Dalton Wed@7:30pm: Live and Interactive!

Wednesday 14 March 2018
Dalton Center Recital Hall
7:30 p.m.
Pre-Concert talk with Dr. David Colson at 7 p.m.

LORI SIMS, Piano

Robert Schumann
1810–1856

Variations on the name “Abegg” Opus 1

William Bolcom
b. 1938

Romantic Pieces (1958–60)
I. Andantino
II. Allegro grazioso
III. Lento sostenuto
IV. Presto ma non troppo
V. Andante grazioso e piacevole
VI. Chorale
VII. Allegretto

intermission

David Colson
b. 1957

The Air is Sweet (Fantasy) (2017)

Olivier Messiaen
1908–1992

Vingt Regards sur l’enfant-Jésus (1944)
X. Regard de ‘Esprit de joie

William Bolcom

II. Rag infernal (Syncopes apolytpiques)

William Bolcom

The Garden of Eden (1969)
III. The Serpent Kiss (Rag Fantasy)
PROGRAM NOTES
by Lori Sims

Composer William Bolcom celebrates his 80th birthday this year, and thus the Gilmore International Keyboard Festival asked me to create a program featuring his music. The works featured on this program have some relationship or kinship to Bolcom’s music, thus subtly defining his style by way of comparison with others. Bolcom states that he was spending hours reading through the works of Schumann prior to or while composing his Romantic Pieces: the large work of connected character pieces bears resemblance to Kreisleriana in the alternation of fast and slow pieces and some of the deeply nostalgic, expressive elements; to pieces such as the Davidsbuendlertaenze in linking the tail of one piece to the beginning figures of the neighboring piece; and finally to the virtuosic figurations of the “Abegg” variations. Though Schumann would not have known stride bass, it is interesting to hear something akin to that modern figuration in the second variation. Bolcom mentored David Colson and though the Fantasy might not be as obviously related to the works of Bolcom presented here, the wildness, the five-fingered harmonies and rhythmic drive echo properties of the Regard de l’Esprit de joie, by Messiaen—who was Bolcom’s teacher. A with all the Bolcom pieces presented in this program, the “Esprit de joie” is a tonal work with vivid chromatic colorization, i.e. tonal harmonies that are corrupted in every possible way. Interestingly, the middle section of the religiously inspired Messiaen features a fervid, jazzy dance based on a five-note rhythmic pattern. The stride bass figure which romps though the Messiaen probably existed in the imagination of Bolcom far before studying in France but it is, nevertheless, an interesting connection to both the “rag infernal” stride bass obsession and the stride bass in the ragtime-inspired “The Serpent’s Kiss”.

This concert is a Bullock Performance Institute (BPI) presentation. BPI events are made possible through the cooperation and support of several community fine arts units: the Donald P. Bullock Music Performance Institute; the Western Michigan University College of Fine Arts and School of Music; and WMU’s chapters of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia and Sigma Alpha Iota music fraternities.

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