



SFCM

SAN FRANCISCO CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC

Sarah Cahill, *piano*

Faculty Recital

Monday, September 12, 2022, 7:30 PM

Caroline H. Hume Concert Hall

with

Regina Myers, *piano*

featuring

Allegra Chapman, *piano*

Monica Chew, *piano*

3-Day Mix (1991)

Eleanor Alberga
(b. 1949)

Ellis Island (1981)

Meredith Monk
(b. 1942)

The Girl in My Alphabet (1990)

Errollyn Wallen
(b. 1958)

Allegra Chapman and Monica Chew, *piano*

Dance of the Paper Umbrellas (2019)

Elena Kats-Chernin
(b. 1957)

- Brief Pause -

Up (Premiere) (2020)

D. Riley Nicholson
(b. 1991)

*Cameras, recording equipment, food and drink are not permitted in Conservatory performance halls.
Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic equipment before the performance begins.*

Program Notes

3-Day Mix

3-Day Mix is one of a selection of light pieces which I wrote for piano very much influenced by my Caribbean heritage. The first piece I wrote in this vein was Jamaican Medley for solo piano, written in 1983 for a concert marking Jamaica's 21 st year of independence and almost completely comprising Jamaican folk songs. This was followed in 1986 by *Two-Piano Suite* and in 1990 by *Hill and Gully Ride* for two pianos, eight hands. All these works contain very tonal and rhythmic elements coming out of Afro-Caribbean influences. As implied, *3-Day Mix* was written in 3 days when, with very short notice, an opportunity to compose a piano duet for a concert came about in 1991. This work, more than the others, contains jazzy elements but the melodic lines over ostinato figures appear in all the other "light" works. It lasts about nine minutes and is meant to be no more than a fun piece.

- Eleanor Alberga

Ellis Island

I studied piano throughout my childhood. Always drawn to 20th century music, particularly Mompou, Satie and Bartók, I began writing short piano studies in high school and college. After many years of concentrating on composing music for unaccompanied voice and then voice and organ, I came back to the piano with Paris in 1972. After that, I began writing short piano pieces, each a world with its own topography, texture and mood. In 1981, I composed a two-piano piece, *Ellis Island*, later recording the two parts myself by overdubbing in the studio. That experience inspired me to compose more music for two pianos. I delved into different relationships and possibilities between them; material passed back and forth, dialogues, interlocking phrases, shifts of figure and ground. In some pieces, I emphasized the individuality of each piano, writing for one player as the "singer," the other as the "accompaniment;" in other pieces I wanted the two pianos to make one large sound. Directness, purity, asymmetry, and above all, transparency have always been important to me. The surface of the music is seemingly simple but the intricacy of the detail and the combination of restraint and expressivity challenge the performer. Every gesture is exposed and clear.

- Meredith Monk

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Dance of the Paper Umbrellas:

Elena Kats-Chernin was born in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, and as a teenager she migrated to Australia, where she now lives. She studied in Germany with Helmut Lachenmann and has written music for theater, cabaret, film, and dance, as well as concert music. Her *Dance of the Paper Umbrellas* was commissioned by the Hush Foundation, which creates music for children undergoing cancer treatment in hospitals, and she has arranged it for full orchestra, for string quartet, for marimba and harp, and several other combinations of instruments.

The Girl in My Alphabet:

The Girl in My Alphabet was composed in 1990 for two pianos, eight hands, then later condensed into a piano duo arrangement. Wallen explains the enigmatic title as a combination of *The Girl from Ipanema*, on which the piece is based, and the “alphabet” or basic material of her compositional style. “The Girl”; in this case represents the important element of eclecticism in her writing. The work takes *The Girl from Ipanema* from an introduction of frenetic chromaticism into sections using jazz, blues and minimalist layering techniques, and finally to an unexpected lyrical climax inspired by an advertisement for Canadian tourism. This falls apart in a barrage of chord clusters, out of which the main theme finally makes a brief appearance, unadorned.

- Errollyn Wallen

Up:

Up’s one unifying theme is simply that, “up”. The piece moves ‘up’; in so many directions: literally, opening with an upward motif that gets pinged between pianos in groovy, dizzying counterpoint; gradually with increasing frequency moving up the circle of fifths; with upbeat syncopations and tempi; constantly one-upping itself with a burgeoning energy that trips over itself with virtuosic fits; and many other upward motions and themes. Loosely akin to a theme and variations, each movement is a different interpretation of the theme “up,” and given the frenetic energy

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of every moment, tranquil interludes provide a necessary buffer between the movements, and give the performers a chance to catch their breath. Even with the addition of these palate-cleansing interludes, the entirety of the work is a manic trip that both explores joyous energy and that darker underbelly of positivity when energy and motion become simply too much to be contained.

- D. Riley Nicholson