



Seven Violin Duos
dedicated to
János Négyesy and Päivikki Nykter

Tuesday, April 10, 2012, 8 pm
Cónrad Prebys Concert-Hall



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Edgewise (2002) Andrew May

Hermitage (2007) Lukas Schulze

Promenade à Deux (2002) Victor Bloom

Before the Coil of Age Ensnares All Memory

(and the Chaos of Light Blinds the Mind) (2006)

Igor Korneitchouk

A Little Suite and an Encore Tango (2008) Will Ogdon

Night Song – A Quiet Midnight – Morning Bells –Tango

Foil (2001-2003) Steven Hoey

Treatise on the Veil (1993) Mark Osborn (1969-2002)

*János and Päivikki plan to record all of tonight's music
for an upcoming CD.*

In the 25 years that they have been playing together, János Négyesy and Päivikki Nykter have built a reputation for performances of uncommon musicality, warmth, and insight. Their skill, their curiosity, and their deep mutual understanding have made them ideal interpreters of the new music that they have advocated so persuasively and with such commitment. János and Päivikki vividly project the characters of the works and communicate the joy and conversational freedom of their collaboration.-- Erik Ulman

Andrew May: *Edgewise*

Edgewise was written in 2002 for János Négyesy and Päivikki Nykter, to whom it is dedicated. The music presents an animated conversation, at times lapsing into fury. This work's occasional histrionics, though vastly unlike the elegant personae of its dedicatees, grow directly out of the dramatic situation of a work for two violins (which are, after all, the high-strung prima donna instruments of the orchestra): a frenzied duel between soloists who strive never to let each other get a word in edgewise... On the other hand, there are passages of great tenderness and affection in this conversation – often juxtaposed edgewise with more brutal passions. -- AM

Lukas Schulze: *Hermitage*

Hermitage is imagined as series of scenes, each one identified by its own poetic, sensual and temporal identity. These are moved through each player, though the scenes do not necessarily align in their outer boundaries with respect to the performers. The work is named for, among other things, a street in Chicago, where I found a rhythm inscribed in the sidewalk (no lie) that figures in one of the sections of the piece.

This piece was written for and in collaboration with János Négyesy and Päivikki Nykter, whom I have known since arriving at UCSD in 1991. They have been, during this project, the same as they have in other ones: gracious, solicitous, and encouraging, with only the most thoughtful responses to my questions and concerns. They remain two friends for whom I am wholly grateful. -- LS

Victor Bloom: *Promenade à Deux* (2002)

The inspiration for “Promenade à Deux” came originally from the essential, practically sacred, act of walking, itself. And, further, from thinking about the myriad-

--possibly infinite---possibilities involved with walking together with another person---physically, mentally, emotionally, and metaphorically. Simultaneity, and also differences in pace; things seen, and heard, together, momentarily, and also profoundly separately; and also purely imagined; entire worlds moving together, and also decidedly not together. As well as, oftentimes, the heightened sense of all of these many phenomena experienced when walking together at night, especially under a brilliant canopy of stars! I take this felicitous opportunity to re-dedicate this music to my dear friends János Négyesy and Päivikki Nykter, for whom it was originally written, and to whom it is dedicated, with great pleasure, once again.
-- VB

Igor Korneitchouk: *Before the Coil of Age Ensnares All Memory (and the Chaos of Light Blinds the Mind)* (2006)

It is a pleasure to be asked to write a duet for János and Päivikki, my second such collaboration. Again, I think this is a kind of piece that only they could and would play – they are fearless! The title of my piece for them, *Before the Coil Ensnares All Memory (and the Chaos of Light Blinds the Mind)*, is surely self consciously pompous and tongue-in-cheek. Nonetheless, it relates to the perception, as we grow older, that there is always more to do and less time to do it all. This perception is engineered in this piece through a process of variation upon the initial theme as it continues to grow in number of pitches with each successive treatment while the number of beats is simultaneously reduced. A serious conundrum, to be sure, even as this music mockingly parodies various sonic worlds (such as the sound of an old-fashioned 78 RPM phonograph, a tropical rain forest, a paraphrase of Bartók's *5th String Quartet*, “two ladies at tea”, and even music “For the Dogs with fleas”). The finale variation is its own set of variations in hocket which reverses the augmentation of the number of pitches back to the original state (but still inexorable continuing the process of temporal diminution!) -- we have returned, dust to dust, but Time has moved on. -- IK

Will Ogdon: *A Little Suite and an Encore Tango*

This piece was written for my good friends, János and Päivikki. All pieces in the suite are variations of the same tonal and thematic materials, evoking three images of passage through night (Night Song, A Quiet Midnight, Morning Bells) and closing with an Encore Tango.

Steven Hoey: *Foil*

Foil was composed for János Négyesy and Päivikki Nykter in 2001 and revised in 2003. The piece is configured as a musical duel between two agile combatants. I used the fencing metaphor of the foil. The foil was invented in France as a training weapon in the middle of the 18th century in order to practice fast and elegant thrust fencing. Much of foil fencing consists of fencers battling for right-of-way. When one fencer makes an attack, the opposing foil fencer will usually attempt to parry the attack and, if this is successful, riposte. To avoid being parried, the attacker may use several tactics, such as disengages or coupés, which are different ways to avoid the opponent's blade. Also, some attacks may begin with an absence of blade, that is to say, the attacker moves forward with his blade out of the range where the defender could parry it. The ending objective of such an attack is to place the blade in too short a time for him/her to react. Because of the precise order and timing of movements needed to fence foil, a single misstep often results in a touch for the opponent.

I was looking to write a very active piece that exploits the suppleness and agile virtuosity of the violin duo within this duel narrative. The piece opens with a sort of calisthenics – a stretching and warming up through preparatory gestures and trceries. Both players then begin their match executing flashing moves in counterpoise to each other. Elements of silence ensue as the combatants break off from their thrusts and parries. Sections of the piece emphasize a particular type of timbre or technique, such as glassy harmonics, which for me were a sort of focus on the blurred action of the tips of the foil blades themselves. The piece builds in intensity to a titanic battle of rhythmically hocketed double stops. Each player attempts to overcome the other in a series of slashing attacks and fevered recoveries. After a brief respite as both combatants maneuver for position there is a moment of unison movement. A brief interchange of material leads to a final attempt by the second violin to deliver a thrust into her worthy opponent, but instead provides an opening for the piercing coup de grace from the first violin. -- SH

Mark Osborn (1969-2002): *Treatise on the Veil* (1993)

Inspiration for *Treatise on the Veil* began with a general attraction to Cy Twombly's painting and related "studies" of the same name, and with a specific desire to continue to address questions of "relating," easily focused by the fact of writing for a married couple! Relating has often become a metaphor in my composi-

tions, manifested in the relationships of the performers to the sonic material, which they "own," contribute to, or are alienated from. Thus, I focused on counterpoint, codependence and negation (veiling being one manifestation) as models of relationship, which have their life in the ways that they imbed themselves in one another, becoming to various degrees indiscernible as separate generalizations about relating. Beckett's solutions (the juxtaposition of syntactical units) to the difficult question of narrative, particularly in his late work, were especially influential in helping me give form to this "dialogue of relation." In order to allow this dialogue to emerge with its due complexity in music, though, I felt that the material had to be exceedingly "pared down," the focus lying for the most part in the single sound. I am interested to find whether this is the inherent flaw in my desire to focus on relating...will any attempt to sharpen the image cause the resolution to change to something more tangible? -- MO

