

8 P.M.

ASHLEY WALTERS, cello

Kaija Saariaho: Spins and Spells

Luciano Berio: Sequenza XIV per violoncello

-short pause-

Luigi Dallapiccola: Ciaccona, Intermezzo e Adagio

-short pause-

Timothy McCormack:]regate[s.t.]Aggre[

Andrew Tholl- Violin

Andrew McIntosh- Viola

Ashley Walters- cello

Alfred Schnittke: String Quartet No. 3

Formalist Quartet

Andrew Tholl- Violin

Andrew McIntosh- Violin

Mark Menzies- Viola

Ashley Walters- Cello

Kaija Saariaho (b. 1952) was born in Finland. While during her early childhood Saariaho studied both music and art it was solely music that she chose to pursue. At the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki she studied composition with Paavo Heininen and later in Darmstadt she studied with Brian Ferneyhough and Klaus Huber. While her music has changed during her compositional career, her focus on timbre and color has remained a constant. She also incorporates electronics in many of her compositions, a technique and practice she initiated in 1982 while at Ircam.

Spins and Spells was written in 1996. It is one of several compositions she has written for the cello, one of her favorite instruments. "With the cello, of all the stringed instruments, you can have the greatest control of the color aspect of the sound. Often, I divide sounds into different categories, from noisy ones to bright ones, and then I create a passage from noisy to bright textures. With the cello, with the different positions and pressure of the bow, with the harmonics, it feeds these ideas very well." The cello is re-tuned for this piece. Instead of the standard tuning (A-D-G-C) the cello is tuned A-C#-G-Bb. The composer says about this work: "The title evokes the two gestures which are at the origin of the work: on the one hand the pattern which I call "spinning tops" turning around on the one spot or undergoing changes, and on the other, timeless moments, centered on the sound colour and texture. The entire piece unfolds either around or between these two gestures. I chose to re-tune the instrument in order to personalise the harmonic writing: the fifths are replaced by structures favouring major sixths and minor thirds. Challenged by this scodatura, the sonority of *Spins and Spells* reminds me of the music and the instrumental colours of another age, far older than those of the cello that we know, although seen and transformed again through my own universe."

Luciano Berio (1925-2003) was born in Italy into musical family. He was drafted in World War II but escaped having to serve after injuring his hand on his first day. After being released from the hospital he fled from the service and fought with anti-Nazi groups. Berio was accepted to study at the Milan Conservatory on piano but due to his injured hand from his day at war, he was un-able to continue piano performance and focused on composition instead. In 1951 Berio moved to the United States to study with Luigi Dallapiccola at Tanglewood. After discovering an interest in electronic music, Berio founded the Studio di Fonologia with Bruno Maderna in 1955. Berio's career continued as both a composer and a teacher.

Beginning in 1958 Berio published his first *sequenza* for flute. *Sequenza* means sequence in Italian and the flute *sequenza* was the first of fourteen *sequenzas* that Berio would write. The cello *sequenza* was the final *sequenza* that Berio wrote. The work was the product of collaboration between the composer and cellist Rohan de Saram. Saram, originally from Sri Lanka, not only plays cello but also the Kandy drum, a drum from the Kandy region of Sri Lanka. As a result, the cello *sequenza* incorporates this drumming technique, which was shown to the composer by Saram. This *sequenza* requires that the cello be tuned differently than the usual tuning. The G string is tuned up a half step to G#.

Luigi Dallapiccola (1904-1975) was born in Italy into a musical environment. While still young, Dallapiccola and his family were imprisoned in Graz, Austria. After attending the Florence Conservatory in the 1920's, Dallapiccola later became a professor there. His students include Abraham Zelman Walker, Luciano Berio, Bernard Rands, and Donald Martino. Dallapiccola opposed the Nazi regime and he and his Jewish wife were twice forced into hiding. He would continue touring only in countries that were not occupied by the Nazis. As a composition teacher, he traveled to the US many times both teaching at Tanglewood and at Queens College. Dallapiccola's solo cello piece, *Ciaccona, Intermezzo e Adagio* was completed in 1945. It combines both serial and tonal techniques. The first movement is a series of fragments each with their own character and timbre. The second movement, *Intermezzo* is a quick and scherzo-like. A recurring chord interrupts the racing figures. The final movement is an *Adagio* with a recurring theme of fifths.

Aggregate [2007] is the second piece in my *Aggregate Series* of compositions. The word *aggregate* is not used to signify the cathartic presentation of all twelve pitch classes, as it is in serial music, but rather

its working definition: a whole formed by combining several, typically disparate, elements. Accordingly, these works, extremely divergent in sound and character to one another, are generated using residual material from the preceding pieces. Thus, each successive piece is an aggregation of all that came before it.

To generate the pitch material, ten pitches from]regate[s.]Aggre[for solo violin were transposed quarter-tonally in accordance with the specified operations of a 10-digit 'folding' process (this process was subsequently applied to other parameters in the following piece in the series,]regate[s.p.]Aggre[for solo piano). In such a process, a fixed amount of domains, which correspond to any specified musical parameter, are folded and subsequently refolded upon themselves until their original order is arrived at. The commencement of a new 'fold' is articulated on the musical surface with a pizzicato attack.

Written soon after my graduation from the Oberlin Conservatory at a time when I began to abandon many of my theretofore musical impulses,]regate[s.t.]Aggre[acts as a modest, nostalgic nod to the past. I'd like to thank the Formalist Quartet for not letting it remain there. (Notes written by the composer)

Alfred Schnittke (1934-1998) was born into a Jewish family of Russian origin. His early musical training began in 1946 in Vienna. He remained in Vienna for only two years before his family moved to Moscow. From 1962-1972 Schnittke was a composition professor at the Moscow Conservatory, the same institution where he completed his graduate work. Much of Schnittke's income came from composing film scores. He composed almost seventy scores in thirty years. Schnittke's health declined after a stroke in 1985 but he continued to compose. Schnittke's music was influenced by Dmitri Shostakovich. And it was after a meeting with Luigi Nono that Schnittke adopted serial techniques into his work. He also began writing in the style called "polystylism." This is a compositional technique that incorporates various styles of music and integrates them into one piece.

Schnittke's Third String Quartet was written in 1983. This quartet reflects Schnittke's use of polystylism. The opening gesture is a quote of Orlande de Lassus' (1532-1594) Stabat Mater. This quote is transformed throughout the entire quartet. Also quoted is Beethoven's Grosse Fugue and Shostakovich's musical signature, which is the sequence of notes D, Eb, C, B. The three movements are attacca.

Many thanks to everyone who has supported me and to everyone who is here tonight.

And a special thanks to Charles, Andrew, Andrew, Mark, Lukas, Mom and Dad.