A GRADUATE SAXOPHONE RECITAL

By
DON-PAUL KAHL

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A PERFORMANCE IN LIEU OF THESIS PRESENTED TO THE COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF MUSIC

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
2013
Summary of Performance in Lieu of Thesis
Presented to the College of Fine Arts of the University of Florida
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Music

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May 2013

Chair: Jonathan Helton
Major: Music

At 7:30 pm on 16 March 2013, the author performed a graduate recital of both new and standard works for saxophone. Presented in the University of Florida Music Building Room 101 recital hall, the program featured several works by friends and colleagues of the author. Alongside these newer compositions, the works of two established and important composers of the twentieth century stand as pillars of excellence in artistic composition. The program for the evening included William Albright’s monumental Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano, Luciano Berio’s Sequenza VIIb, David Biedenbender’s exciting and virtuosic quartet, ...you’ve been talking in your sleep, Molly Joyce’s new work for solo saxophone, Dew of the Moon, and Christian Lauba’s dynamic Kabuki. These works represent disparate styles and require different sets of technical and artistic knowledge. However, with the exception of Albright’s Sonata and Biedenbender’s quartet, the other works were for solo virtuoso saxophonist alone. The collaborative pieces required sensitive and involved communication. These aspects unified the program and provided a holistic experience of artistry.
PROGRAM
A Graduate Saxophone Recital
Don-Paul Kahl, saxophone
Saturday, March 16, 2013 – 7:30 pm
MUB 101


Kabuki for soprano saxophone (2010) Christian Lauba (b. 1952)

  Two-Part Invention
  La follia nuova: a lament for George Cacioppo
  Scherzo “Will o' the wisp”
  Recitative and Dance
  Brian Hargrove, piano

Intermission


...you've been talking in your sleep (2010) David Biedenbender (b. 1984)
  for saxophone quartet
  Drew Sevel, alto saxophone
  Taylor Barbay, tenor saxophone
  Gregory M. Snider, baritone saxophone

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Music.

Don-Paul Kahl is from the studio of Dr. Jonathan Helton.
PROGRAM NOTES

In tonight’s program, I feature works that are not only very new, but also several works that were composed by my friends and colleagues. I have had the distinct pleasure to work with both Christian Lauba (b. 1952) and Molly Joyce (b. 1992) on their works and I have been in contact with David Biedenbender (b. 1984) concerning many aspects of his pieces. The other two composers, William Albright (1944-1998) and Luciano Berio (1925-2003), have unifying connections with the living composers on the program—Biedenbender is a former pupil of Albright and Berio’s music influenced the music of Joyce, Lauba, and Biedenbender.

Molly Joyce’s *Dew of the Moon* for solo saxophone is a work of musical expression, extended techniques, and extreme register. It is the newest work on the program, which was commissioned and written for me and premiered at the Navy Band Saxophone Symposium in January 2013. Molly provides the following explanation about her first work for saxophone:

“We first received the commission from Don-Paul in the summer of 2012, I was currently studying composition in Berlin, and one of my composer colleagues there had presented a piece of hers in which she had set the poem *The Land Which is Not*, by Edith Södergran. I quickly fell in love with the poem and the sense of longing and ambiguity that it exudes, specifically the line “in the dew of the moon.” I thus decided to take the idea of the “dew of the moon,” and whatever that may mean, as inspiration for the piece. As I thought about it more, I realized that for me the “dew of the moon” could possibly be a dance floor, and therefore I decided to try to translate whatever this dance floor with people dancing on it might be to shape the music for the saxophone.”

While the music of *Dew of the Moon* itself does not necessarily represent or attempt to recreate the Södergran poem in its entirety, the ambiguity and longing of which Molly speaks can be found in the piece. The poem reads:
The Land Which is Not
by Edith Södergran

I long for the land which is not,
For all that is, I am weary of wanting.
The moon speaks to me in silver runes
About the land which is not.
The land where all our wishes become wondrously fulfilled,
The land where all our fetters fall.
The land where we cool our bleeding forehead
In the dew of the moon.
My life was a burning illusion,
But one thing I have found and one thing I have really won -
The road to the land which is not.

In the land which is not
My beloved walks with a glittering crown.
Who is my beloved? The night is dark
And the stars quiver in reply.
Who is my beloved? What is his name?
The heavens arch higher and higher
And a human child is drowned in the endless fogs
And knows no reply.
But a human child is nothing but certainty.
And it stretches its arms higher than all heavens.
And there comes a reply:
I am the one you love and always shall love.

Kabuki is the sixteenth etude for saxophone composed by Bordeaux composer, Christian Lauba. Since their conception in 1992, Lauba’s etudes for saxophone have not only pushed the limits for the repertory, but also for saxophonists in general. Like most other works in this genre, each etude is designed to explore technical or musical aspects of the saxophone technique. Lauba’s etudes demand the utmost of mastery, execution, and above all, artistry to render a credible performance. Kabuki incorporates Oriental modes and melodic glissandi, but also requires a mastery of the techniques and effects introduced in the previous etudes. In Lauba’s own words, “Kabuki is a poetic and idealized vision of ancestral Japanese music. This virtuosic work opposes, at times brutally, softness and violence and ends in a calm meditation. The soprano saxophone's tone perfectly suits this distant and exotic culture.”

The Sonata for saxophone and piano by William Albright is considered to be one of the best works for saxophone and it has found its place into the repertoire of almost every concert saxophonist. The work encompasses a diverse array of compositional styles including minimalism, neo-romanticism, free atonality, jazz, and set configurations, to name just a few. Albright’s Sonata requires both melancholic lyricism and immense ruthless force sometimes switching between these elements within the same musical line or gesture. The piano assumes
just as much of a solo voice as the saxophone; the interplay between the instruments is both essential and rigorous.

The Sonata is in four movements, all based on traditional dance forms with contemporary twists. The first movement, “Two-Part Invention,” is based on several interchanges, including the invention in the style of Bach (presented here in the quasi-atonal relationships that center around the tritone), minimalistic gestures, and passages of extended improvisatory cadenzas for both solo voices. The second movement is based on compositional techniques of a Chaconne. Titled, “La follia nuova: a lament for George Cacioppo,” Albright dedicated this movement to his friend and colleague, George Cacioppo, a composer and the founder of the ONCE group, who died unexpectedly of Crohn’s disease in 1984. He was a mentor and friend to an entire generation of composers and students, including William Albright. The third, “Scherzo ‘Will o’ the wisp,’” is a fast, extremely quiet, and chromatic movement that challenges both performers. The final movement, “Recitative and Dance,” starts with a long cadenza that begins softly and introspectively, becoming more hurried but still subdued. The mad dance which follows incorporates some jazz elements in its brief, but furious dash to the finish.

Luciano Berio’s Sequenza VIIb was originally composed and conceived for solo oboe. However, at the request of saxophone virtuoso, Claude Delangle, Berio (with the help and expertise of Delangle) made a transcription and adaptation of the work for solo soprano saxophone. The work is a commentary on the history of the oboe. The presupposition of the melodic lyrical oboe is completely shattered, however, from the first note of the work. The opposing dichotomy between Baroque ornamentation, romantic lines, and modern gestures serves as a form of continuous contrast. Sequenza VIIb is accompanied by a monotone and
relentless concert B pitch. This pitch is intended to represent the pitch that stage lights produce when they are activated; it also functions as a supportive backdrop for the entire work.

Berio worked very closely with a famous Italian author and poet, Edoardo Sanguineti. Sanguineti, after hearing the various *Sequenze*, composed poem verses to represent the metaphysical expression of the individual *Sequenza*. With Berio’s permission these verses can be stated before the performance of the various works.

The following is the poem verse for *Sequenza VIIb*:

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il tuo profilo è un mio paesaggio frenetico, tenuto a distanza:
é un falso fuoco d'amore, che è minimo: é morto:
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your profile is a frenetic landscape of mine, kept at distance: 
it is a false fire of love, near nothing: death

...you’ve been talking in your sleep is an exciting, virtuosic addition to the saxophone quartet repertoire. It was commissioned and composed for the PRISM Quartet in 2010 and has since been performed by some of the most important quartets in the world. Biedenbender gives the following preface to his quartet:

“I am often fascinated by sleep and dreams and, consequently, the incredibly weird and bizarre thoughts, ideas, experiences, and sounds that come out of this seemingly inactive and tranquil aspect of human existence. For instance, while working late at night, I frequently hear my wife talking aloud, presumably either to me or to something or someone with whom she is interacting in her dreams. The language is neither English nor gibberish and contains familiar words and sounds but is completely incomprehensible to me. I often imagine what it would be like to talk with her while she sleeps and experience what she experiences, but alas, I am awake and she is asleep—there is a veil of consciousness between us. For this piece, I imagined a musical language that is sort of synthesis of both the clarity and complete nonsense of this surreal language—a sort of dialogue between the conscious self and the sleeping self.”

The work itself is very programmatic and can almost be read as a narrative of a bedtime dream. The introduction of the work represents the musical sigh or yawn as if one was just
crawling into bed. Eventually these yawns are interrupted by the chaotic yet precise workings of the dream world. As the work progresses these dreams become more complicated and the musical yawn transforms into musical yet unintelligible speech. Musical contrasts mark where dreams shift and the work plays out this way until a synthesis of all the dreams comes to the fore before the supposed dreamer awakes from their chaotic nightmare with a jolt.
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Described by distinguished American composer John Corigliano as an "artist beyond his time," Don-Paul Kahl is an active concert saxophonist. He has performed throughout the United States, as well as in France, Japan, and Scotland, both as a soloist and a chamber musician. He is currently pursuing his Master of Music degree in Saxophone Performance at the University of Florida where he studies with Dr. Jonathan Helton. There he holds a graduate teaching assistantship in saxophone. He has also had applied studies in modern music with Dr. Geoffrey Deibel.

A member of the North American Saxophone Alliance (NASA) since 2007, Kahl regularly performs at both national and regional conferences. In 2010, Kahl performed concerts in Japan through an exchange program sponsored by Niigata University. He has also performed at the World Saxophone Congress in Scotland in July 2012. In addition to these regional and national conference performances, Kahl has been a featured soloist with several varied professional ensembles.

Most recently, Kahl won the prestigious Harriet Hale Woolley Scholarship. As contingent of being a scholar through this noted fund, Kahl will travel to Paris to study for the 2013–2014 academic year. Kahl was also named a finalist in several national orchestral concerto competitions. Kahl was the winner of the University of Florida Concerto Competition. With the Zenith Quartet, Kahl has garnered numerous prizes from several competitions including being a semi-finalist in the NASA Quartet Competition. In 2010 he was the winner of the Susquehanna University Concerto Competition. In 2009, he was the winner of the competitive Joseph L. and Vivian E. Steele Music Competition.

In 2011, Kahl graduated Summa Cum Laude from Susquehanna University where he earned his Bachelor of Music in Music Performance. He studied saxophone with Dr. Gail B. Levinsky. During his tenure at Susquehanna, Don-Paul was active not only within the music department with ensembles and within the studio, but as an avid contributor to his chapter of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia
as its musical director. He is also a member of Alpha Lambda Delta Freshman Honor Society and Kappa Delta Pi Educational Honor Society.

Don-Paul is currently on the adjunct faculty at the College of Central Florida in Ocala, Florida where he teaches applied study in both saxophone and clarinet. He is also contracted to teach saxophone through the studios at Great Southern Music in Gainesville, Florida. Currently, he holds the position of the saxophone chair in the Ocala Symphony Orchestra in Ocala, Florida where he performs regularly.