

July 7th 2018
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon

Program: Leoš Janáček and Martin Bresnick

Lisa Moore, piano

Leoš Janáček (1854-1928)

On An Overgrown Path (1901-11) (12')

Selections from the First Series

- Our Evenings
- A Blown Away Leaf
- The Madonna of Frydek
- They Chattered Like Swallows
- The Barn Owl Has Not Flown Away

From the street 1.x.1905 (1905) (10')

- The Presentiment
- The Death

In The Mist (1912) (14')

1. Andante
2. Molto Adagio/Presto
3. Andantino
4. Presto/Meno mosso

intermission

Martin Bresnick (b.1946)

Dream of the Lost Traveller (1997) (12')

Willie's Way (2006) (10')

Extrana Devocion (Strange Devotion) (2010) 6'

Ishi's Song (2012) (9')

Bundists (2014) 3'

Program notes and bios

"When I first heard Janáček's music, about 30 years ago, I thought it was perhaps the most beautiful music in the world. I was initially struck by an eerie lyricism and quirky originality. As the music grew on me I became captivated. His uniquely free modal harmonic palette sweeps across generous haunting folk melodies, interrupted by melodic Moravian speech fragments borrowed from eaves-dropped conversations heard in village cafés and streets. Fueled by a sense of urgency, ecstasy, and melancholy, Janáček blends language and melody, transforming spoken rhythms into music. He combines simplicity with sophistication and embraces ambiguity."
(Lisa Moore)

Leoš Janáček (1854-1928) was born in Hukvaldy, Moravia (now the Czech Republic) and spent most of his adult life as a dedicated organist and teacher of keyboard and harmony at the Music Academy in Brno. He was an excellent pianist and one of the first composers to collect and use folk tunes in his music (pre-dating Bartok). Janáček was socially aware and also nationalistic, spending considerable effort trying to establish an independent Czech music academy.

Janáček often composed using *speech rhythms* - melodic fragments he transcribed while listening to the lilt of Czech conversation on streets and in cafés. Transforming these fragments into music, he produced brief melodic figures or *interruption motives*. Moving freely between major, minor and modal tonalities, Janáček uniquely juxtaposes these interruptions with lyrical folk melodies. The music shifts effortlessly between simplicity and worldly sophistication, revealing an impassioned lyricism and driving urgency. In understanding the intense emotion in Janáček's music one must

consider the effect of his long unhappy marriage complicated by the unrequited love for his beloved Camilla.

Professionally Janáček was a 'late developer' - reaching little international recognition until just a few years before his death. Janáček wrote: 'I no longer saw any worth in my work, and scarcely believed what I wrote. I had become convinced that no one would ever notice anything of mine.' His operas began to draw attention after they were translated into German by Max Brod (Kafka's translator). Over time Janáček's work has built an admired international reputation as some of the most original, intense and dramatic music of the twentieth century. His operas are regularly programmed in major opera houses and his chamber and piano music is firmly established in the instrumental repertoire. (LM)

On An Overgrown Path is a collection of fifteen short piano pieces. The *First Series* is a suite of ten pieces, each with a descriptive title. Five were originally written for harmonium. They journey through imagery and reminiscences of Olga's childhood, Janáček's daughter. Olga showed a promising start to a theatrical career but died of TB in her early twenties. (She loved her father's music, and on her deathbed insisted Janáček sit at the piano and play through the new opera score for *Jenufa*.) After her passing Janáček was totally distraught and unable to work for many months.

The turbulent **Street Scene 1.x.1905** depicts and mourns the violent death of an innocent worker who was killed in a counter demonstration against Germans preventing the establishment of a Czech university in Brno. It highlights Janacek's nationalistic side and his keen social awareness. Inside the score reads: "*The white marble staircase of the Beseda House in Brno, here an ordinary worker Frantisek Pavlik falls, stained with blood, he only came to pleased for a university and was killed by cruel murderers.*" Although in sonata form, this work was never referred to as a sonata in Janáček's lifetime. Today, we are left with two movements 'the premonition' and 'the death'. Alas, Janáček destroyed the final third movement at a 1906 dress rehearsal. He snatched it from the pianist (his pupil Ludmila Tuckova) and burned it on the spot in a rehearsal room stove. Later, after a Prague

performance, he threw the first two movements in the river Vltava. *“They did not want to sink, the pages bulged and floated on the water like white swans”* Janáček recalled. Fortunately Ms Tuckova, having been forewarned, and had copied the two first movements. Janáček finally approved them for publication (minus the burnt 3rd mvt) in 1924.

In The Mist is considered the most mature of Janáček’s piano works because many of his compositional techniques culminate here. These four movements are drenched with haunting folk tunes, impressionistic timbres, impassioned emotions, and speech rhythm interruptions. The title suggests an ambiguity - nature scenes, reflecting the composer’s great love of long walks in the woods and also the composer’s inner personal and artistic struggles. (LM)

Martin Bresnick's compositions, from opera, oratorio, chamber and symphonic music to film scores and computer music, are performed throughout the world. Bresnick delights in reconciling the seemingly irreconcilable, bringing together repetitive gestures derived from minimalism with a harmonic palette that encompasses both highly chromatic sounds and more open, consonant harmonies and a raw power reminiscent of rock. At times his musical ideas spring from hardscrabble sources, often with a very real political import. But his compositions never descend into agitprop; one gains their meaning by the way the music itself unfolds, and always on its own terms.

Besides having received many prizes and commissions, the first Charles Ives Living Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, The Rome Prize, The Berlin Prize, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and a Koussevitzky Commission, among many others, Martin Bresnick is also recognized as an influential teacher of composition. Students from every part of the globe and of virtually every musical inclination have been inspired by his critical encouragement.

Martin Bresnick's compositions are published by Carl Fischer Music Publishers, New York; Bote & Bock, Berlin; CommonMuse Music Publishers,

New Haven; and have been recorded by Cantaloupe Records, New World Records, Albany Records, Bridge Records, Composers Recordings Incorporated, Centaur, Starkland Records and Artifact Music.

The Dream of the Lost Traveller is part of a series of compositions of various lengths and orchestrations called Opere della Musica Povera (Works of a Poor Music). Several titles I considered for the 'Opere' were taken from William Blake's book of emblematic texts and engravings For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise. After some reflection I decided that the book itself would better in a complete visual and musical setting. I put that idea aside for the future, saving only a transformation of a fragment of the final poem for my title:

To the Accuser Who is the God of This World
Truly My Satan thou art but a Dunce
And dost not know the Garment from the Man
Every Harlot was a Virgin once
Nor canst thou ever change Kate into Nan
Tho thou art Worshipd by the Names Divine
Of Jesus & Jehovah: thou art still
The Son of Morn in weary Nights decline
The lost Travellers Dream under the Hill

The Dream of the Lost Traveller is, for me, the gate and the gateway to a larger, less formally stringent project. In this composition the musical materials retain the austere simplicity of the Povera works, but they now unfold as variations in a more indirect, expansive way.

The Dream of the Lost Traveller was commissioned by Sequitur, and is dedicated to Lisa Moore. The world premiere was performed by Lisa Moore on December 8, 1997 at Merkin Hall in New York City.

Willie's Way

In the spring of 1968 I was sitting, not completely in my right mind, at a table in a very large house in Palo Alto rented by a group of Stanford medical students. These future doctors were then my very own merry pranksters and

I had often tagged along while they tried radical politics, communal living, vegetarian foods, medical school laboratory pharmaceuticals, even raising a lion cub, whose nightly roaring eventually alerted the neighbors and gave one of the students a rare African lion's disease.

But on this night, after a meal of randomly exotic foods and sundry medications, they retired with their lovers to the (not quite adequate) privacy of their rooms, leaving me alone in the immense dining room, while a recording I had never heard before (oh Ginger, Jack and Eric!) gradually invaded every neuron of my not so slowly blowing mind.

As I stared intently at the remains of a dinner that in my peculiar state resembled a disorderly old Dutch Master's still-life, a basic blues grew relentlessly from elemental simplicity into melodic improvisations worthy of a south Indian master, and the blues pulse multiplied into an infinity of polyrhythmic patterns, and the individual lines became a counterpoint that extended above and beyond the fifth species, and then, finally, when after a shattering climax of impassioned instrumental virtuosity Willie Dixon's great tune returned, I knew I had heard something I would never forget -

that spoon,
that spoon,
that - spoonful.

Extrana Devocion (Strange Devotion) One of the artist Francisco de Goya's most enigmatic etchings in his famous series "Caprichos Enfaticos" or "Emphatic Caprices" is entitled "Extrana Devocion". The etching depicts a group of ordinary Spanish people as they kneel on the roadside to pray while a donkey pulls a bier with a corpse in a strangely see-through coffin through the street. The donkey's mute yet somehow knowing expression seems to reveal both the sincerity and futility of the people's unquestioning faith. This image was my inspiration.

(The work is dedicated to Robert Blocker, Dean of the Yale School of Music)

Ishi's Song - Ishi was among the last of the Yahi Indians. Living in northern California, these Native Americans were part of a larger group known as the Yana. They were ruthlessly suppressed and finally decimated at the end of

the 19th century. The few remaining Yahi people hid in the mountains until they all died, leaving only Ishi. He was found and brought to the University of California at Berkeley by sympathetic Anthropology professors Alfred Kroeber and T.T. Waterman. Ishi lived for several years at the University's museum, then in San Francisco, teaching the professors and other researchers the ways of his people and helping to create a dictionary of his language. He was the last native speaker of the Yahi-Yana language. The opening melody of my work was taken from a transcription of a recording made by Ishi himself singing what he called "The Maidu Doctor's Song". There is no known translation of the text. (MB)

Bundists (Robert, György and Me) is intended as an addition to Robert Schumann's *Dauidsbündlertänze*, Op. 6. *Bundists* may be played alone, or it may be inserted in *Dauidsbündlertänze* No. 4, before the second ending.

Two Lisa Moore bios (take your pic):

Longer Bio:

Lisa Moore, piano

Pitchfork writes: "The New York-based Australian pianist Lisa Moore is a tightrope-walker, a daredevil. She's the best kind of contemporary classical musician, one so fearsomely game that she inspires composers to offer her their most wildly unplayable ideas. She can play them all." *The New York Times* writes 'Lisa Moore has always been a natural, compelling storyteller' while *TimeOut New York* describes her as 'the wonderfully lyrical pianist'.

Lisa Moore has released 10 solo albums (Cantaloupe, Tall Poppies, Orange Mountain, Bandcamp, IGM) ranging from Leoš Janáček to Philip Glass. Her recent disc *The Stone People* (Cantaloupe), featuring music by John Luther Adams, Martin Bresnick, Missy Mazzoli, Kate Moore, Frederic Rzewski, and Julia Wolfe, made both *The New York Times* "Top Classical Albums 2016" and was a 2017 Naxos "Critics' Choice". Lisa has recorded more than thirty collaborative discs (Sony, Nonesuch, DG, BMG, New World, ABC Classics, Albany, New Albion, Starkland, Harmonia Mundi, Bandcamp).

Lisa has performed globally as both soloist and with a large and diverse range of musicians and artists - including the London Sinfonietta, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, New York City Ballet, Steve Reich Ensemble, American Composers Orchestra, Bang On A Can All-Stars (founding member '92-'08), Paul Drescher Double Duo, So Percussion, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Grand Band, TwoSense, and Ensemble Signal. Festival highlight performances include Lincoln Center, BAM Next Wave, Tanglewood, Aspen, Chautauqua, Gilmore, Huddersfield, Holland, Graz, Paris d'Automne, Rome, Milan, Turin, Hong Kong, BBC Proms, Southbank, Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne Metropolis, Israel, and Warsaw - in venues such as the Royal Albert Hall, La Scala, Carnegie Hall, Musikverein, and the Sydney Opera House.

As a concerto soloist Lisa Moore has performed with the London Sinfonietta, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Wesleyan University Orchestra and Sumarsam Gamelan, the Albany, La Jolla, Sydney, Tasmania, Thai, and Canberra Symphony Orchestras, Monash MAPA, Philharmonia Virtuosi and the Queensland Philharmonic - under the batons of Bradley Lubman, Steven Schick, Richard Mills, Benjamin Northey, Reinbert de Leeuw, Pierre Boulez, Geoffrey Simon, Jorge Mester, Angel Gil-Ordonez, and Edo de Waart.

The New Yorker magazine crowned Lisa 'New York's queen of avant-garde piano'. She has worked personally with hundreds of composers - including John Adams, Louis Andriessen, Martin Bresnick, Gerard Brophy, Elliot Carter, Philip Glass, Elena Kats-Chernin, Ornette Coleman, David Lang, Hannah Lash, Thurston Moore, Kate Moore, Meredith Monk, Steve Reich, Frederic Rzewski, Michael Smetanin, Julia Wolfe, and Iannis Xenakis.

Lisa Moore grew up in Canberra, London and Sydney before venturing to the USA to complete her music education. She studied piano at the Canberra School of Music, the Sydney Conservatorium, the University of Illinois, Eastman School of Music, SUNY Stonybrook, and in Paris with Yvonne Loriod. Lisa Moore won the silver medal in the 1981 Carnegie Hall *International American Music Competition* and moved to New York City in

1985. She coaches at the Yale-Norfolk Festival every summer and is a frequent guest at the Australian National Academy of Music in Melbourne. www.lisamoore.org

Shorter Bio

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