2012-2013 Season

La Jolla Symphony & Chorus

Mandeville Auditorium March 16-17, 2013

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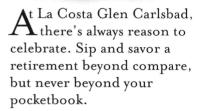
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REPEAT / MOVE ON

Saturday, March 16, 2013, 7:30 pm Sunday, March 17, 2013, 2:00 pm

Mandeville Auditorium, UCSD

Steven Schick conducting

GLASS

Overture to La Belle et la Bête

DRESHER

Concerto for Quadrachord and Orchestra

Uncommon Ground A Tale of Two Tunings Louder/Faster

Paul Dresher, quadrachord

INTERMISSION

WU

Transcriptions of Place NEE COMMISSION

COPLAND

Appalachian Spring

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FROM THE CONDUCTOR



As I re-read "Angle of Repose" I recall the conversations I had with my own grandparents. I was especially close to my mother's parents who lived just down the street from us. My overriding memory is how their lives seemed utterly different and old-fashioned—my grandfather arrived in lowa in an actual covered wagon—and yet were so similar to my own. We shared many deep connections: a desire to spend a good part of every day outside, a firm conviction that baseball should only be played in

daylight, and a fascination with patterns and cycles. This last topic might seem like a strange basis for conversations between a twelve-year-old boy and two people in their late seventies — but we milked it endlessly.

My grandparents thought a lot about the big repeating patterns of nature from crop rotations and weather patterns to political fortunes. I was mostly concerned with a personal set of vexing pre-adolescent mini-cycles consisting of exams, chronic social rejection, and acne. But the questions were more or less the same for all three of us: why do some things stay the same and others change? When you find yourself repeating something, how do you know when or even how to move on? I realized only much later that the tension between repetition and change in these conversations was part of my agrarian birthright. Without knowing it I was practicing the distinctions between continuity and rupture that can be found in growing and harvesting. I was learning that the farmer's eternal squint toward the horizon was tempered with the knowledge that his world ended at the edge of the field.

Our conversations about stasis and change drew me closer to them, especially to my grandmother, who was the real philosopher in the family. But eventually those same conversations brought us to tears and to words that nearly tore us apart. What I didn't know then—couldn't know—is that the deep generational differences in the way we understood repetition were practically unbridgeable. Theirs was a conservative project, in which they saw the maintenance of a straight line of repeating experiences as their horse in the race away from the privations of the Great Depression. I came to see repetitive behavior for its own sake as an impediment to what I considered necessary social change. When our theoretical musings inevitably took the form of concrete disagreements about the great issues of the day from Civil Rights to the war in Vietnam, we were all surprised by the distinctly un-Midwestern vehemence of our exchanges.

Our differences were probably nothing more than questions of scale. Each of us lived fully in a Newtonian world in which bodies stayed at rest or in motion. That meant that we accepted both continuity and change. We understood that repeating patterns were the necessary architecture for memory and meaning, but that unreasonable repetition was the enemy of invention. It was just that my grandparents took the long view and measured life in increments of seasons and market cycles. I was a child of the modern age of machines and rock music, parsing my view in rpm, mph, and an obsession with the repeating one bar groove of Ticket to Ride. I am much less impatient now and, for better and worse, am becoming more like my ancestors every day. I too have learned

to love the long patterns of life—though I continue to maintain a healthy respect for Ticket to Ride.

In today's concert we will hear my grandparents' voices echoing across nearly half a century. They are still talking about whether to continue or move on, but our interest today is in how that conversation plays out in musical terms. It won't be difficult to hear aspects of repeating in the spinning cellular repetitions of Philip Glass's Overture to La belle et la bête and in Paul Dresher's Concerto for Quadrachord. On the other side of the spectrum are the more mutable and evolving structures of Yvonne Wu's Transcriptions of Place, and the ultimate statement of fluidity in Aaron Copland's Appalachian Spring.

What might be less obvious are the many ways in which musical repetition and change function as a barometer of a deeper intellectual climate. Classical philosophy didn't come up much in the conversations with my grandparents, and Heraclitus didn't figure at all. However, à propos Copland and the flowing water of his Appalachian spring, Heraclitus's statement that you "never step in the same river twice" might have been something my grandmother would have said in another way. The concept is that a river is always the same and never the same; it repeats and moves on at the very same time. My grandfather was more prosaic, but I think my grandmother would have agreed with Heraclitus that the truth consists of a set of unified oppositions.

Perhaps in this light, repetition and moving on are not flat-footed opposites but are rather dynamically interpolated forces in a complex world. Why then is some music suffused with repetition? Think of Philip Glass in the 1970s, or George Antheil in the 1920s, or Johann Sebastian Bach in the 1740s. And, why in another time and place is repeating oneself an artistic anathema? Think now of the music of German avant-garde immediately after World War II, which fiercely avoided repetition and as a result was nearly devoid of the markers that aid memory. In the end the texture of a musical experience is largely about helping us remember or helping us forget. Could it be that in one age there was so much to sayor and in another so much to forget?

It would be wrong to give you the impression that my grandparents and I spent the 1960s trading pithy philosophical aphorisms. No, it was mostly small talk with the occasional deeper realization. While I was in the middle of it, all time seemed to stretch on forever as a succession of repeated behavior. I went to school, talked with my family, worked on my father's farm, and at least once a week rode around my grandparents' farms with them to look at the rain gauges and check on the animals. At the time I thought that phase would never end. But in a real-life version of musical repetition and culmination it did end. Suddenly. And now I am tantalized by the veiled memories of those years in which there was so much to savor.

STEVEN SCHICK conductor

For more than 30 years Steven Schick has championed contemporary music as a percussionist and teacher by commissioning and premiering more than 100 new works. Schick is a professor of music at the University of California, San Diego and in 2008 was awarded the title of Distinguished Professor by the UCSD Academic Senate.

Schick was one of the original members and percussionist of the Bang on a Can All-Stars of New York City (1992-2002). He has served as artistic director of the Centre International de Percussion de Genève in Geneva, Switzerland, and as consulting artist in percussion at the Manhattan School of Music. Schick is founder and artistic director of the acclaimed percussion group, red fish blue fish, a UCSD ensemble composed of his graduate percussion students that performs regularly throughout San Diego and has

toured internationally. He also is founding artistic director (June 2009) of "Roots & Rhizomes"—an annual international course for percussionists hosted by the Banff Center for the Arts in Canada.

As a percussion soloist, Schick has appeared in Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, The Royal Albert Hall (London), Centre Pompidou (Paris), The Sydney Opera House and Disney Hall among many other national and international yenues.

Schick is a frequent guest conductor with the International Contemporary Ensemble (Chicago and New York City), and in 2011 he was appointed artistic director and conductor of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. Schick has been music director and conductor of the La Jolla Symphony & Chorus since 2007.

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PROGRAM NOTES

by Eric Bromberger

OVERTURE TO LA BELLE ET LA BÊTEPHILIP GLASS

Born January 31, 1937, Baltimore



The story of beauty and the beast dates back at least 300 years, and while it takes many forms, the basic tale tells of a young woman pursued by a beast of fantastic ugliness. She resists his advances but eventually recognizes his goodness and falls in love, and at the moment she confesses her love the beast is transformed into a handsome young man, whom she marries. That basic story has been retold in many ways,

including a version by the brothers Grimm. One of the most striking of these retellings dates from 1946 when French filmmaker Jean Cocteau created a version of extraordinary magic and charm. So compelling is Cocteau's film that when the young woman (Josette Day) makes clear her love for the dying beast (Jean Marais), the result is almost an anticlimax: the beast in Cocteau's version had been so noble that we regret his transformation into a conventional matinee idol.

Cocteau's movie La Belle et la Bête is regularly included on the lists of the greatest films ever made, and it has influenced a number of artists. In 1994 Philip Glass created what is in effect a complete re-imagining of Cocteau's film, a theater-piece that the composer called "an opera for ensemble and film." Glass composed a completely new musical soundtrack for Cocteau's film (the original score had been by French composer Georges Auric). A newly-restored print of Cocteau's film is projected (silently and with subtitles) in the background while in the foreground characters sing and act out the scenes, and Glass' score—which he carefully synchronized with the action of the film—is performed by a pit ensemble. Sometimes the singers sing to each other, and sometimes they turn and sing to their counterparts on the screen behind them. Glass' La Belle et la Bête was first performed in Gibellina, Italy, on June 21, 1994, and then taken on tour. It remains one of his most effective operas.

Glass originally scored *La Belle* for his own ensemble of synthesizers, keyboards, winds, and percussion, but he then created a version for chamber orchestra by adding strings and a few more wind instruments. The *Overture* is performed during the opening credits of Cocteau's film, which—in a charming touch—are written on an ancient chalkboard by the hands of unseen actors. The *Overture* is brief (just over three minutes), and its pulsing, shifting music fuses a certain innocence and freshness with a darker current of menace, a perfect prelude to the tale of magic, wonder, and self-exploration that will follow.

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CONCERTO FOR QUADRACHORD & ORCHESTRA

Paul Dresher

Born January 8, 1951, Los Angeles



The following program note has been provided by the composer.

Concerto for Quadrachord & Orchestra was originally composed for Joana Carneiro and the Berkeley

Symphony Orchestra with support from the Creative Work Fund, and premiered in 2012. The work is in three separate movements that in general follow the conventional concerto movement sequence of fast-slow-fast. Beyond this large-scale formal connection to convention, the similarities to common practices become more difficult to define, starting most obviously with the featured solo instrument, the Quadrachord. This very large stringed instrument (four strings, each nearly 14 feet long) was invented and constructed by my long-time collaborator Daniel Schmidt and me between 1999 and 2004. (A more detailed description of the instrument follows these notes.)

The first two movements take two different approaches to a core challenge inherent in this composition—the fact that the Quadrachord plays in an entirely different tuning system than that of the orchestra. The orchestra—along with virtually all other forms of music we hear daily regardless of idiom or point of origin—uses equal-temperament, a system in which all 12 semitones that make up an octave are equidistant from the one above or below.

In sharp contrast, the Quadrachord's extremely long strings lead it to very easily and accurately play the intervals of the natural harmonic series. These are the naturally occurring intervals that result from the multiple modes of vibration that occur when a string or column of air is set into motion by plucking, bowing, striking or blowing. Each of these intervals is unique in terms of its distance from the closest neighboring harmonic. While the first four or five of these naturally-occurring subdivisions of the string (also known as "just" intervals, "overtones" or "partials") are quite closely matched to those of equal temperament, they increasingly diverge from equal temperament as one proceeds up the harmonic series.

To ears accustomed only to equal-temperament these intervals will typically sound quite "out of

PAUL DRESHER quadrachord

Paul Dresher is an internationally active composer noted for his ability to integrate diverse musical influences into his own personal style. He pursues many forms of expression including experimental opera and music theater, chamber and orchestral composition, live instrumental electro-acoustic music performances, musical instrument invention, and scores for theater, dance, and film.

A recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship for 2006-07, he has received commissions from the Library of Congress, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Spoleto Festival USA, the Kronos Quartet, the San Francisco Symphony, California EAR Unit, San Francisco Ballet, Seattle Chamber Players, and Chamber Music America. He has

performed or had his works performed throughout North America, Asia, and Europe at venues including New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, London Sinfonietta, Lincoln Center, Festival d'Automne in Paris, the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival, CBC Vancouver Radio Orchestra, and Festival Interlink in Japan.

A major focus of Dresher's work has been the Paul Dresher Ensemble. Formed in 1984, the group commissions and performs a diverse repertory of works from a wide range of contemporary composers, produces and tours new opera/music theater productions, and collaborates with a broad range of dance and theater artists and organizations.

tune" at first, often unpleasantly so. Thus, one of my goals in this work is to introduce the Quadrachord's tuning system in such a way that as the piece progresses, this initial strangeness starts to become familiar and will then begin to make a different kind of sense to the listener. To accomplish this I have had to come up with several compositional and orchestration strategies to create some common ground between the orchestra and the Quadrachord (as well as interesting uncommon ground).

These issues become the underlying subject of the first movement, *Uncommon Ground*, which takes the form of a dialogue between the orchestra and Quadrachord using the syntax and vocabulary of the two contrasting tuning systems. There are two places in the score, one each in the 1st and 2nd movements, where I digitally record what I perform on the Quadrachord. This recording then loops continuously, forming the basis of the rich musical development furthered by both the live Quadrachord and the orchestra.

The 2nd movement, A Tale of Two Tunings, is sparer in its orchestration laying bare, through a simple and continuously-looped 14-bar harmonic progression, the tension between the two different intonation systems. The last movement, Louder/Faster, dispenses entirely with this focus on tuning and instead explores the unique sonic resources of the Quadrachord as a percussion instrument.

The Concerto for Quadrachord was composed between March and September of 2012. After the premiere in October 2012, some revisions, primarily in orchestration, were made in early 2013. ■

A Special Thanks to Robert Whitley

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THE QUADRACHORD

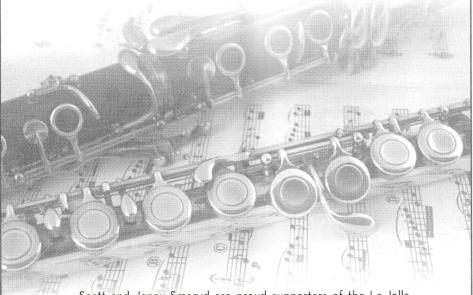
The Ouadrachord is an instrument invented in collaboration with instrument designer Daniel Schmidt as part of my music theater work Sound Stage. The instrument has a total string length of 160 inches, four strings of differing gauges but of equal length and an electric bass pick-up next to each of the two bridges. The instrument can be plucked like a guitar, bowed like a cello, played like a slide guitar, prepared like a piano, and hammered on like a percussion instrument. Because of the extremely long string length (relative to our conventional bowed and plucked instruments), and very low open string/fundamental pitches, the instrument is capable of easily and accurately playing the harmonic series up to the 28nd harmonic and beyond. Thus it is a remarkable tool for exploring alternative tuning systems based on the harmonic series.

Since its debut in Sound Stage, the instrument has been used in several important works. It is the featured instrument and source for all sounds in the concert work In the Name(less), recorded with percussionist Joel Davel on my 2004 New Albion CD, Cage Machine. In 2006, in a commission from the Jewish Music Festival produced by the Berkeley JCC, Joel and I premiered a second duo for the Quadrachord and Marimba Lumina, Glimpsed From Afar. This work has toured widely, and was performed on a program with the Los Angeles Philharmonic as part of the West Coast Left Coast Music Festival directed by John Adams.

— Paul Dresher







Scott and Jenny Smerud are proud supporters of the La Jolla Symphony & Chorus. Jenny has played clarinet with the orchestra for ten years, and served on the board for four years.

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TRANSCRIPTIONS OF PLACE

Yiheng Yvonne Wu

Born March 25, 1981, Taipei, Taiwan



The following program note has been provided by the composer.

In one sense, *Transcriptions* of *Place* is a fantasy of a singing piano. Two aspects of the piano's sound—the

percussive hammer-strike and the resulting resonance—become metaphorical characters that dance around each other while constantly shifting forms. The piece opens with woodwinds mimicking the attack and decay of piano chords. Soon the winds surpass the piano's capabilities when they turn decaying sounds into crescendos. Later, fast runs mimic those undulations, and later still, glissandos from the brass and strings bring a physical palpability to the gestures. In this way, the orchestra is an extension of the piano, creating sounds that the piano cannot achieve alone.

The middle of the piece is an icy world of string harmonics (overtones, which sound purer and thinner). The frozen soundscape has a quietly stirring surface, and moments of scurrying suggest a greater energetic potential. This passage might imply a shift in the listener's "perspective." The extreme quiet suggests that we are far away from the sounds, yet the intimacy of certain details suggests we are deep *inside* the sound. Or perhaps time has slowed down. Within the iciness, fragments of fast runs from earlier

parts of the piece confuse the sense of "perspective"; multiple worlds clash and co-exist.

A lonely piano cuts into the iciness, stirring up the latent energy. It grows increasingly percussive, and the entire orchestra is roused for one last fiery dance. The strings still sound frozen, aside from some brief, explosive moments when they pierce through the figurative distance.

A final, loud percussive "hit" by the entire orchestra leaves the piano and tam-tam ringing alone. Little clouds of woodwinds and scattered strings sound like dust particles catching moments of iridescence in their never-ending fall. During the near-silence of several pauses, listeners might hear the resonance of the orchestra in their own imaginations.

The title is metaphorical. "Transcriptions" are my copying the piano's "resonances" over and over, though each copy becomes a translation into a new musical form. The word "place" connotes a specificity of location and circumstance, which "transcription" attempts to capture. But everything is ephemeral, and nothing can be pinned down. This is what I love most about music.

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Born in Taiwan and raised in Virginia, Yvonne began piano lessons when a family friend volunteered to teach her. She began composing during her last year of high school and decided then to take the plunge into music. She received a B.A. in Music from Yale University and an M.A. in Music Composition from UCSD. Her works have been performed in the U.S., Canada, Taiwan, and Germany and premiered by The Timothy Dwight Chamber Players, ARRAYMUSIC, and Ensemble SurPlus. She was a prize-winner in the 2004 Formosa Composition Competition and was awarded the Abraham Beekman Cox Prize at Yale. Her string quartet Utterance has been released on Carrier Records. Primary composition teachers have included Katharina Rosenberger, Kathryn Alexander, John Halle, Sophia Serghi, and Steven Takasugi. Yvonne is currently a doctoral student in music composition at UCSD.



APPALACHIAN SPRING AARON COPLAND

Born November 14, 1900, Brooklyn Died December 2, 1990, North Tarrytown, NY



Aaron Copland's Appalachian Spring has become such a classic that it is surprising to learn that this ballet took shape rather haphazardly. Copland and Martha Graham had long wanted to work together before that opportunity came in

1942 when music patron Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge commissioned three new dance works from Graham and gave the choreographer her choice of composers. One of those Graham chose was Copland, and they set to work. But their plans were unclear. It was wartime and Graham wanted a specifically American subject, but her initial thought of something that would include spoken text, an Indian girl, and the Civil War did not appeal to Copland. And so the composer went ahead with only a general sense of Graham's evolving scenarios.

Copland began composition in June 1943 in Hollywood, where he was working on a film score. and completed the ballet the following summer in Cambridge, while teaching at Harvard; the orchestration was completed in Mexico. Graham was delighted with Copland's music and adapted her choreography to fit his score (she in fact chose the title Appalachian Spring just weeks before the first performance, taking it from Hart Crane's poem The Bridge). For his part, Copland conceived this music specifically for Martha Graham rather than for her constantly-evolving plot-lines: "When I wrote Appalachian Spring, I was thinking primarily about Martha and her unique choreographic style, which I knew well. Nobody else seems guite like Martha: she's so proud, so very much herself. And unquestionably very American: there something prim and restrained, simple yet strong, about her which one tends to think of as American." Copland's working title for this music was simply "Ballet for Martha" (and it still says that on the score's title page).

The premiere, at the Library of Congress in Washington on October 30, 1944, was a great success, and Copland's score was awarded the Pulitzer Prize and the New York Music Critics Circle



Award the following year. Because the pit at the premiere was so small, Copland originally scored *Appalachian Spring* for an ensemble of only thirteen instruments: three woodwinds (flute, clarinet, bassoon), double string quartet, contrabass, and piano. In the spring of 1945, he arranged a suite from the ballet for full symphony orchestra, deleting about eight minutes from the original ballet, and this is the version heard at the present concert.

A note in the score outlines the subject of *Appalachian Spring* as Graham and Copland finally evolved it: the ballet tells of "a pioneer celebration in spring around a newly-built farmhouse in the Pennsylvania hills in the early part of the last century. The bride-to-be and the young farmerhusband enact the emotions, joyful and apprehensive, their new domestic partnership invites. An older neighbor suggests now and then the rocky confidence of experience. A revivalist and his followers remind the new householders of the strange and terrible aspects of human fate. At the end the couple are left quiet and strong in their new house."

This scenario is rather simple, but the story is timeless, and Copland's wonderful music—glowing, fresh, strong—catches its mood perfectly. The action is easily followed. The opening section, which introduces the characters one by one, outlines the main theme of the ballet—a simple rising-andfalling shape — within a guiet haze of sound, and out of this bursts the general gathering: Copland portrays this with a jubilant A-major explosion that suggests country fiddling. A hopping little episode for woodwinds is the dance of the Bride and her Intended, who look forward to their life together (there is a dark interlude here — not all of life will be happy). Suddenly the revivalist and his flock appear and help celebrate the wedding with a barn dance. The Solo Dance of the Bride, marked Presto, is her attempt to convey her complex feelings on this day, and this leads to one of the most striking moments in Appalachian Spring: Copland has a solo clarinet sing the Shaker melody "Tis the Gift To Be Simple," and there follow five variations, each a vision of the married couple's life together. The last is stamped out triumphantly, and then, over prayer-like music from the strings, the Bride goes to take her place among her neighbors. The young couple is left together, "quiet and strong" as the ballet fades into silence on the music from the very beginning. ■

In Memory of Bill Lindley

William "Bill" Lindley played in

the Orchestra's viola section for forty years, holding out at the last against his deafness.

Leavened through his sense of humor, Bill invested his life passion in music, physics, humanism, and vigorous free-thinking. Bill remembered his years with the La Jolla Symphony & Chorus by leaving a bequest of \$5,000 to our organization. At the urging of friends who knew Bill well, this gift was used to help sponsor this weekend's concerts.

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