

Recital Hall
M.O. Morgan Music Building
Saturday, 20 October 1990
8:00 p.m.

MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN
Piano

Sonata in C Major, Hob. XVI:50

Allegro
Adagio
Allegro molto

Franz Joseph Haydn
(1732-1809)

Sonata no. 1 (1919) in one movement

Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji
(1892-1988)

INTERMISSION

The People United Will Never Be Defeated!
(36 variations on *El Pueblo Unido Jamás Será Vencido*)

Frederic Rzewski
(1938-)

MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN

Born in Montreal in 1961, Marc-André Hamelin studied at the Vincent d'Indy School of Music, then emigrated to the United States and earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees at Temple University in Philadelphia. His principal teachers were Yvonne Hubert, Harvey Wedeen and Russell Sherman.

He has concertized extensively throughout North America, including recitals in Montreal, Toronto, New York and Philadelphia, as well as many venues throughout the province of Quebec. Recent concerto performances include the orchestras of Toronto, Quebec, Ottawa, Albany, Indianapolis, Minneapolis, Philadelphia, the Manhattan Philharmonic, the Riverside Symphony (the latter two in New York City) and the Montreal Symphony, with whom Mr. Hamelin toured Spain, Portugal and East Germany in the autumn of 1987.

Mr. Hamelin's active interest in little-known repertoire is reflected in his recordings. In addition to a collection of Leopold Godowsky's original works and transcriptions (on the Canadian CBC Enterprises label), his discography includes two recordings on the New World Records label; the first one devoted to the music of William Bolcom (**Twelve New Etudes**) and Stefan Wolpe (**Battle Pieces**) and the second one featuring Charles Ives' legendary **Concord Sonata**. Recent releases include Khaikosru Sorabji's **Sonata No. 1** and Frederic Rzewski's **The People United Will Never Be Defeated**, both on the London-based Altarus label.

PROGRAMME NOTES

SORABJI: SONATA NO. 1

Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji (1892-1988) is a truly unique figure as a composer. He is responsible for having written a great number of extremely long and pianistically complex creations, largely inaccessible to most pianists, first because of their immense difficulty and second because Sorabji's manuscript is so difficult to read (in the case of the unpublished works) that recopying the music is almost a necessity, and that is a very long process. Sorabji did however publish some of his earlier works, and among these is the famous **Opus Clavicembalisticum**, in twelve movements (on 248 pages) and lasting about 4 hours.

However, most of Sorabji's early works are much shorter, and among these in the **Sonata no. 1** (1919). Sorabji dedicated it to Busoni, a gesture of gratitude in response to the latter's help in recommending the sonata for publication. The sonata is in one continuous movement of approximately 22 minutes and already displays many of Sorabji's later pianistic and stylistic characteristics. It is somewhat reminiscent of Scriabin and Debussy and at the same time intensely personal and innovative. Busoni described it as "a tropical forest...strange and voluptuous." I personally see it as a thrilling magic-carpet ride through all the joys of youthful excess.

RZEWSKI: THE PEOPLE UNITED

The People United Will Never Be Defeated! by American composer Frederic Rzewski consists of 36 variations on the political song of the same name by Sergio Ortega and the group Quilapayun. It is one of this century's most fascinating piano works and it is not an exaggeration to say that it deserves a place alongside the greatest examples of the variation form. Rzewski wrote it in 1975 to draw the American public's attention to the political situation in Chile. The work goes through a great range of styles, including simple folk-like tonality, jazz, blues, intense chromaticism, extreme dissonance and even minimalism.

Since the work is very long (just under an hour) it might be helpful to point out the structure of the work. It is divided into six groups of six variations each. The last variation of each group recapitulates the first five. In the same way, the sixth group of variations recapitulates the first five groups, at which point the density of events becomes of course very great. This creates a feeling of "compression" which culminates in the 36th variation which, as one might expect, recapitulates the entire work. The pianist is then free to improvise if he wishes (for up to 5 minutes) and the theme is heard again, as simple as it was at the beginning, but with a gradual (and glorious) amplification.