Walker Art Center

Minnesota Composers Forum and The Dale Warland Chamber Singers
Walker Art Center presents

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and The Dale Warland Chamber Singers

Dale Warland, conductor

8 pm
Thursday, 19 September 1985
Walker Art Center Auditorium

Three Songs from Hebrew Poetry
Steve Barnett

1. The Poet
2. Epitaph: For A Wife
3. The Sun

The Seventh Healing Song of John
Joseph (Blue)
James DeMars

Jan Weller, flute

The Stone of Sisyphus
Tyler Kaiser

Daniel K. Sturm, guitar

Peppercorn Songs
Eric Stokes

Jerry Rubino, piano

intermission

Le Campane di Leopardi
Yehuda Yannay

Echo, in Amber
C. James Sheppard

prelude, Apparition 1 (counterpoint)
interlude
prelude, Apparition 2 (organ point)
postlude

James Sheppard, electronic valve instrument,
delay, pre-recorded electronic tape

Chicago
Lloyd Ultan

Jerry Rubino, piano

Program Notes

The Three Songs from Hebrew Poetry
were a result of my being chosen to write a
work to be performed by the 1982 Minnesota
All-State Choir, co-commissioned by the
Minnesota American Choral Directors
Association and the Minnesota Music
Educators Association. Having never studied
Hebrew poetry during my ten years of Hebrew
School, I was excited to discover The Penguin
Book of Hebrew Verse, which covers the richness of Hebrew poetry from the Bible through the 20th century. The three poems I chose and translated are reproduced below and are quite self-explanatory. Suffice it to say I was struck with the timelessness of each poem as it addresses the creative artist's dilemma, marital relations, and pure joy of life.

Steve Barnett graduated summa cum laude from the University of Minnesota in Music Theory and Composition, and attended Eastman School of Music, studying advanced jazz composition and arranging. After leaving the University, Steve was Assistant Creative Director at Sound 80 Recording Studios for four years. Now Creative Director of Barnett Music Productions, Steve is also beginning his twenty-first year as choir director at B'nai Emet Synagogue, produces St. Paul Sunday Morning for National Public Radio, and is resident composer,arranger/conductor for NPR's A Prairie Home Companion show. Steve's current projects include his fourth year as the McKnight albums producer for the Minnesota Composers Forum; the composition of a viola concerto for Tamas Strasser (Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra) and the St. Paul Jewish Community Center Orchestra; as well as a new jazz work to be premiered as part of the commemoration of the new Music Building at the University of Minnesota.

The Seventh Healing Song of John Joseph (Blue) for flute and pre-recorded tape was commissioned by Arizona State University for Eric Hoover. Writing for an instrument and tape recorder provided an opportunity to enjoy a magical world of manipulated acoustic sound and to thus create a dialogue with the supernatural. Anyone living in the Southwest soon recognizes the impact of the Native American culture and is likely to notice its shared traditions with the Far East. The mantra is similar to the repetitive color imagery (usually red or blue) of the Navaho "horse songs" and ceremonial drums, as well as mandala designs, are common to both cultures. The "Healing Song" is an artifact of my fascination with these pre-Buddhist pioneers and with those individuals who practice the mystical art of healing.

James DeMars is a native Minnesotan. In he received a doctorate in theory and composition from the University of Minnesota where he studied with Dominick Argento and Eric Stokes. From 1977-81 he served as Musical Director and pianist with Zeitgeist, and in 1981 he joined the faculty of Arizona
State University, where he teaches theory, composition and acoustics. He is currently Music Director and pianist with TOS, a performing arts ensemble.

**The Stone of Sisyphus**

Many aspects of existence appear as agonizingly futile actions and events. The myth of Sisyphus presents this futility as cyclic; for a brief time it appears our stones have reached a goal, yet our hopes roll down the hill to do it all again. Looking into the despair of this realization Albert Camus commented on his own essay “The Myth of Sisyphus” as follows: “Although ‘the Myth of Sisyphus’ poses mortal problems, it sums itself up for me as a lucid invitation to live and to create, in the very midst of the desert.” Looking into this despair is also what stimulated me to choose the title of this composition during its creation. The structure shows the cyclic nature of the myth by being a chain of variations of a theme which is not presented—though the three principal notes of this theme should be apparent, their rising intervals representing hope and the ascent. Similarly climbing and descending lines are to represent the path of the stone and Sisyphus.

**Tyler Kaiser** was born in Duluth, Minnesota and spent most of his life there. He attended St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota for two years, where he studied music theory and composition with Janet Gilbert and Arthur Campbell. At the College of St. Scholastica in Duluth, Mr. Kaiser studied guitar and composition with Daniel K. Sturm, later assuming the position of Associate Professor of Guitar for the ’84-85 academic year. As a composer Mr. Kaiser has been the recipient of grants and awards from the Minnesota Federation of Music Clubs, the St. Louis County Heritage and Arts Center, the Minnesota Composers Forum, and the Arrowhead Regional Arts Council.

**Peppercorn Songs** were composed on a commission from the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis with funds provided by the Charles Sigmund Memorial Fund for Music. The text comes from writings that first appeared in the Smithsonian magazine, concerning the history of pepper and its uses for cooking and medicinal purposes.

**Eric Stokes** was born in Haddon Heights, New Jersey, and was educated at Lawrence College, the New England Conservatory of Music and the University of Minnesota, where he now teaches in the School of Music. Among his many works are those commissioned for the Minnesota Orchestra, the Minnesota
Opera Company, the London Sinfonietta, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Plymouth Congregational Church, the Cabrilla Festival, Walker Art Center, and New Music America.

*Campane di Leopardi* (Leopardi's Bells) is a setting of an excerpt from the poem *Le Ricordanze* (Memories) by the Italian poet Giacomo Leopardi (1798-1837). The text, sung in Italian, translates as follows:

... The tolling of the hour is carried by the wind From the town-belfry. It was the sound that comforted me, As I remember, during those terrifying nights Of boyhood, when I lay awake in my dark room, Filled with fright, longing for the dawn...

The work is accompanied by a Bb-F drone, played on tuned wine glasses, representing the "Emptiness of Night." The pairs of chord sequences count the hours of the night in numbers and go through the lines of the text. This work was commissioned by the choral society Madrigal Ars Viva in Santos, Brazil and was premiered by the composer in 1980. In 1984, this work was a finalist in a National Competition of Contemporary Choral Music in America at Bowdoin College.

**Vannay** is pursuing an international career as a composer. He holds a doctorate from the University of Illinois and degrees from Brandeis University and the Rubin Academy of Music in Tel-Aviv. He serves on the faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where he established the prominent *Music From Almost Yesterday* series and conducted more than two hundred first Milwaukee performances and numerous world premieres. This summer he toured Western Europe and presented concerts of his music in Denmark, Belgium and Germany. During 1985-86 he will serve as guest professor at the University of Texas at Dallas. His works are recorded on the CRI, Advance and Levana labels.

*Echo, in Amber* was written for the World as Mirror national conference on narcissism held in Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, in 1983. The music appeared on a festive concert of premieres composed especially for the conference. Essentially solo music written for the Steiner Electronic Valve Instrument (EVI) composition also employs a delay unit (for echo) and pre-recorded audio tracks of EVI music (for counterpoint and accompaniment). The Steiner EVI is a monophonic, analog synthesizer designed for performers with a background in valved, brass instruments.
C. James Sheppard received training in composition under a fellowship with Philip Bezanson at the University of Massachusetts (M.M. 1968) and with Richard Hervig and Donald Martin Jenni at the University of Iowa (Ph.D. 1975) where he was a composition and performing fellow with the Center for New Music. He has received several awards for his compositions which have been performed in the United States and Europe. Mr. Sheppard is currently a member of the music faculty at Miami University (Ohio) where he teaches composition and directs both the electronic music studio and the ensemble for new music.

Chicago

The vivid, strong, brusque images of Carl Sandburg’s poem were the initial attracting feature of the text to the composer. They provided an effective portrayal of the big city with its diversity of personalities and kinds of human experiences, and offered the composer the opportunity to explore a wide range of vocal and piano interaction and expression. The piece is unabashedly tonal and tends to section itself to complement the flow of the text and its changing moods. The demanding piano writing is designed to add both strength and a sense of continuous driving motion that one should associate with a vital growing city. The primary concern of the composer was to capture the poetic representations of Sandburg and to complement them with a suitable musical setting. The composition was completed after an exchange of correspondence between the composer and poet and brought to final form with the poet’s encouragement.

Chicago

They tell me you are wicked and I believe them, for I have seen your painted women under the gas lamps luring the farm boys. And they tell me you are crooked and I answer: Yes, it is true I have seen the gunman kill and go free to kill again. And they tell me you are brutal and my reply is: On the faces of women and children I have seen the marks of wanton hunger. And having answered so I turn once more to those who sneer at this my city, and I give them back the sneer and say to them: Come and show me another city lifted head singing so proud to be alive and coarse and strong and cunning. Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on job, here is a tall bold slugger set vivid against the little soft cities;
Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action,
cunning as a savage pitted against the
wilderness,
Bareheaded,
Shoveling,
Wrecking,
Planning,
Building, breaking, rebuilding,
Under the smoke, dust all over his mouth,
laughing with white teeth,
Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing
as a young man laughs, Laughing even as an
ignorant fighter laughs who has never
lost a battle,
Bragging and laughing that under his wrist is
the pulse, and under his ribs the heart of
the people,
Laughing!
Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling
laughter of Youth, half-naked, sweating,
proud to be Hog Butcher, Tool Maker,
Stacker of Wheat, Player with Railroads and
Freight Handler to the Nation.

—Carl Sandburg

Lloyd Ultan has been the Director of the
University of Minnesota School of Music since
1975. He was founder and first chairman of
the music department at Dickinson College,
Carlisle, (PA), and served as Guest Professor
Composition and Theory at the Royal
College of Music, London, and as guest
lecturer at Cambridge University. Mr. Ultan
has received numerous commissions,
performances, grants and fellowships
throughout his career, bringing him in contact
with such ensembles as The Tokyo String
Quartet, Pro Arte String Quartet and The
Charlie Byrd Trio.

The Dale Warland Chamber Singers are a
professional choral ensemble with an
extensive repertoire of standard a cappella
music representing a broad variety of styles.
Established by Dr. Dale Warland in 1972, the
Dale Warland Singers begin their fourteenth
season in 1985 with plans for performances at
Orchestra Hall, the Ordway Music Theatre, and
various regional concerts in the Upper
Midwest. In March of 1985 the Singers
traveled to Germany to perform concerts in
Stuttgart, with the Stuttgart Radio Symphony
Orchestra, and Frankfurt, with the Frankfurt
Radio Symphony Orchestra. Regularly heard
on Minnesota Public Radio, National Public
Radio, and American Public Radio broadcasts,
the Singers have also performed with the
Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and the
Minnesota Orchestra. The Dale Warland
Chamber Singers have made significant
contributions to twentieth century music
through numerous performances of contemporary literature and the ensemble’s involvement in world premiere performances and commissions of works by local composers. Once such commission will be premiered November 9, at Macalester College when the Singers perform *Our Sisters: Requiem*, by Michael J. Aubart.

**Dale Warland**, Music Director of The Dale Warland Chamber Singers, is on leave of absence this season from his position as Professor of Music at Macalester College in St. Paul. Mr. Warland has distinguished himself as a composer and arranger, and was awarded an Individual Artist Grant by the Minnesota State Arts Board in 1981 to work with Robert Shaw, the Music Director of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. He has guest conducted the Swedish Radio Choir (Stockholm), the Danish Radio Choir (Copenhagen), and traveled to England in 1983 to research English choral literature under a Bush Foundation Award. Dr. Warland frequently serves as guest conductor and lecturer for various groups throughout the U.S., is a member of the Recording Panel of the National Endowment for the Arts, and has served as Co-Chairperson of the NEA Choral Panel.

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