

SEPT 27HL

the firm 2004

CONCERT FIVE

Gabriella Smart, piano

James Cuddeford, violin

Canzone popolare (Francia, 1500 c.a.) Ludovico Einaudi
1'

Totentanz (Dance of Death) (1992) John Polglase
8'

(Waltz) for Cornelius (1982) Alvin Curran
12'

10 minute interval

....after "Tristia" (1997)
5'

Raymond Chapman Smith

1. Lento
2. Allegretto
3. Allegro
4. Allegretto

Tarantella (2003)
10'

Sophie Lacaze

Sonata for violin and piano (1925)
25'

Margaret Sutherland

1. Calm and subdued, but flowing
2. Quasi improvisione
3. Allegro vivace

Truth is tradition, not the truth.

Thomas Bernhard

A so-called Chamber Music Association famous for playing only ancient music on original instruments and for having only Rossini, Frescobaldi, Vivaldi, and Pergolesi in its repertoire was playing in an old castle on the Attersee and had its greatest success since it was founded. The applause continued until the Chamber Music Association did not have a single encore left on its program to play. It was not until the next day that the musicians were told that they had been playing in an institute for deaf-mutes.

T.B.

Pilgrim Church provides wheelchair access via the rear (northern) doors.

Toilets can be accessed through the door on the left of the performance area.

Canzone popolare (Francia, 1500 c.a.) Ludovico Einaudi
This short piece captures the spirit of the Italian lyric poem from which it derives.

Totentanz (Dance of Death) John Polglase

In 1988 I was approached by Rodney Smith and asked to compose a work for solo piano for an upcoming concert which gave me the opportunity to write a large scale work reflecting a pianistic tradition to which both he and I owed some deference. As a result, *Quiet This Metal* is a work which takes its influence from, as much as anything, a way of playing, rather than any particular style of composition; either contemporary or not.

The title is taken from a poem by Ezra Pound which deals with an alchemist's song-like chant over a transformation of metals and seemed an appropriate parallel for this piece which is really a sonata in three movements following that standard form of a fast, weighty first movement followed by a more lyrical second movement and ending with a fast, dramatic finale.

This final movement was originally called 'Dances' and was later arranged for two pianos for Gabriella Smart and Anna Goldsworthy. I gave it the title 'Totentanz' and this seems to have stuck, getting this one movement more performances than the whole sonata.

(Waltz) for Cornelius (1982)

Alvin Curran

In his threnody for *Cornelius*, Alvin Curran moulds his despair into a waltz. The waltz remains unsettled, before launching into a meditative lament. The cascading vibrations of repeated chords build to an intense climax. It is dedicated to his friend and colleague Cornelius Cardew, who was killed in a hit and run accident in 1981.

In the Belgian city of Bruges a few hundred years ago, a nine-year old chorister who had sung a wrong note in a mass that was being performed before the entire royal court in the Bruges cathedral is said to have been beheaded. It seems that the queen had fainted as a result of the wrong note sung by the chorister and had remained unconscious until her death. The king is supposed to have sworn an oath that, if the queen did not come round, he would have not only the guilty chorister but all the choristers in Bruges beheaded, which he did after the queen had not come to and had died. For centuries no sung masses were to be heard in Bruges.

T.B.

For decades Paul played the madman, so I played the victim of lung disease; and just as he exploited his role for his purposes, so I exploited my role for mine. Some people spend all their lives cherishing some great possession or some exceptional art, daring to exploit it by every possible means and making it, for as long as they live, the sole content of their lives: in the same way Paul spent all of his life cherishing and exploiting his madness and using every possible means to make it the content of his life. Similarly, I cherished and exploited my lung disease and my madness, which together may be said to constitute my art.

T.B.

.....after "Tristia"

Raymond Chapman Smith

- I Lento
- II Allegretto
- III Allegro
- IV Allegretto

The "Tristia" of the title refers to Osip Mandelstam's remarkable cycle of lyric poems that were written between 1916 and 1924.

Absorbing this poetry, and recalling Gabriella's fine playing of Scriabin, triggered several 'Russian' responses which eventually emerged as this brief suite.

All the material ofafter "Tristia" is derived from Scriabin's "Promethean" synthetic hexachord, a harmonic device which is at the core of much of his late music.

When beginning this piece I also came upon the piano works of Nikolay Roslavets (1881-1944), who expanded Scriabin's harmonic explorations into a unique, globally chromatic system which also plays a part in the unfolding of my four, miniature poems.

Tarantella (2003) Sophie Lacaze

Sophie Lacaze, a French composer and Australian resident, wrote *Tarantella* for Gabriella to perform in the 2003 Melbourne Festival. The Tarantella was an Italian folk dance, rather frantic, apparently used to cure the bite of the Tarantula spider. In variation form, a simple motif is incessantly repeated with subtle difference to disarm the listener.

Sonata for violin and piano (1925) Margaret Sutherland

A handwritten note of introduction from Arnold Bax to the publishers J&W Chester indicates that Sutherland sought publication of the sonata soon after its completion in 1925, while she was still in Europe.

The note reads:

'...Dear Sir, This is to introduce to you Miss Margaret Sutherland an Australian pianist and composer. She is anxious to obtain publication of a sonata for violin and piano. I think that this work contains some remarkable ideas and deserves your careful consideration. Yours very truly, Arnold Bax.'

Any such approach the Sutherland made was unsuccessful as the work was not published until 1935 as a limited edition of 300 copies by Lyrebird press, well after Sutherland's return to Australia at the end of 1925. Sutherland writes that 'Louise Dyer, owner of the then fairly young Lyre Bird press in Paris offered, generously, to publish it [the Violin Sonata], "paying me for it with a set of the Couperin publications in the Lyre Bird Edition.'

When the powerful become too powerful in their own countries and, while holding power over a long period, dissipate not only the whole national wealth but also the intellectual wealth of their state, there are still many people in many countries who are surprised when, here and there, overnight, and, in the nature of things, frequently in the most barbarous manner, those in power are assassinated and anarchy reigns. We can call it luck, said the professor from that state from which he could have fled and in which the prime minister had been assassinated the week before. When the professor returned to his own country, however, he was immediately arrested at the frontier and thrown into prison in spite of the fact that a new prime minister, and one totally opposed to the one who had been assassinated, had assumed power in the meantime.

T.B.

Due to illness Anna Goldsworthy was unable to perform tonight but The Firm will be presenting her concert before the end of the current season. Subscribers may use their season tickets for this extra recital and will be informed of the performance date.

The Firm is very grateful to Gabriella and James for filling in at such short notice.

Next Concert:

Monday October 25th
The Firm
presents
Leigh Harrold, piano

Anne Carwse *new work*
Hauer *Zwölf-tonspiel*
Chapman Smith *Sonata IV*
Polglase *Three Laments*
Beethoven *Sonata in C minor, Op.111*

Please join the performers and composers after the concert for complimentary drinks and tortes by Gabriele.

the firm

and

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