

Impossible Dream - Program Notes

“The Nocturne on an Impossible Dream,” with its soaring, plaintive violin, its gentle interminglings of clarinet and piano, and the quiet intimations of mortality emanating from tam-tam and low clusters, is one of the most sensuous works of our era. With its ensemble of nine, its twelve wistful minutes suspend all sense of the passage of time. One senses the effect of a masterpiece.”

- **Harold Blumenfeld**, composer & critic

Written in memory of my mother, this work was inspired by the great void left by her absence in my life. What occupied my mind in the final days, were her unfulfilled dreams. A warm, sensitive, artistic and creative person, she could never quite realize her artistic vision. Political turmoil, emigration and an energetic husband did not allow her own potentials in design, embroidery, lute and dance to develop. There simply was not the time or space her talents deserved. The piece is as much a portrait of her, as it is of my thoughts about her. It attempts to convey the perfect island of peace and love she created, around which we could always gather and find comfort.

Born in Bonn, Germany, **Gerhard Samuel** (April 20, 1924) came to the United States at the age of fourteen, a refugee from the Nazi terror. Since his early studies in composition with Paul Hindemith at Yale University, he has established himself internationally as both composer and conductor. As Director of Orchestral Activities at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, his commitment to the presentation of 20th Century works and the expansion of the orchestral repertoire, has led to his numerous recordings for the Hyperion, Centaur, Orion, Desto, CRI, Everest, Delos, Acoma, and Vienna Modern Masters record labels. Samuel's output spans the gamut from solo instrumental pieces to works for orchestra with chorus. This fluidity and control over his compositional craft has brought commissions from the LaSalle Quartet, the Sequoia Quartet, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Baltimore, Denver, San Francisco, Santa Rosa, San Jose and Oakland Symphonies, the CCM Wind Symphony, Zara Nelsova, Joel Krosnick, Eiji Hashimoto, the Los Angeles Monday Evening Concerts, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the Cincinnati Symphony, the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra, the Starling Chamber Orchestra, and WGUC, Cincinnati with additional performances by the New York Philharmonic, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the American Symphony Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Philadelphia, San Francisco, Santa Rosa Jose and Oakland Symphony Orchestras, as well as the L.A. Chamber Orchestra, Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra, the National Symphony of Mexico, the Pacific Northwest, the Joffrey and Oakland Ballets, and many more. He has received numerous awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Freeman and Fromm Foundations, Meet the Composer, and ASCAP. Samuel was honoured with the 1994 Alice M. Ditson Award from Columbia University.

Concerto for Guitar and Chamber Orchestra was originally composed as a chamber concerto for guitar and wind ensemble, written at the request of Randall Adkins for the Ohio Northern University Wind Ensemble who was seeking a new work to premiere at the Ohio Private College Instrumental Conductors Association's 5th Annual Honors Festival. Written for Lynn Harting-Ware as soloist, I began the concerto during a residency at the Atlantic Center for the Arts in New Smyrna Beach, Florida where I was working with the Russian composer, Rodion Shchedrin. The work proceeds in the traditional fast-slow-fast tempo scheme with similar motivic ideas unifying the three movements. It is essentially tonal with constant meter changes. The first movement is expository, while the second movement communicates a sense of beauty and sadness. The driving finale evokes a flamenco character.

Richard Jordan Smoot was born in Missouri (May 25, 1952) and grew up in Connecticut where he began his musical studies. An alumni of Ohio Wesleyan University and Ohio State University, he was Composer-in-Residence at Ohio Northern University and visiting instructor at Ohio State University. Smoot's compositions have been performed in the United States, Canada, West Germany and Taiwan, and heard on National Public Radio. As a classical guitarist himself, his compositions for guitar stand out in their creative, idiomatic quality. As well, his orchestra commissions and performances have been well received by the Pro Musica Chamber Orchestra of Columbus, Ohio, the Toledo Symphony, the Lima Symphony Orchestra, and the Columbus Symphony Orchestra. He has received grants from the American Music Center and Ohio Arts Council.

Guitarist **Lynn Harting-Ware** has premiered and commissioned numerous compositions. Her dedication and musicality continually inspire composers, drawing them in to the intimacies of the guitar. Her dramatic musical flair, beautiful tone, and variety of timbre completely absorb her audience. She received a Masters of Music Degree from Kent State University and a Bachelor of Music Degree from the University of Cincinnati/College Conservatory of Music. She studied in master classes with Oscar Ghiglia, Alice Artzt, Sergio Abreu, Eduardo Fernandez and Turibio Santos with principal teachers including Clare Callahan and Eli Kassner. She was the founding editor of Guitar Canada magazine and is a contributing writer to many music publications in the U.S. and Canada. Her desire and

commitment to establish a 20th Century guitar repertory leads her ambition in publishing an annual catalog of contemporary music for the Acoma•Nambe Editions guitar series. Her compact disc, *The Many Moods of the Guitar* (GXD 5732) has been broadcast around the world. Another disc, *Forest Scenes* (GXD 5734) includes premiere selections of her arrangements from Bach's Goldberg Variations as well as contemporary pieces.

"Kabah is an exotically evocative piece, describing the atmosphere and spirit of the place with eerie harmonics, long-held notes and often sparse harmonies conveying a sense of vast emptiness and antiquity."

- **The Washington Post**

"Kabah for string octet, was commissioned for the Pan American Games, Festival of the Arts with a Canada Council Grant and premiered at the Indianapolis Museum of Art in a special Gala Concert. Inspired by Indian mysticism, the work is named after a Mayan ruin in Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula. In Kabah, Ware climbs inside his source creating an organic rather than narrative musical style. Expressionistic with driving rhythm and intense dissonance, it evolves through long-breathed melodies, spun out almost endlessly in a free-flowing contrapuntal texture. The musical structures develop naturally from motivic cells that seem to grow and mutate in an evolutionary sense. Fascinating in its defiance of rational analysis, the music emerges from a primitive sense that communicates directly with the listener on a purely spiritual level. For this reason, its meaning can be interpreted and understood emotionally, but the message is encoded outside the realm of language."

- **Ira Lieberman**

Peter Ware (May 4, 1951) like Charles Ives and Aaron Copland, has fashioned a melodic and harmonic vocabulary both distinctive and attractive. His music is large in gesture with the heroic always surfacing and a sense of undeniable majesty. It communicates the universal awe, a speechlessness that can only be captured in the language of tone. In the end, the process is clearly recognizable as an extremely personal testimonial: the individual artist struggling for context in the world, and through the workings out of their art, championing and empowering themselves with spirit transcending.

Ware's early musical training was in the church choir and under the piano tutelage of Florence Robertson in Beethoven's lineage. He studied composition at Virginia Commonwealth University, the University of Cincinnati and Yale University. His principal teachers include Krzysztof Penderecki, Scott Huston, Roman Haubenstock-Ramati and Toru Takemitsu.

Ware's attracts numerous commissions with grants from the Canada Council, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council and the Ohio Arts Council. He has attracted commissions and performances from ensembles such as the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Saskatoon Symphony (Composer-of-the-Season), Iceland Symphony Orchestra, Regina Symphony, Orchestra London Canada, Virginia Symphony, Hamilton Philharmonic, Mississauga Symphony Orchestra and the Canadian Chamber Ensemble/Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, Richmond Symphony, Queen's Chamber Orchestra, National Chamber Orchestra, and Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra; and received composition prizes from the Minnesota Composers Forum, St. Louis New Music Circle, University of Cincinnati, Pi Kappa Lambda Music Honor Society, Yale University, and Virginia Commonwealth University.

Israeli born violinist, **Yehonatan Berick** began violin lessons at age six with Ilona Feher and has attended masterclasses with Isaac Stern, Henryk Szering, Josef Gingold and Pinchas Zukerman. In Cincinnati, he studied with Henry Meyer, Kurt Sassmanshaus and Dorothy DeLay. Presently a faculty member at McGill University in Montreal, he is an active chamber musician in the resident Proteus Chamber Ensemble. He has performed with Israeli orchestras including the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, Haifa Symphony Orchestra and Israeli Chamber Orchestra, and given numerous recitals and radio broadcasts throughout the United States, Canada and Europe.

Clarinetist, **Helen Russell** studied at the University of Western Ontario with Jerome Summers and at CCM with Ronald de Kant. She has performed with the Kitchener- Waterloo Symphony Orchestra.

Pianist **Alonzo Alexander** is a Doctoral candidate in composition at CCM and a specialist in the performance of contemporary music. He has numerous premieres to his credit and has become an irreplaceable participant in the Cincinnati music scene.

Dedicated to the performance of new music, the **Contemporary Music Ensemble** at the University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music has been under the direction of Gerhard Samuel since 1976. It has premiered countless compositions for large and small ensembles as well as pieces for solo instruments. While many of its programs have been broadcast on National Public Radio Station WGUC, the ensemble has also recorded works by other prominent composers.