LIBERATING FORM

ART BY JOEL SHAPIRO

MUSIC BY
STEPHEN BACHICHA
ANDREW SCHNEIDER
DANIEL ZAJICEK

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new art / new music.

This concert is made possible through generous support from the Sviatoslav Richter Fund for Music Outreach.
New Art/New Music presents:

**Liberating Form**

Inspired by Joel Shapiro’s “New Installation,” ensembles will perform original works composed by Stephen Bachicha, Andrew Schneider, and Daniel Zajicek.

**PROGRAM**

**Quintet for Clarinet and Strings**

Andrew Schneider

Juan Olivares, clarinet; Robert Landes, violin; Eun-Mi Lee, violin; Dawson White, viola; Hellen Weberpal, cello

… until someone loses an eye!

Stephen Bachicha

Micah Ringham, violin; Ioana Ionita, violin; Koko Dyulgerski, viola; Mike Frigo, cello

**straight lines with hard edges for string quartet and Bb clarinet**

Daniel Zajicek

Juan Olivares, clarinet; Robert Landes, violin; Eun-Mi Lee, violin; Dawson White, viola; Hellen Weberpal, cello
A collaboration between the Shepherd School of Music and the Rice Gallery. 
Organized by Dawson White

Quintet for Clarinet and Strings

This work evinces my conviction that compositional aesthetic is 75% dependent on instrumentation, 20% on political conviction, and 5% on originality. Why would I write such a work that starts out like Babbitt (whose Clarinet Quintet is his most lyrical work), continues like Strauss, and makes its whole argument eventually some sort of combination of the two, with Webern-like intervallic leaps abounding? (And I love Webernian intervallic leaps because they are cute.) Because I feel the instrumentation of the ensemble calls for such a schematic. Not because I have always wanted to write such a work. Such inspiration always comes from the ensemble at hand. This is the sort of work that one rarely just sits down and composes willy-nilly. Oftentimes I try to write such a work willy-nilly, but if I don't finish it quickly, I lose interest because of a lack of reason to write it.

(And I do "just sit down and compose" a lot, so I can attest to the fact that such a method is perfect for nostalgic parlor ballads and art songs for which the poetry is especially compelling. The poetry itself provides a reason to write. And writing common-practice instrumental works, as the common practice tonality itself provides a reason to write meaningful music. Indeed, it is perfect for acknowledged Romantics who live in the 19th century, such as myself. And the best way to write in that aesthetic is to be familiar with the modernist repertoire of the 20th century, to be able to actively deny its existence completely at will. This has been made complicated, however, given my newfound knowledge that Puccini is a modernist. Could anyone listen to the opening bars of Turandot and possibly think otherwise?)

My concept of Liberating Form comes from the notion that Form cannot be Liberated unless one has a concept of Form to begin with. This certainly comes out of my Romantic love for long phrases which I write fully-formed, which always seems to have baffled my instructors who think that I am working from little motives and pitch sets. Theorists’ toys as they are. Not a harmful thing to notice, so long as I, the artist, can see the bushes and the whole forest. Therefore, I have adopted a combination of ternary form and rough sonata form which slowly become intertwined with each other. (Case in point: Is the sonata form the entire ternary form, or the fast internal section only?) The ending is my personal way of responding to the cliché of ending all modernist soft works with a fadeaway to nothing. (Especially on strident high notes!) If only more people could end suddenly as in the first movement of Dmitri Shostakovich’s “Leningrad” Symphony.

- Andrew Schneider
... until someone loses an eye!

Fun and Games for String Quartet 2012

I enjoy having as much fun as I can in music and in life. When I first saw Joel Shapiro’s installation, I was immediately excited by all the potential energy in the piece. His objects all hanging in suspension seemingly able to all collide and crash into one another gave me such wonderful pleasure! I could only imagine playing the game “Jenga” when all the wood blocks fall everywhere and make the most amazing sounds. With those ideas in mind, I created different fun and games for string quartet. The piece is designed around three games. Each game allows the players to make different choices on the spot where each of their choices influences the others’ in what they play. At the end of the piece, just like any game, no one knows the outcome and who if anyone will win.

- Stephen Bachicha

**straight lines with hard edges for string quartet and Bb clarinet**

I am a very visual composer. I often see my scores as images in my mind before I start. Joel Shapiro’s installation works often contain long blocks interspersing spaces. Each related, but also with their own identity. Another key element is the open ends of each object. They are floating in space. Connected in our minds, but physically separate. All of these things I built into my visual image for the piece.

To that end I created seven distinct sound objects, plus a chaotic introduction. Excluding the introduction, each following section is built on three notes, possibly representing the three dimensions of space, and then sometimes including another element, the color. Some blocks are longer, some shorter, just like the shapes in the room are thinner, or wider, or shorter, or taller. Little to no transition is built in to the work as well. This is the hard edge.

During the unraveling process of my initial image an inevitable transformation takes place. For this work, the final rendering remains quite close, but still some changes were made. I hope something of the original impulse is still visible in the sounds.

- Daniel Zajicek