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Concert recording 2019-04-03

Er-Gene Kahng

Samantha Ege

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UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

J. William Fulbright
College of Arts & Sciences

FULBRIGHT CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES

Er-Gene Kahng, violin
Samantha Ege, piano

CONCERT PROGRAM

- Sonata in E minor..... Florence Price (1887–1953)
I. Andante - Allegro
II. Andante
III. Scherzo
- Troubled Water..... Margaret Bonds (1913–1972)
- Azuretta..... Regina Harris Baiocchi (b. 1956)
- Toccata..... Dolores White (b. 1932)

INTERMISSION

- Sonata for Violin and Piano..... Irene Britton Smith (1907–1999)
I. Allegro Cantabile
II. Andante con sentimento
III. Vivace
- Violin Concerto No. 2 F. Price

PROGRAM NOTES

FLORENCE BEATRICE PRICE was born in Little Rock Arkansas in 1887. Her musical education began at the age of 3 with piano lessons from her mother. At the age of 19, she graduated with the highest honours earning a double major in piano teaching and organ performance from the New England Conservatory of Music. Five years after moving to Chicago, Price entered the 1932 Rodman Wanamaker Music Contest, which was a national competition for African-American composers. Price came first in the piano composition category with her *Sonata in E minor* and also won the symphonic category with her *Symphony in E Minor*. Price is recognised as the first African-American woman composer to achieve national and international success.

The *Sonata in E minor* (1932) consists of three movements: 'Andante - Allegro,' 'Andante' and 'Scherzo.' The movements are strongly connected and each one reflects an array of influences from classical forms and German Romanticism, to spiritual melodies and plantation dances. The first movement explores two spiritual themes that resurface in various guises as the sonata progresses. The second movement delves even deeper into the sound world of the spiritual. The third movement embarks on a virtuosic whirl around African-American folk music and classical conventions. Price's *Violin Concerto No. 2* (1952) is a single-movement work. The arrangement for violin and piano still manages to convey Price's affinity for melody and orchestral color. Unfortunately, Price did not live to hear the concerto performed. After her death, the location of the manuscript was unknown until its 2009 discovery in an abandoned house outside of Chicago.

MARGARET ALLISON BONDS was born in Chicago and grew up during a cultural renaissance led by African American visionaries and thinkers in all spheres. The home that Margaret lived in with her mother, Estella C. Bonds, was a cultural hub for artists and intellectuals alike. Her circles included composers such as Will Marion Cook, performers such as the soprano Abbie Mitchell and poets such as Langston Hughes. Her mother, Estella, was a gifted musician and Margaret was instilled with the same passion. The younger Bonds later rose to prominence with her own works and performances, and came to represent the next wave of African-American composers in Chicago. When Florence Price moved to Chicago in 1927, she was welcomed into the Bonds family. Both mother and daughter became cherished friends of Price

Bonds' compositional output consists of solo piano pieces, ensemble works and art songs. As a composer, she fills European forms with spiritual melodies, blues harmonies and jazz rhythms. *Troubled Water* for solo piano was composed in 1967 and is often performed as a stand-alone

work, though it belongs to a set called the Spiritual Suite. This set draws influence from specific spirituals, and in the case of *Troubled Water*, Bonds constructs this work around “Wade in the Water.” Bonds encases the melody of this spiritual in jazzy chords and builds up to moments of gushing Romanticism. Yet, the distinctive “Wade in the Water” melody grounds *Troubled Water* in the unromantic reality of African-American history.

REGINA HARRIS BAIOCCHI was born in Chicago, Illinois and continues to reside there to this day. Her upbringing was especially musical: her mother, an enthusiastic singer, enrolled a young, four-year-old Baiocchi into the Chicago Girls Choir at the Metropolitan Church in Bronzeville. Her father’s expansive vast collection also contributed to Baiocchi’s musical childhood. At the age of ten, Baiocchi began to compose original works and later went on to study composition at Roosevelt University’s Chicago Musical College, which is where she earned in B.A. in Composition.

Along Baiocchi’s journey as a composer, Dr. Hale Smith became one of her most important mentors and champions. Baiocchi describes *Azurette* as her “musical reaction to a debilitating stroke Dr. Hale Smith suffered in 2000. It was unbearable to witness my mentor, friend and master composer rendered mute and paralyzed. Hale was such a vibrant man who loved to talk, hold court; and he had the goods to do so. Unfortunately, Hale subsisted in a mute, paralyzed state until he passed 24 November 2009. Fortunately, Hale’s incredible legacy speaks for him and itself.” *Azurette* begins wistfully with a light and lyrical melody accompanied by jazz-inspired harmonies. The increasingly dissonant middle section conveys the turmoil and tragedy of Baiocchi and Smith’s experience. When the opening melody returns, the music is not quite how it was, but its return brings a sense of closure to this incredibly emotive piece.

DOLORES WHITE (b. 1932) was born in Chicago, Illinois and currently reside in Cleveland, Ohio. White began piano lessons at a young age and aspired to be a concert pianist. She was inspired by African-American pianists Natalie Hinderas, Philippa Schuyler and Frances Walker. She received her B.M in Piano Performance from Oberlin College Conservatory of Music and her M.M. in Piano Performance and Composition at the Cleveland Institute of Music. White became increasingly drawn to composition and drew significant influence from the Western classical tradition, from the contrapuntal passagework of Bach to the dissonant expressiveness of atonal styles.

On the subject of composition, White says: “I began composing music late, during my graduate years in graduate college. My concept of consonant, and dissonant sounds had changed greatly. I believe music is a science and should constantly develop, expand, explore. My *Toccata* (2011) was inspirational as a challenge, taking from the historical and expanding with harmonic, dissonant contrapuntal sounds, rhythms, dramatic expressiveness, lyricism and virtuoso passageworks.” White’s *Toccata* pays tribute to the Baroque origins of the style. The Italian word *toccata* translates as “touched.” It is an apt description for a genre designed to showcase the keyboardist’s touch through virtuosic passages and apt description for the virtuosic display found in White’s *Toccata*.

IRENE BRITTON SMITH was born in Chicago, Illinois. Smith began her formal studies composition with Stella Roberts and Leo Sowerby at the American Conservatory. She continued her studies at The Juilliard School of Music with Vittorio Giannini and at the American Conservatory at Fontainebleau as a student of Nadia Boulanger. Smith was very influenced by the classical tradition. Her works reveal both neoclassical and experimental inspirations. Surviving programs of her music also show that she wrote arrangements of Negro Spirituals and that her style was incredibly varied. After retiring from composition and teaching, Smith became a docent for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Smith’s *Sonata for Violin and Piano* was composed in 1947. The sonata was completed during her studies at Juilliard. Mother-and-son duo Helen Walker-Hill and Gregory Walker (the son of the late pre-eminent composer George Walker) gave the world première in 1990. By this time, however, Parkinson’s disease made it increasingly challenging for Smith to recognize her own music. The sonata comprises three movements: ‘Allegro Cantabile,’ ‘Andante con sentimento’ and ‘Vivace.’ The first movement is structured by two themes: the first is ever-wandering and highly lyrical while the second is energetic and jauntily rhythmic. ‘Andante con sentimento’ was one of Smith’s favourites. It’s mellow character and expressive colour heightens the sentimental qualities of the movement. ‘Vivace’ is marked by playful themes that return throughout the movement. This playfulness is contrasted against dreamy episodes and more serious sections that call to mind previous movements. However, the playfulness always returns and brings the sonata to joyful close.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

MARCH

- THU 4 Thompson Horn Studio Recital**
7:30 pm, Stella Boyle Smith Concert Hall
free and open to the public
- SAT 6 Pierce Tuba/Euphonium Studio Recital**
7:30 pm, Stella Boyle Smith Concert Hall
free and open to the public
- MON 8 Percussion Ensemble**
7:30 pm, Faulkner Performing Arts Center
\$10 general admission; \$5 student/faculty/staff
- TUE 9 Tuba Euphonium Ensemble**
7:30 pm, Stella Boyle Smith Concert Hall
free and open to the public
- THU 11 Rulli Trumpet Studio Recital**
7:30 pm, Stella Boyle Smith Concert Hall
free and open to the public
- FRI 12 Guest Artist Recital:
Myth-Science Ensemble**
7:30 pm, Stella Boyle Smith Concert Hall
free and open to the public
- FRI 12 Opera Theatre**
7:30 pm, Faulkner Performing Arts Center
\$10 general admission; \$5 student/faculty/staff
- FRI 12 Guest Artist Recital:
Doug Stone, jazz saxophone**
7:30 pm, Guisinger Music House
1 E. Mountain Street
free and open to the public
- SAT 13 Opera Theatre**
7:30 pm, Faulkner Performing Arts Center
\$10 general admission; \$5 student/faculty/staff

Ushering and stage management for this concert provided by
Sigma Alpha Iota and Phi Mu Alpha.

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The University of Arkansas, Department of Music is housed in the George and Boyce Billingsley Music Building and is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music. Home to over 300 music students and fifty faculty members, we offer a variety of degree programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Through generous support from alumni and friends, the Department of Music became an All-Steinway School in 2010. The University of Arkansas is the third SEC school to gain the distinction and one of only 150 universities worldwide with the honor.

With the completion of the 600-seat Faulkner Performing Arts Center, the University of Arkansas added a world class performance venue. The Department recital hall, Stella Boyle Smith Concert Hall, is located in the Fine Arts Building, adjacent to the Music Building. The 200-seat Concert Hall offers an intimate setting for chamber and solo recitals. Department faculty and students perform over 600 concerts per year, on and off campus.

For more information on the Department or our events, contact us at (479) 575-4701, email us at music@uark.edu, or visit music.uark.edu.