*
3. *I thought I was headed for silence*
4. *the unfamiliarity of the sounds of the sea*
5. *in this space and solitude*
6. *Nels*
7. *today a sadness in the light itself*
8. *Soul in Salt*
9. *what can we do in such elements?*
10. *the cemetery*
11. *things here flower in death*
12. *a strange shaking*
13. *a small crack first in the morning's spell*

(Commissioned by the Webern Trio with the financial assistance of The Canada Council.)

PROGRAMME NOTES

Sonatina Op. 205

A native of Florence, Castelnuovo-Tedesco was a prolific composer of over 200 works including operas, cantatas, concertos, chamber works and songs. Among the many works in which he used the guitar is the Sonatina written in 1965 for flautist Werner Tripp and guitarist Konrad Ragossnig. The Sonatina exhibits the ease of mature compositional technique with canonic treatment and juxtaposition of themes. The neo-romantic style exudes Mediterranean grace and charm.

Drei Morgenstern-Lieder

Mátyás Seiber, born in Budapest, was a composition student of Kodaly. He lived in England from his thirtieth year until his untimely death in an automobile accident. He had many musical activities, but it was as a composition teacher that he became most widely known and highly respected. His compositions, which cover the gamut of form and expression, were often performed at International Society for Contemporary Music festivals: the cantata Ulysses is one of his most highly regarded. The Morgenstern-Lieder of 1927 show a humorous aspect of his nature; the whimsical settings of the surreal verse use imitation as in a two-part invention in the first song, a clarinet ostinato figure in the second, and word depiction in the third.

Three Pastorales

Canadian composer Brian Tate wrote the Pastorales in 1978. Set to texts of three different Canadian poets, the music enhances the poetic imagery through lyrical renderings and evocative accompaniment.

Drei Lieder Op. 18

Anton Webern's output exhibits exceptional concentration of material. With opus 18 of 1925 he fully exploits the twelve-tone technique including the use of inversion, retrograde, and retrograde-inversion forms of the series. The texts - a love ditty, an excerpt from "Des Knaben Wunderhorn", and a Marion antiphon - have seemingly no relation to each other. However, for Webern each was an embodiment of an endearment, "Minna-Mutter-Konigin", that he used on occasion for his wife. The songs each reflect part of the nickname and symbolize his sweetheart, the incarnation of motherhood and the queen over the family. As such, they pay homage to his wife, though they are not officially dedicated to her. The three songs are characterized by enormous leaps in the vocal part and an extremely complex contrapuntal and rhythmic fabric in the guitar and E-flat clarinet.

The Grey Islands

(Notes by the composer)

Newfoundland poet John Steffler's book The Grey Islands is a sequence of prose and lyric verse pieces which tell the story of a man who leaves the mainland behind to spend a summer retreat on a remote and deserted island off the Newfoundland coast. This is a journey of discovery, his finding of place, his placing of self. Throughout the journey, he reflects on the Newfoundlanders he meets (Nels and Cyril) and thinks of his wife Karen and their children left behind in Ontario.

For my musical interpretation of The Grey Islands, I chose thirteen pieces, alternating between prose and verse, in the order in which they appear in Steffler's book.

They are arranged in a concentric structure, with #7 at the centre and the other pieces emanating out from there in such a way that #6 is parallel to #8, #5 parallel to #9, etc. This arrangement allows the musical and textual material in these parallel groupings to be contrasted and compared.

The verse selections are sung by the Soprano. The prose pieces are spoken by John Steffler and others on tape (with the option of having them recited by a poet/actor or the Soprano live on stage).

Although this work is firmly rooted in a specific cultural milieu (the Newfoundland that John Steffler and I have experienced for ten years now), I believe that the brilliance of John's text transcends these specifics and creates a moving portrait of every man's search for his identity.

The text of John Steffler's The Grey Islands is used by permission of McClelland and Stewart.