

UC Davis Contemporary Players Present Premieres and "Classic"

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UC Davis Contemporary Players in George Edwards's "Trio" for horn, violin and piano (1987), the West Coast premiere of Jason Uechi's "Duet" for flute and violin (1992), the world premiere of Richard Festinger's "Triometry" for flute, bass clarinet / Bb clarinet, and piano (1996), and the world premiere of Martha Callison Horst's "Suite" for flute, alto flute, piccolo, clarinet, bass clarinet, string trio, and piano (1995). April 16, San Francisco State University, San Francisco, CA.

The UC Davis Contemporary Music Players, directed by Ross Bauer, continues to be one of the West Coast's finest new music ensembles featuring works by upstart, as well as seasoned composers.

In a concert presented by San Francisco State University's Department of Music, April 16, 1996, the Contemporary Players' program included George Edwards's "Trio" for horn, violin and piano (1987), the West Coast premiere of Jason Uechi's "Duet" for flute and violin (1992), a world premiere of Richard Festinger's "Triometry" for flute, bass clarinet (doubling on Bb clarinet), and piano (1996), and the world premiere of Martha Callison Horst's "Suite" for flute, alto flute, piccolo, clarinet, bass clarinet, string trio, and piano (1995).

The UC Davis Contemporary Music Players are Tod Brody, flute, alto flute, piccolo; Peter Josheff, clarinet, bass clarinet; Peter Nowlen, horn; Terrie Baune, violin; Uri Wassertzug, viola; Beth Snellings, cello; Karen Rosenak, piano; Ross Bauer, conductor.

George Edwards writes of his "Trio":

The three players are constantly asked to continue or color one another's lines, blend, or take part in complex polyphony on more or less equal terms. Each player has to shift rapidly and frequently from soloist to equal partner to accompaniment. The effect is of a rather dark, late romantic work 'seen' through a prism.

The "prism" was successfully cast by the performers through their extremely sensitive rendition of the score. The phrasing was seamless as the lines were fused from one instrument to the next. In addition the rapidly shifting responsibilities of "soloist to equal partner to accompaniment," were implemented transparently.

"Duet" by Jason Uechi, was skillfully crafted by the composer and brilliantly executed by Tod Brody (flute) and Terrie Baune (violin). The work is compact and agile with periods textural interplay juxtaposed with soloistic sections, for a result nimble and exciting.

Richard Festinger's "Triometry" was simply breath taking -- for both audience, and flute and clarinet players! This technically demanding piece begins with a delicate exposition which gradually develops into a rich complex of sonorities. This timbral experiment eventually explodes into a contrapuntal argument of grandiose proportions with motivic material being tossed around throughout the ensemble. The performers, Tod Brody (flute), Peter Josheff (clarinets), and Karen Rosenak (piano), articulated the crucial upbeat cadences which propel this piece like a multi-staged rocket that--ignoring gravity--traverses the earth's atmosphere. Bravo!

The program finale was Martha Callison Horst's "Suite" (I. March, II. Courante, III. Sarabande, IV. Waltz, V. Interlude, VI. Gigue). The composer has written this dance suite using traditional Baroque and Classical dance forms as an avenue into exploring the relationship between pulse, movement, and music. The product of this exploration yielded a beautiful and unique set of complimenting movements. The writing, specifically for the string trio is very lyrical. The overall harmonic structure is rich and well balanced. Ross Bauer artfully conducted the ensemble who's performance of the suite never missed a step.

The UC Davis Contemporary Music Players is a professional music ensemble in residence at the University of California at Davis. Established in 1988, the ensemble is dedicated to performing recent music alongside acknowledged masterpieces of the twentieth century. Recently, the ensemble toured ten campuses throughout California in a program of recent music by Latin American Composers. The UCD Contemporary Players is the only ensemble in the Davis-Sacramento area dedicated exclusively to twentieth-century music.

