



FREDERICK LOEWE SYMPOSIUM ON AMERICAN MUSIC
THE MUSIC OF CHRISTOPHER THEOFANIDIS

CHAMBER MUSIC CONCERT

Wednesday, April 11, 2018 - 8 p.m.
FREDERICK LOEWE PERFORMANCE HALL

Raga (1992)

Christopher Theofanidis
(b. 1967)

Victoria Batta, flute
Kathryn Nevin, clarinet
Sakura Tsai, violin
Kyle Champion, cello
Stephanie Lovell, piano
Yuri Inoo, percussion
Bill Schlitt, percussion
Andrew Glendening, conductor

Kaoru (1994)

- I. darting, restless
- II. bitter, sharp
- III. joyous

Jacob Miner, flute
Gerardo Lopez, flute

Statues (1992)

- I. Partial Symmetries
James Still, piano
- II. Eros
Justin Lee, piano
- III. Unstruck Sound
Colin Ward, piano
- IV. Visigoth
Sean McJunkin, piano
- V. Bard
Patrick Telles, piano

One thing at a time (6 etude-miniatures for solo flute) (2017)

- I. Singing, noble
- II. Curious
- III. Allegro
- IV. Mercurial, graceful
- VI. Lyrical

Gerardo Lopez, flute

Airs and Dances (2016)

- I. Allegro
- II. Cantabile
- III. Maestoso
- IV. Grazioso
- V. Allegro
- VI. Allegro

Francisco Castillo, oboe
Brian Begg, oboe
David Hernandez, english horn
Carolyn Beck, bassoon
Diego Hammond, bassoon
Bill Schlitt, percussion

PROGRAM NOTES

By Christopher Theofanidis

Raga (1992)

This short piece grew out of my fascination with Indian classical music. The beautiful forms that can unfold in some Hindustani music struck me as very organic- the alap (or opening, which presents the key intervals of a melody), the introduction of rhythm into the flow of those intervals along with a more fully formed melody, and the extended and heightened state of a kind of climactic final section, often ending at its peak intensity. This Pierrot ensemble piece with added percussion follows that structure loosely in miniature, built off of a synthetic scale of my own design.

Kaoru (1994)

After the flutist, Kaoru Hinata, asked me to write her a solo flute work, with several subsequent failed attempts on my part, I asked if I might add a second flute to the equation- an addition which would allow me to pursue ideas which were squarely on my mind at the time- heterophony and harmonic inference.

My mentor, Martin Bresnick had suggested that I go out to the New Haven town green and study the movement of flocks of birds to see how the individual worked within the collective, a metaphor which proved very helpful in writing *Kaoru*. The idea of motion that refers to a collective 'mind' but allows for flexible relationship internally was a revelation. The three short movements that make up *Kaoru* are all based on this kind of motion, and the harmonic implications that grow out of it.

The first movement is set up around a co-dependent dialogue between the flutists, each of whom at certain moments seems to take the lead and forces the other to respond and interact. The second movement was influenced by Japanese shakuhachi playing, with expressive pitch bends and a more 'breathy' sound world. The third movement is a perpetual motion piece, where the fast exchange of 16th notes allows for longer lines to emerge. *Kaoru* is approximately 12 minutes long.

Statues (1992)

The five episodes that make up statues all draw on the same core of pitch material and are all built on sonic impression and gesture. Each of the movements grew

out of a set of improvisations that I did in reaction to the death of a close family friend, Claude Caux, and the feeling I wanted was a sense of motion that had been frozen in time, going nowhere- a kind of musical statue. The first miniature, Partial Symmetries, is built on a bell-like figure resounding in empty space. The second, Eros, is based around a swirling, two-handed pattern, which after having run its course, again approaches a kind of stasis. The third movement, Unstruck Sound, is built on short, terse outbursts played in the left hand, the harmonic residue of which is sustained in the right hand. The fourth, Visigoth, takes a bright harmony and treats it brutally. The last miniature, Bard, has a kind of keening melody over what I imagine as a mandolin or lute accompaniment. It is wistful in character.

One thing at a time (2017)

This short set of movements was commissioned by a businessman who is also an amateur flutist and great lover of contemporary music. He specifically asked for etudes that were more than just technical exercises, so I devised a way to do that in the form of etudes that are basically character pieces, each having a certain technical or musical challenge that however is disguised in the form of a musical personality. There are six short movements and the whole work is only ten minutes long.

Airs and Dances (2016)

Airs and Dances was the happy outgrowth of working with Beth Wheeler and her colleagues in Little Rock on a new orchestra piece for the Arkansas Symphony. Beth is also part of DDG Trio, which is a double reed ensemble, and when she asked me what a piece I would really like to write next, having been a fellow oboe player for about a dozen years myself, I immediately answered, a work for double reed consort. I had always loved the sound of all those reedy woodwinds (in this case, 2 oboes, 1 English horn, and 2 bassoons), and following in the example of some of those early music style double reed ensembles, this piece was the result. In the fourth movement, there is actually a musical quotation from the 13th century work, Cantigas de Santa Maria.

Airs and Dances is in five movements lasting about 12 minutes, although there is also an optional 6th movement which derives from the first which can be added, making the piece about 15 minutes long.

BIOGRAPHY

Christopher Theofanidis, composer in residence

Christopher Theofanidis has had performances by many leading orchestras from around the world, including the London Symphony, the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Atlanta Symphony, the Moscow Soloists, the National, Baltimore, St. Louis, and Detroit Symphonies, among many others. He has also served as Composer of the Year for the Pittsburgh Symphony during their 2006-7 season, for which he wrote a violin concerto for Sarah Chang.

Mr. Theofanidis holds degrees from Yale, the Eastman School of Music, and the University of Houston, and has been the recipient of the International Masterprize, the Rome Prize, a Guggenheim fellowship, a Fulbright fellowship to France to study with Tristan Mural at IRCAM, a Tanglewood fellowship, and two fellowships from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 2007 he was nominated for a Grammy award for best composition for his chorus and orchestra work, *The Here and Now*, based on the poetry of Rumi, and in 2017 for his bassoon concerto. His orchestral work, *Rainbow Body*, has been one of the most performed new orchestral works of the new millennium, having been performed by over 150 orchestras internationally.

Mr. Theofanidis' has written a ballet for the American Ballet Theatre, a work for the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra as part of their 'New Brandenburg' series, and two operas for the San Francisco and Houston Grand Opera companies. Thomas Hampson sang the lead role in the San Francisco opera. His work for Houston, *The Refuge*, features six sets of international non-Western musicians alongside the opera musicians. He has a long-standing relationship with the Atlanta Symphony and Maestro Robert Spano, and has just four recordings with them, including his concert length oratorio, *Creation/Creator*, which was featured at the SHIFT festival at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. this year with the ASO, chorus, and soloists. His work, *Dreamtime Ancestors*, for the orchestral consortium, New Music for America, has been played by over fifty orchestras over the past two seasons. He has served as a delegate to the US-Japan Foundation's Leadership Program, and he is a former faculty member of the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University as well as the Juilliard School. Mr. Theofanidis is currently a professor at Yale University, and composer-in-residence and co-director of the composition program at the Aspen Music Festival.