Williams Symphonic Winds
Steven Dennis Bodner, director

Yo Shakespeare

9 May 2009

Tonight's concert explores ways music can construct identity. Several of the works are, at least, semi-autobiographical, others try to reinterpret and re-contextualize literary and historical figures, while still others simply use intentionally ambiguous notions of "self" or "other" to create moving tableau. Although the concert may seem to be in the Bard's honor, Shakespeare himself is only tangentially referenced in three of the nine pieces performed this evening—Daron Hagen's *Wedding Dances* from *Bandanna* (a recasting of *Othello* as a 1960s Texas-Mexico border town melodrama), Gordon's eponymous work (which uses "Shakespeare" as a substitute, perhaps, for all creative beings), and Martin Mailman's *for precious friends hid in death's dateless night* (inspired by lines from several sonnets). However, while Shakespeare's actual work receives scant attention, the notions of what it means to be an artist in any era and how creative work may be indebted to the past in myriad ways are of paramount significance. Who *is* Shakespeare today – and what does "Shakespeare" even *mean*? The works tonight, then, reveal various ways we can answer this—and similar—questions of identity recognition and construction.

We are especially pleased and excited to be presenting works tonight composed for the group by two of our own talented "Shakespeares" — Sarah Riskind '09 and Brian Simalchik '10. Who knows—perhaps in a hundred years, someone will title a piece or a program "Yo Riskind" or Yo Simalchik"?!

Lukas Foss: *Elegy* from *Concert Band* (2002)

> *Anybody can put things together that belong together. To put things together that don't go together, and make it work, that takes genius like Mozart's. Yet he is presented in the play* Amadeus *as a kind of silly boy whom the gods loved.... To me, Mozart is our Shakespeare, the one who wrote the most dramatic, psychologically most baffling music. He combined ideas that no one else would have thought of putting together.*
>
> -Lukas Foss

Described by percussionist Jan Williams as "a musician of gigantic stature in the annals of American contemporary music," **Lukas Foss** (15 August 1922–1 February 2009) enjoyed a long, varied, and celebrated career as a composer, conductor, pianist, and teacher. As Music Director of the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the Buffalo Philharmonic and the Milwaukee Symphony, Foss was an effective champion of living composers and brought new life to the standard repertoire. In I986, the New York Times praised his adventurous and eclectic combinations of traditional and contemporary repertoire, asserting that Foss led "the most engrossing and unusual programs in town.... Our musical life would be richer if Lukas Foss...could hire himself out as a sort of 'programmer at large.' He seems incapable of a mechanical idea." As a conductor, Foss directed most of America's major symphony orchestras including those of Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, and San Francisco, as well as many abroad, too. "I conduct because I love to make love to the past," he said in a 1975 interview with the New York Arts Journal. "I think man has this need, and the need to discover the future as well. The more my own composition is busy with exploration and experimentation, the greater is my need to keep my tie with the past which made me a musician in the first place." He taught composition at Tanglewood, and was composer-in-residence at Harvard, the Manhattan School of Music, Carnegie Mellon University, Yale University, and most recently, Boston University. In 1983, he was elected to the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, of which he served as Vice Chancellor.

Although he was a German émigré, Mr. Foss was, from the start of his composing career, considered an important voice in the mid-century world of American composition, along with Aaron Copland, Samuel Barber, Elliott Carter and Leonard Bernstein. Foss created a body of well over one hundred works that Aaron Copland called, in 1974, "among the most original and stimulating compositions in American music." Tom Johnson in the Village Voice went further: "Little by little he is knitting together a body of work which may actually speak for contemporary culture as a whole more eloquently than any other," while the British musicologist Wilfred Mellers once described Mr. Foss's body of work as "a pocket history of American music during the 20th century." For all their diverse styles, Foss's works spring from a distinct personality: enthusiastic, curious and receptive to every kind of musical idea. Not coincidentally, these are the same attitudes he instilled in audiences with his performances of the classical repertory and new music. In short, he was one of his era's most communicative and representative composer-performers.

Precociously gifted (and described as a musical "wunderkind"), he began composing at the age of seven and had his first works—a series of piano pieces written mostly on the New York subway—published by G. Schirmer when he was fifteen. By age 18, the young musician had graduated with honors from Curtis, and was headed for advanced study, in conducting with Serge Koussevitzky at Tanglewood and in composition with Paul Hindemith at Yale University. He rose to national prominence when he received the New York Music Critics' Circle Award in 1944 for his cantata *The Prairie*; the following year, at the age of 23, Foss became the youngest composer to ever be awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship. In 1953, after two years spent as a Fulbright recipient and as a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome, Foss succeeded Arnold Schoenberg as professor of music (composition and conducting) at UCLA. While there, he founded in 1957 the Improvisation Chamber Ensemble—a quartet (clarinet, piano, cello and percussion) that improvised music in concert, working not from a score but from Foss's ideas and visions—and formulated what he called "system and chance music," a kind of controlled improvisation. (The Symphonic Winds performed in 2002 Foss's *For 24 Winds*, one of a series of three graphically-notated, "controlled improvisation" pieces that were "based on the idea of a score containing on every page a sum total from which a different selection is extracted for each performance.")

The effects of these experiments led to a profound change in Foss's compositional techniques: he abandoned tonality and fixed forms and opted for serialism, indeterminacy and graphic notation. Even time itself came up for scrutiny in the 1960 work *Time Cycle* for soprano and orchestra, a setting of texts about time by Auden, Housman, Kafka and Nietzsche, that was first performed by Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic, with interludes by Foss's Improvisation Chamber Ensemble. At the premiere, Mr. Bernstein, in an unprecedented gesture of respect, performed the entire work twice that same evening; (Foss and his impressive output, though, were often overshadowed by his friend and colleague Leonard Bernstein. As composer William Bolcom remarked in 2000: "People would always talk about Lukas in relationship to Lenny, and that made people overlook what he was and is, which is a much more disciplined composer.... Lukas has been almost cursed by his ability to do so many different things so well.") Described by critic Lester Trimble as one of "the most inspired compositions by a contemporary American," *Time Cycle* received the New York Music Critics' Circle Award for 1961, and has remained Foss's most performed work.

Foss's compositional language, however, evolved considerably over the last several decades. Since about the mid-1980s, he revisited the neo-classicism and Americana from his earliest works, while not forgetting the experimental techniques he helped to develop during the 1960s and 70s; for example,

his guitar concerto, *American Landscapes* combines folk guitar styles and tunes with novel plucking and percussion techniques in the solo part. In particular, Foss's compositions demonstrated that a love for the past can be reconciled with all sorts of innovations, as he explains in his lecture entitled, "A Twentieth-Century Composer's Confessions about the Creative Process:"

> People are still clinging to the Hollywood idea of a genius, say, Beethoven walking in the midst of a thunderstorm. There comes suddenly the great melody, the inspiration. We would never do this to a scientist. We would not imagine Einstein walking through a thunderstorm and suddenly the Theory of Relativity appearing to him. If we know better when it comes to scientists, why are we so naive about artists? Because art is supposed to be emotional and science intellectual? I don't dare postulate about science, but I know that it takes both emotion and intellect in order for art to happen.... It is obvious that anything a scientist discovers or invents is based on previous discoveries and inventions. The same applies to the arts. Invention does not fall upon a blank mind. Any creator owes a debt to past creation. The artist falls passionately in love with art that already exists. This is the first step.... Most people think an artist tries to be original, but originality is the last thing that develops in the artist. Nor is the artist concerned with expressing himself.... An artist who knows what he wants to do never said, "I want to express myself." He wants to do what he loves. For years that may mean imitation. Then, one day, it is like a door opening, and a new thought comes in. Why not try this instead? Suddenly he is doing something original, almost in spite of himself. Even at this point he does not give up being influenced by what he loves, by the music that has made him a musician. Rather, he uses it in the light of his recent discovery. He makes it his own. This is a wonderful English expression that exists in no other language I know: "to make something one's own." Stravinsky probably did not know this expression when he said, "One must always steal, but never from oneself." Right on the mark! Why make something my own that is already my own? Stealing from oneself is indulgent, and one doesn't learn anything new. If I steal from another source, I enrich my vocabulary.... There is another interesting paradox here: by immersing ourselves in what we love, we find ourselves. We do not lose ourselves. One does not lose one's identity by falling in love. The paradox is most striking in the performing arts. Does the actor stop being himself as he becomes "Hamlet" on stage? He doesn't. The greater his acting, the more likely he becomes himself in the act and finds himself. So does the pianist when he immerses himself in a Beethoven sonata. Through love we find ourselves. That is why we study masterworks.

The essential feature in Foss's music is the tension, so typical of the 20th century, between tradition and new modes of musical expression, nowhere more explicit than in his *Baroque Variations* for orchestra (1967) and *Renaissance Concerto* (1986) (performed by flutist Jeffrey Wessler '07 and the Symphonic Winds in November 2006). "Deconstructing" works by Handel, Scarlatti and Bach, the surrealist Variations are intended to be "dreams" in which the original music is fragmented and distorted; about Variation III (Phorion), on Bach's Partita in E for solo violin, Foss described its desired effect as "torrents of baroque semiquavers...submerging into and emerging out of inaudibility." Foss described the elegant sound of the Concerto as "the invention of a Renaissance sound that never was. It's not modernizing the Renaissance, but dreaming yourself back to it and making a piece out of that." The wistful and antiquarian work, says Foss, is "an homage to something I love, a handshake across the centuries." It is certainly true that, after the early 1980s, Mr. Foss's music became increasingly listener-friendly, but he did not consider this more mellow style to be an abandonment of his earlier exploratory approach. "I'm not sure the works I've done since my so-called avant-garde period are less adventurous," he told The Times in 1997. "The whole point now is that I can be just as crazy tonally as I was before atonally. Crazy in the sense of unexpected." As Allaz Kozin wrote in the New York Times obituary: "Mr. Foss preferred to explore the byways of the avant-garde, focusing at different times on techniques from serialism and electronic music to Minimalism and improvisation. But as he moved from style to style, his voice remained distinctive, partly because he distrusted rules and never fully

adhered to those of the approaches he adopted, and partly because a current of mercurial wit ran through his work. Mr. Foss was aware that his detractors regarded his style-hopping as the sign of a dabbler, and that the critics complained that he tended to follow stylistic trends rather than to originate them. He rejected those criticisms and took particular pride in the fact that even listeners who followed his music closely never knew what to expect of his latest works." In fact, Foss rebutted his critics, in his typically capricious manner: "I would agree that my curiosity has led me absolutely everywhere. But I make one qualification: I've never done anything at the O.K. time. In other words, I've never been a bandwagon jumper. I've never belonged to any school. I've never written a 12-tone piece when it was fashionable to do so."

Commissioned by a consortium of 20 high schools and colleges from Ohio, Kentucky, Illinois, Michigan, Texas, and Massachusetts, Foss's *Concerto for Band* does not demonstrate any of the "avant-garde tendencies" that characterize his best-known works. Instead, his love of early music seems to be at display here, polyphonic counterpoint abounding in this straightforward, tonal work. The "Elegy" is the second movement of the Concerto, which is in four movements: Fanfare-Elegy-Fanfare-March. Rather than a mournful lamentation, the "Elegy" is a simple, reflective song. Mostly pentatonic and modal melodies are gradually developed, built from fragments and then presented in tight canons. With the exception of three bars in unabashed Bb-major, very little of the work screams "Band." Instead, low winds and low brass are featured almost throughout (the prime exception being the clarinet solo during the scherzando central section), doublings are rare (reserved only for the climactic moments), and the emotional core is a subtle, almost playful interpretation of the concept of "elegy"—this is a hopeful recollection of the living, not a mournful remembrance of the dead. Although he arranged two of his works for orchestral winds—*American Fanfare* (1990) and *Griffelkin March* (1989)—and he wrote one other work for winds only [the aleatoric *For 24 Winds* (1966)], the Concerto was Mr. Foss's first original work for wind band. The Williams Symphonic Winds premiered the *Elegy* in May 2002 and the entire *Concerto* on a November 2002 concert celebrating Lukas's 80th birthday entitled "From America: the music of Lukas Foss and Leonard Bernstein." The *Concerto for Band* was also Foss's penultimate work as he stopped composing in early 2002 after finishing *For Aaron* (a reference to Aaron Copland, one of Foss's most important mentors), a chamber work commissioned by the Boston Symphony and premiered in the summer of 2002 by the Tanglewood Music Center Fellows in recognition of Foss's 80th birthday.

Daron Aric Hagen: *Wedding Dances* from *Bandanna* (1998, arr. 2000)

Daron Hagen has created a catalogue of over a hundred works in every genre from art song and chamber music to full-scale operas and immense orchestral and choral works. Commissions have come from major artists, ensembles, and orchestras around the world, including the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Gary Graffman, Jaime Laredo and the Kings Singers. In fact, Hagen is currently in Albany, NY, where his Symphony No. 4: *River Music* is being premiered by the Albany Symphony. He has received numerous awards and accolades, including the Kennedy Center Friedheim Award, a Rockefeller Foundation grant, Columbia University's Bearns Prize, an Ives Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the ASCAP-Nissim Prize, the Barlow International Composition Prize and a Friedheim Award. Hagen's music has been described as "utterly brilliant" (New York Times), while he has been called as the creator of "dangerously beautiful melodies" (New York Post).

Trained at the Curtis Institute and Juilliard, Hagen has studied with many notable composers,

including Ned Rorem, David Diamond, Joseph Schwantner, Bernard Rands, and Witold Lutoslawski. He taught composition at Bard College for 10 years, as well as at the City College of New York, New York University and Princeton University. He also served on the Curtis Institute of Music faculty from 1996 to 1998 and as composer-in-residence of the Ohio Opera Theater and the Long Beach (California) Symphony Orchestra.

The commissioning of *Bandanna* by the College Band Directors' National Association was a three-part commission: an opera with wind ensemble accompaniment in the pit, an overture for band, and a suite of music from the opera (the *Wedding Dances,* arranged for concert band by Mark Spede). All three parts were premiered at the 1999 CBDNA National Conference at The University of Texas at Austin. *s* has already been performed by several opera companies, both in Europe and in the United States. Of the premiere, the Austin American Statesman wrote "Hagen's masterful score captures the rage, intrigue and tender resignation of the tale," while of a more recent performance (and the recording session for a recently-released CD), the Las Vegas Review Journal wrote, "*Bandanna* is a banner of triumph! Hagen's work is glorious. This opera should be destined to become a standard in the repertoire."

Described as "*Othello* on the Rio Grande," *Bandanna* is an opera set in 1968 in a small border town in Texas. Drawing heavily on Shakespeare's tale of love and betrayal, it is the story of a chief of police, Miguel Morales, and two officers, Jake and Cassidy, who once served with him in Vietnam and who now serve with him in the town police. Jake, who is resentful of Cassidy's advancement over him, is playing a dangerous double-role as policeman and guide to successive groups of illegal immigrant workers. With the encouragement of a morally bankrupt union organizer, Kane, Jake determines to convince Morales that his wife, Mona, is having an affair with Cassidy. In the end, groundless jealousy provokes Miguel to strangle his wife with her own bandanna, shoot his colleague, and, ultimately, himself.

The second act of the opera begins with the anything-but-happy wedding reception of Jake and his young wife Emily, at which the principle characters of the opera pair off in a sequence of wedding dances. During the course of the dances, Mona—the pretty wife of Morales—dances innocently with each of her husband's associates, culminating in a pairing with Cassidy orchestrated by Jake. Growing increasingly drunk and his rage mounting, Morales sees this as confirmation of their having an affair. He calls her a dirty whore and, after a moment of stunned silence, he lunges for her, but the crowd closes in and a humiliated Mona flees with Cassidy. Joshua Rosenblum wrote in *Opera News*: "the opera's finest moments come when Hagen manages that wonderful, much-sought fusion of highbrow and lowbrow, championed by, among others, Leonard Bernstein (with whom Hagen studied)." The *Wedding Dance*—one of the most overt syntheses of high and low art in the whole opera—certainly display Hagen at his finest. He describes this music as "aggressive, manic, emotionally overwrought, progressive piece of American Opera, equal parts opera and music theater," acknowledging the hybrid nature of the work's style/language. Hagen provides the following information regarding the content of each dance:

Dance No. 1: Jake, Morales's lieutenant, and his bride Emily, dance to a waltz whose melody is associated with Jake's sentiment, "*Donde esta mi querida*?"

Transition: Emily breaks away from him and sings of her misgivings over pulsating clarinets.

Dance No. 2: Morales and Mona dance to a waltz that combines their two melodies. His melody is associated with the vow: "I pledge myself to Mona, my fountainhead;" hers to the first words we hear her say

to him: "Miguel, you've been gone so long." The waltz deepens into the melody we associate with Mona's credo: "For the alder and the willow nail their colors to their masts."

Transition: Jake reminisces about his days as a single man.

Dance No. 3: Morales dances a rumba with Emily. The tune associated with the first words of Morales' credo, "Again and again, where a neon sign leaves a little red stain on the desert air" is combined with Emily's lament about Jake, "When I reached across my pillow, the night before last, there was only dark."

Dance No. 4: Jake and Mona dance an old-fashioned, traditional tango. The words to this melody, although they change throughout the opera, are always associated with the idea of seduction [and so here represent a turning point in the opera: Jake has seduced Mona to be, albeit unwittingly, his partner in exacting his revenge on Morales, the sensual dance paralleling Mona's submission].

Dance No. 5: Kane, a decadent, bad man, abruptly wheels a very young girl onto the dance floor, to a crude, 1950's rock-'n-roll version of the music he used earlier in a labor speech to migrant workers. [In this dance, Kane, flaunting the immorality of his actions, revels in the fact that he is reviled by everyone—and so he boasts how he has manipulated Jake to strike out at Morales.]

Dance No. 6: Mona dances, initially with reluctance, though she gradually becomes more responsive, with a man named Cassidy to a strong power ballad setting of a tune associated with the idea of "crossing over" from Mexico to America and from Life to Death. In this context, it underpins her husband Morales's "crossing over" from sanity to madness as he watches her with Cassidy [each verse of the song revealing the escalation of Morales's madness].

Epiphany: Morales "loses it," lunges at Mona. She and Cassidy flee. The wedding reception breaks up. The suite ends with the various tunes of the opera charging through Morales's fevered mind as he decides to kill Mona.

Arvo Pärt: *Fratres* (1977)

In Pärt's case, the exact nature of his [ritualistic] purpose is strangely obscure, as all his music is written for performance in the context of public concerts, with a paying audience, applause, and so on. Are we intended to have our conscience pricked? How are we to view (and thus to use) music which in effect dramatizes the history and practice of religion down the ages? —a music which (infamously in some people's eyes) brings a sense of religious liturgy into the concert hall, or at least makes us pretend that it does. What is the role of the performer in all of this, especially as he or she stands up and faces the audience, obscuring the path to whatever altar may be available? ...Might some of us not be turned to bitterness by our failure to find such spiritual compensation? Must we assume in fact that most people simply listen to this music, as to early music, as an aesthetic experience in which a rather generalized spirituality awakens our nostalgia for what might be or might once have been? ...Or do we believe, as I'm sure some do, that the music's religious essence or content does in fact touch us and, however briefly, brings us some measure of consolation?

-Paul Hillier

In the Soviet Union once, I spoke with a monk and asked him how, as a composer, one can improve oneself. He answered me by saying that he knew of no solution. I told him that I also wrote prayers, and set prayers and the texts of psalms to music, and that perhaps this would be of help to me as a composer. To this he said, "No, you are wrong. All the prayers have already been written. You don't need to write any more. Everything has been prepared. Now you have to prepare yourself." I believe there's truth in that. We must count on the fact that our music will come to an end one day. Perhaps there will come a moment, even for the greatest artist, when he will no longer want to or have to make art. And perhaps at that very moment we will value his creation even more—because in this instant he will have transcended his work.

-Arvo Pärt

Arvo Pärt was born in 1935 in Paide, Estonia. After studies with Heino Eller's composition class in Tallinn, he worked from 1958 to 1967 as a sound engineer for Estonian Radio. In 1980 he emigrated with his family to Vienna and then, one year later, travelled on a DAAD scholarship to Berlin, where he has lived ever since.

As one of the most radical representatives of the so-called "Soviet avant-garde," Pärt passed through a profound evolutionary process with his work. His first creative period (ca. 1958-1968) began with neo-classical piano music. Then followed ten years in which he made his own individual use of the most important compositional techniques of the avant-garde: dodecaphony, composition with sound masses, aleatoricism, collage technique. *Nekrolog* (1960), the first piece of dodecaphonic music written in Estonia, and *Perpetuum mobile* (1963) gained the composer his first recognition by the West. In his collage works "avant-garde" and "early" music confront each other boldly and irreconcilably, a confrontation which attains its most extreme expression in his last collage piece *Credo* (1968). In this work, Pärt took on Bach's Prelude in C Major (Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 1), intensifying and hardening his musical language to an extreme degree, as what Pärt called "an amassment of violent power, straining at its own limits like an avalanche." This battle between the two musical worlds is concluded by Bach's victory over the modernistic cataclysms in Pärt's own music, the "triumph" of the musical quotations in *Credo* marking a decisive turning-point in his artistic development.

From that point on, Pärt regarded his previous compositional techniques as meaningless, the serial and collage devices had lost all their former fascination and now seemed pointless to him. For eight years, Pärt virtually stopped composing (only one work was completed, the Third Symphony of 1971). Pärt's quest for his own musical voice drove him into a creative crisis that dragged on, the composer unable to predict when he might once again emerge. In search of a new musical language, he studied Gregorian chant, the Notre Dame School and classic vocal polyphony, observing that "...hidden behind the art of connecting two or three notes lies a cosmic mystery."

In 1976, music finally emerged from his silence: the little piano piece *Für Alina* — Pärt had discovered his own path. The new compositional principle used here for the first time, which he called tintinnabuli (Latin for "little bells"), has defined his work right up to today. The "tintinnabuli principle" does not strive towards a progressive increase in complexity, but rather towards an extreme reduction of sound materials and a limitation to the essential. As Pärt wrote:

> Tintinnabulation is an area I sometimes wander into when I am searching for answers--in my life, my music, my work. In my dark hours, I have the certain feeling that everything outside this one thing has no meaning. The complex and many-faceted only confuses me, and I must search for unity. What is it, this one thing, and how do I find my way to it? Traces of this perfect thing appear in many guises—and everything that is unimportant falls away. Tintinnabulation is like this. Here I am alone with silence. I have discovered that it is enough when a single note is beautifully played. This one note, or a silent beat, or a moment of silence, comfort me. I work with very few elements—with one voice, with two voices. I build with the most primitive materials—with the triad, with one specific tonality. The three notes of a triad are like bells. And that is why I called it tintinnabulation.

At the style's core lies a "duality," a new sort of "basic structure;" two parts join to form an inseparable whole. One of the two is the omnipresent major/minor triad, the notes of which are bound to the other—the so-called "melodic voice"—by strict rules. This "duality" of two juxtaposed parts, which exist only in connection with one another, joins to form the smallest and most important building block of the Tintinnabuli style. The combination of this compositional style's formal logic and its starkly reduced sonic material inevitably results in an extremely dense musical texture. The focus on the basic

musical unit remains Pärt's foremost concern. Thanks to his ascetic compositional approach, his music leaves the listener with an impression of concentration and objectivity. "Music," says Pärt, "must exist in and of itself ... the mystery must be present, independent of any particular instrument ... the highest value of music lies beyond its mere tone colour." Taking this point to the extreme, Pärt's *Fratres* now exists in fifteen different, authorized versions (according to Pärt's publisher, Universal Edition), only some adapted by Pärt himself, and only some including the virtuosic solo variations. The cello version was created by Pärt in 1980, while the wind/percussion version was arranged by Beat Briner in 1990. As Tim Smith writes:

> Arvo Pärt may have conceived of *Fratres* as existing independently of sound. By this I do not mean to imply that sound is unimportant...exactly the opposite. Before there can be meaningful sound there must be intellect, thoughtfulness, and design. The most meaningful sounds emanate of contemplation; in Pärt's case, an attempt to fathom the Cloud of Unknowing (to quote a medieval English text). Such thought is evident in Pärt's permutation technique which makes the various "incarnations" of *Fratres* possible... It seems clear that this composer thinks of his music as existing first in the timeless and soundless dimension of thought, out of which, and only after which, sounds emanate. In that sense *Fratres* is sacramental—a physical manifestation of spiritual signification—a materialization of that which is spirit, transcendent, and therefore unfathomable. In Pärt's own words: "That is my goal. Time and timelessness are connected This instant and eternity are struggling within us. And this is the cause of all of our contradictions, our obstinacy, our narrow-mindedness, our faith and our grief."

Fratres was one of the first religio-minimalist pieces to emerge after Pärt's compositional exile, revealing music of a monk-like, contemplative tone that would make him world-famous. Composed in 1977, *Fratres* was initially composed for the Estonian early-music ensemble Hortus musicus. *Fratres* is built over an open fifth pedal, and the structure consists simply of eight or nine (depending on version) rotations of a single, three-voice idea: two playing a chant-like melody in tenths while a tenor fills the space with arpeggios. While *Fratres* distinguishes itself as the earliest example of a relatively dissonant tintinnabuli formation, the underlying triad [G-minor in the cello version, A-minor in the wind version] is serenely and perpetually present in the tenor throughout. What dissonance there is arises from the use of a scale which incorporates an augmented second and a split third—G-Phrygian with #3 in the cello version, A-Phrygian with #3 in the wind version (or a decidedly minor mode scale that has the major third, which conflicts with the tenor's minor third). The austere chant-like melody is built methodically and inevitably: first a four-note cell is performed, then two new pitches are added to the middle to create a six-note cell, then two additional pitches are added to create an eight-note cell, and then the three iterations are presented again but in retrograde (or reverse order). This entire melodic formula is then repeated a third lower (the upper melodic voice simply playing what was the lower melodic voice, and the lower voice re-harmonizing as appropriate), creating new, temporary harmonic centers that rub against the perpetual drone and insistent tonic-minor triad. The dynamic arc of the piece parallels the harmonic tension, so that by the time to chant returns to the drone key, the music is overtaken by silence to end in a state of hushed spirituality. Wolfgang Sandner observes that: "the schematic of this composition, its numerical relationships, and its easily discernable syntax, give the effect of a semi-transparent screen. One can easily enter in to it, but in doing so the work does not begin to give itself away." Separating these rotations are percussion punctuations (in the cello version, signified by rapping with the hand on the body of the cello and playing *col legno*); as Paul Hillier notes:

> The dry knocking of the opening rhythmic pattern is heard between each of these six-bar sections, and its effect is easily overlooked in any brief analytical description: but the repetition of this motif and the continuation of the drone together play a crucial role in delimiting the harmonic-melodic activity, and it is

> the contrast between these two separate elements (both of which suggest "permanence" in their different ways) that gives the work its remarkable eloquence.... It also emphasizes the surrounding silence or stillness. But in addition to serving these purposes, the rhythmic punctuation is also, initially at least, a call to attention (rather like the wooden semantra which prefigured the use of bells in the Eastern Church); thereafter its unvarying repetition suggests the unchanging response in a litaneutical prayer.

The title of the work, *Fratre*, may be translated as "brethren," the archaic plural of "brother." While on a technical level, this could simply relate to the two melodic voices that traverse together, it likely has monastic connotations. Ultimately, even Pärt's pure, absolute, instrumental music is religious or mystical—in this case perhaps *Fratres* indicates a vision of a solemn, peaceful-yet-passionate procession of medieval monks through a dark, sacred space—"wending their way by candelight along the ambulatory to the abbey's chapels, for another of the endless succession of services that regulated their monastic lives" (Richard Rodda). As Hillier concludes:

> Hesychasm, minimalism, rites, icons: these are the dominant motifs which have come to surround my response to Pärt's music.... While I am aware that the music stands by itself (as it must), I have found these motifs inescapable, and to avoid them would be to accept that (to me) unacceptable premise that Pärt's music is simply an accident of time and circumstance, a mere reaction to prevailing conditions.... The influence of early music is not a superficial imitation or borrowing, still less an escape from modernity, but represents a reconnection with our collective musical unconscious, and is thus as much a way forward as a way back.

Reynaldo Hahn: *Le bal de Béatrice d'Este* (1905)

The music of Reynaldo Hahn (1875-1947) has been described as "quintessentially French," as evoking "a Paris, indeed a way of life, forever gone and, like [Marcel] Proust's world, retrievable only in precious moments where taste, sight, or the sound of a musical phrase provoke the memory, or even perhaps the collective unconscious." It has by turns been both dismissed and praised for being "charming" and "nostalgic," "sentimental" and "sensual." Ironically, Hahn was not French by birth; although his family moved to Paris when he was only three years old; instead, he was born in Venezuela, the youngest of twelve children, to a German, Jewish father and a Venezuelan, Catholic mother. He demonstrated prodigious musical talents as a child, giving many performances in private houses, including his "professional" debut at the age of six, singing and playing the piano at the salon of the eccentric Princesse Mathilde de Metternich (Napoleon's niece). At ten he entered the Paris Conservatoire where he studied with Massenet and Gounod and was a classmate of Ravel and Charpentier, and at thirteen his first song, *Si mes vers avaient des ailes,* was published. Hahn's early (and lasting) reputation was founded primarily on his aromatic *mélodies*, which now hold an honored place in French vocal repertoire, alongside the songs of Gabriel Fauré. At the invitation of the writer Alphonse Daudet, Hahn composed music for the play *L'Obstacle* in 1890, his first stage work at the age of fifteen. He wrote several operettas and ballets, specialized in conducting Mozart operas, was a leading writer on music, and was appointed in 1945 the director of the Paris Opéra.

Known as much for his charm and exotic handsomeness as for his music and intellect, Hahn was a constant presence in the salons of Paris, capturing the love and attention of high society. He counted among his friends the poets Verlaine, who was said to have wept when he heard Hahn's settings of his verses, and Mallarmé, who praised him with the stanza:

Le pleur qui chante au langage	The tear that sings in the word
Du poè te, Reynaldo	of the poet, Reynaldo

Hahn, tendrement le degage	Hahn gently releases
Comme en l'allée un jet d'eau.	like a fountain on a pathway.

In 1894, he met the aspiring writer Marcel Proust, who although three years older, was less well-known than Hahn. They were lovers for the first two years of an enduring friendship that lasted until Proust's death in 1922. They shared a passion of painting and reading, and challenged each other regarding ideas of literature and music, of art and life; in fact, neither was ever to have another relationship with an intellectual equal. Proust praised Hahn's music in a 1914 article for possessing "the irretrievable sweetness of a first promise or a first confession," and included Hahn as an eponymous hero in his autobiographical novel *Jean Santeuil*. More touching, though, is Proust's loving pen-portrait:

> When he takes his place at the piano, with a cigarette in the corner of his mouth, everyone is quiet and gathers around to listen. Every note is a word or cry. His head is slightly tilted back: his mouth is melancholy and rather scornful. Thence emanates the saddest and warmest voice you can imagine. This instrument of genius, by name Reynaldo Hahn, moves our hearts, moistens our eyes, cures us one after the other in a silent and solemn undulation. Never since Schumann has music painted sorrow, tenderness, the calm induced by nature, with such brush strokes of human truth and absolute beauty.

A musical conservative who delighted in the music of the past and obsessed with musical and poetic form, Hahn achieved his biggest stage successes before the First World War with two ballets, *Le bal de Béatrice d'Este* and *La Fête chez Thérèse*. Like his contemporary Fritz Kreisler, Hahn had a deft skill in evoking or suggesting different periods in musical history, such as eighteenth-century France, England in the Regency period, Mozart's Vienna, and so on. In writing the ballet *Le bal de Béatrice d'Este* in Paris in 1905, but setting it in sixteenth-century Milan, Hahn blurs the line between Renaissance Italy and *fin-de-siècle* France. Although the ballet does not seek to retell an actual historical occasion, the work is firmly based within a historical context. Béatrice (1475-1497) was of the Italian noble family Este who ruled Ferrara from 1240-1597 and was celebrated for significant patronage of the arts throughout the Renaissance. In 1490, she married Ludovico Sforza the Moor, Duke of Milan. During Ludovico's reign, Milan was praised as the "new Athens;" he lavishly supported the humanities and many of the greatest artists of the day (including Leonardo da Vinci) resided in Milan to be near their patron. Béatrice, Dutchess of Milan, was singularly noted for her tremendous beauty and charm, as well as for her love poetry and dancing; her grand balls were regarded highly throughout Italy. Hahn's *Le bal de Béatrice d'Este*, then, is a nostalgic impression of what one of these balls might have been like. The suite consists of seven movements: within the framing processional and recessional, the interior movements of the suite consist of three Renaissance dances (although with a subtly more modern sensibility), a character sketch of Béatrice's sister Isabella (*Ibérienne*), and an impression of da Vinci's controversial painting *Leda and the Swan*; the two movements performed tonight—*Lesquercade* and *Romanesque*—are the second and third movements, respectively, from the suite, each capturing a haughty-yet-playful sense of nobility and a glimpse of the Dutchess's charming naivety.

Sarah Riskind: *Heart's Place* (2009)

Sarah Riskind is a senior music major from Needham, Massachusetts. She has enjoyed composing for about thirteen years, an interest that began with simple piano compositions and led to many chamber and choral pieces over the years. She attended the Boston University Tanglewood Institute program for composition in 2003. Her instrumental background was in violin and piano, but at Williams she has explored her love of singing and choral conducting. In addition to studying voice with Kerry Ryer-Parke and singing in the Chamber Choir and Symphonic Winds, she is the student conductor of the Williams Concert Choir, assistant conductor of the Bennington Children's Chorus (directed by Kerry Ryer-Parke), senior director of the Williams College Elizabethans, and director of the Contra Dance band, Rude Cider. Her post-Williams plans include composing, conducting, and pursuing her love of music in every way possible. Sarah was named the winner of the 2009 Hutchinson Prize in music.

Sarah has written the following about *Heart's Place*:

> Because *Heart's Place* is my senior thesis, I always meant it to express who I am in a stronger way than any of my previous compositions. Other compositions have had themes, but this one has a narrative process; it is a more thorough exploration of interests and values. Influences include my love of medieval and Renaissance vocal music, my intellectual interest in religion, my Reform Jewish perspective, my gender, and my romantic and idealistic worldview. By representing and interpreting voices from the Bible and the Middle Ages, I seek to highlight the idea of women's freedom in sacred and secular love.
>
> The first movement, *Union with Christ*, combines the texts of two liturgical songs by the medieval mystic and nun Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179) called *O dulcissime amator* ("O sweet lover") and *O pater omnium* ("O father of all"). Both praise Christ in intimate terms, glorifying the sacred marriage of nuns over the secular one of men and women. While Hildegard valued secular marriage for the purpose of procreation, she perceived the holiness of nuns, monks, and clergymen as far greater than that of the more earthly-minded laypeople. Her ideal model for womanhood was the Virgin Mary, a paragon of chastity and humility. Hildegard believed the nuns' needs for family and motherhood could be fulfilled within their own community by teaching and performing rituals together.
>
> Although the vocal line is entirely my own, I chose aspects of Hildegard's melodies to incorporate into the first movement. *Heart's Place* opens with metrical interpretations of Hildegard's melodies, in the form of woodwind solos. During the *O gloriosissime* section, woodwind solos bring back these melodies in a modified version of the medieval *cantus firmus* technique, in which a pre-existing melody (often slower) would be juxtaposed with newly-composed material. The Phrygian mode of the source material appears in several sections, including the beginning of the vocal part, and melismatic moments embellish some of the same text as in Hildegard's version (for example, *o suavissime odor*). While I preserve or translate aspects of the medieval text setting, I also expand the possibilities of modal, harmonic, and rhythmic contrast in reaction to specific textual details. The listener will hear a sound affected by medieval music but know that my perspective on the text is being gradually revealed throughout the piece.
>
> *In Prison* expresses the exaggeratedly tragic plight of a fourteen-year-old girl forced to spend her days in a convent under a vow of chastity. The text comes from Motet No. 34 of the Montpellier Codex, a collection of music from the 13th century. In this polytextual motet, there are three French texts and one Latin tenor. Only one word, *Aptatur*, is given or known for this lowest voice, meaning "it is fitting." A motet such as this would probably have been performed by a group of students or other educated people, for the pleasure of singing and playing rather than for an audience to attempt an understanding of all of the texts. In this social setting it was common to play the tenor line on an instrument, its slower rhythms and lower register creating the foundation for the singers. The three texts in the upper voices of motet No. 34 are all about love: "Joliement" describes the pleasure of love from the point of view of a man, but implies that his love has been resisted; "Quant voi la florete" also praises love, but turns it to grief for the female narrator's

imprisonment in a convent; and "Je sui joliete" expresses a girl's desire to learn about love instead of being forced, like the other woman, to be a nun. Although all of these texts were probably written by men, we can treat the lyrics in the female voice as a plausible representation of reality that opposes Hildegard's point of view. The narrator finds no comfort in the idea of a "sacred marriage", but rather wishes to experience womanhood with a physical manifestation of love.

The poetry is not sincerely somber, though; it is full of the humorous rebellion of an adolescent. *In Prison*, which of course refers to the "prison" of the convent, interrupts the depth and sincerity of the other two movements by translating the uneven 6/8 rhythm of the original motet to a fast, playful melody. The string pizzicato and the ornamented flute accompaniment suggest the instruments of secular medieval music, and the predominating Lydian mode continues to color the harmonic language with the musical world of the movement's inspiration. The whimsical chromaticism and occasional wordplay provide contrast with the first movement, demonstrating the diversity of medieval values as well as the versatility of poetry in expressing them. The humor is contextually appropriate in that it argues against all women being "imprisoned" in convents, showing how some women are not meant for that calling.

My textual source for the third movement, Chapter 7 of the Old Testament Song of Songs, offers a solution to this problem by allowing me to develop my own perspective on sacred and secular love. While the Old Testament is undoubtedly much older than the medieval texts utilized in the first two movements, this text was a key object of interpretation in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, as well as a favorite source of motet texts. As a result, I am able to use a Palestrina motet as my musical model: *Veni, dilecte mi* from *Canticum Canticorum* (1584). The idea of a collection of sensual love songs in a religious text is one that both Jewish and Christian thinkers approached allegorically. According to longstanding Jewish tradition, the lovers in the Song of Songs depicted God and Israel, while the Christian allegorical perspectives (and following the tendency to interpret the Old Testament as "prefiguring" the New Testament) usually equated the lovers with Christ and the Church or the human soul. Nowadays, it is more common for scholars to embrace the literal meaning of secular love. My choice of Hebrew for this movement situates *Heart's Place* as a work that can reach across cultures and times.

In each of my three texts, I portray a different version of womanhood. While all portray fertility, in a way, the agricultural descriptions in 7:11-14 of the Song of Songs are the only words that are not accompanied by oppositions, admonitions, and restrictions. Hildegard von Bingen states, *nos reliquimus propter te/ fertilem amatorem conjuctionis* (we have renounced for you/ the fertile lover of intimacy), clearly separating sacred and secular love and valuing the former over the latter. In the Montpellier Codex motet, a young woman cries, "je sui mise en prison" (I am in prison), referring to the convent. In the Song of Songs selection, a woman calls to her beloved and warmly describes her amorous intentions. It is not a general sexual frustration, as expressed by the girl in the Montpellier Codex motet, but rather a reverent and passionate love that must be celebrated among the wonders of nature. Nowhere in this text are women restricted to certain behaviors or lifestyles, and there is no division set up between sacred and secular love. It validates female sexuality and implies that spirituality can be part of human interactions.

Although the string quartet introduction to *Pomegranates in Flower* is based on Palestrina's style of phrasing and ornamentation, the movement reveals much more of my own voice than it would as an adaptation of *Veni, Dilecte Mi*. While Palestrina set the text of the Song of Songs 7:12-13 in a more tender and lively way than most of his other sacred polyphony, it was still to him "a work which treats of the divine love of Christ and His Spouse the Soul." I chose this movement to break away from the depiction of medieval and Renaissance perspectives, instead using my most lyrical compositional style to show a passion that is free from the moral and cultural restrictions that existed in that time and still exist in some communities today.

Sarah would like to thank Professor Kechley, Professor Bloxam, Kerry Ryer-Parke, and Steve Bodner for their invaluable help with her composition thesis. They have all spent countless hours helping to make this culminating project as successful as possible.

Michael Gordon: *Yo Shakespeare* (1992)

> *I have a friend from high school who can't really get into my sort of music. When he calls me he greets me on the phone with, "Yo Shakespeare." I think he tags on the Shakespeare reference because Shakespeare is simply the only cultural figure that he is aware of at all. I think this maybe says something about American culture in general.*
>
> -Michael Gordon

Out of the stylistic "-isms" that dominated musical culture in the '60s-'80s, a characterizable style—of which Michael Gordon (b. 1956, Nicaragua) is a prime exponent—emerged in the 1990s: *totalism* (sometimes also called *post-classical music*). As Kyle Gann defines it in his *American Music in the Twentieth Century*, totalism, "in the rawest meaning of the term…suggests having your cake and eating it, too: in this case, writing music that appeals to audiences on a sensuous and visceral level, and yet which still contains enough complexity and intricate musical devices to attract a more sophisticated aficionado. It also implies using all of the musical resources available, so that Indian raga-like melodies may fit together with jazz harmonies with classical structuring devices. Totalist composers are those who admired minimalism's ability to communicate to large audiences, yet also admired serialism's ability to yield more and more information on further hearings, and also appreciated the inherent complexity, especially rhythmic complexity, of non-Western musics. As a result, totalist music can generally be characterized as having a steady, articulated beat, often flavored by rock or world music. That beat becomes a background grid for polyrhythms of great complexity. Elliott Carter and Milton Babbitt employ complex rhythms, too, but without a grid to hear them against; for totalist composers, being able to hear and calculate the complexity is essential. Totalist harmony can be either consonant, dissonant, or both—the distinction having ceased to be very important—but it is usually fairly static, concentrating on harmonic or melodies images that are easily memorable, even when quite complex." Gann groups composers such as John Luther Adams (whose *Farthest Place* and *Three Drum Quartets* from *Earth and Great Weather* were performed last semester, by the Symphonic Winds and the Percussion Ensemble, respectively) and Lois V Vierk (whose *Red Shift 4* was performed by I/O New Music in January) into this category. Gordon's music typifies the totalist trend in that it does not entirely concede to rock music or to classical traditions, but instead employs an equal synthesis of both. Rhythm is the most immediate of his concerns, especially rhythmic dissonance: irregular rhythms and polyrhythms, abrupt tempo changes, and the implication of different meters played simultaneously. Alan Pierson (conductor of Alarm Will Sound) described Gordon's style as: "hard-hitting, edgy, but [with] music of impassioned lyricism."

Gordon's compositions demonstrate a deep exploration into the possibilities and nature of rhythm and what happens when rhythms are piled on top of each other, creating a glorious confusion; John Adams, who has conducted Gordon's works with the London Sinfonietta and the Ensemble Modern Orchestra, calls these raw and complicated sounds "irrational rhythms." His interest in adding dimensionality to the concert experience has led to frequent collaborations with other artists. In *Decasia,* a multimedia orchestral work with films by Bill Morrison and spectacle by Ridge Theater, the audience stands in the middle of a three-tiered, triangular structure surrounded by 55 musicians and large projection scrims. His interest in the mysterious line between dissonance and consonance has lead him to create works that distort traditional classical instruments with electronic effects and guitar pedals, including *Potassium* for Kronos String Quartet and *Industry* for cellist Maya Beiser. His most recent work—*Lighting at our feet,* a music/theater work in collaboration with Ridge Theater based on the words of Emily Dickinson—was workshopped and previewed at Williams College this past September and premiered in Brooklyn December 9-13, 2008. The Symphonic Winds also performed three

movements of his opera *Van Gogh* this past February.

His most regular and rewarding collaborations, however, have been with his wife, composer Julia Wolfe, and his friend David Lang. Besides co-writing several pieces together—the oratorios *Lost Objects* and *Shelter* (which includes Lang's "Before I enter" and "I want to live," performed by Symphonic Winds last November), and most recently *Singing in the Dead of Night* (a collaboration with Eighth Blackbird, and New York choreographer Susan Marshall), the three of them founded in 1987 *Bang on a Can*, described by the *San Francisco Chronicle* as "the country's most important vehicle for contemporary music." Once "only" a one-day new music festival, *Bang on a Can* is now a multi-faceted organization dedicated to commissioning, performing, creating, presenting and recording contemporary music and whose mission is "to expose exciting and innovative music as broadly and accessibly as possible to new audiences worldwide. And through its Summer Festival,"—held at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art in North Adams every July—"Bang on a Can hopes to bring this energy and passion for innovation to a younger generation of composers and players." As Gordon explained in an interview, their project is demonstrating that, simply put, great music is great music, regardless of genre interpretation: "This is now concert music. Great concert music. Not classical or pop or 'new' music. It's just great music. So that was, in a sense, what we were trying to do: break down the perception that it's this or that."

Gordon's *Yo Shakespeare* is considered still by many to be Gordon's "greatest" work: Alan Baker calls it "a rock-solid piece and one of my favorites," Steve Reich describes it as "a very good and important piece," and Darcy James Argue believes it to be Gordon's "breakthrough piece." As Gordon said in an interview with American Public Media:

> I say that I'd been trying to write *Yo Shakespeare* for ten years before I wrote it. In this weird sense, I think one of the things that really helped me was the computer. It was the beginning of being able to write music on the computer. I had this very elementary software in which—it didn't have measures, it was just music paper, and then after you wrote the music—you could put the bar line anywhere you wanted. So I just started writing without any bar lines. I started writing one set of rhythms and I started writing another set of rhythms and listening back to them and I was going, "This sounds so great. I wish I could squeeze this into a measure." One of the weird things I was doing, and one of the things I did in *Yo Shakespeare*, is I started splitting up triplet notes…but instead of dividing a beat into three triplets, I would write two triplet notes, a bunch of eighth notes and then two more triplet notes and a bunch of eighth notes. I started listening to this and I started to think, "This sounds so great, but there's no way this can be played and there's no way this can get into a measure." So I said, "Let me keep writing." So I started writing this music that had no bar lines.

David Lang describes this aspect of Gordon's music as a "simple, easy to understand way of destroying or exploding the tyranny of the bar line." Eventually, though, Gordon did figure out how to group the rhythms into bars, mostly of common-time. Gordon observed that this conceptual realization was:

> …the moment that shifted everything for me, and I was fortunate to be working with this great group in England called Icebreaker. They looked at [*Yo Shakespeare*] and they were like, "We'll figure this out." When I showed the piece to Steve Reich, he got really excited, and he said, "The first thing you've got to do in this score is, on the front page, you've got to say, "This is the rhythm. Because if people look at this score, they're going to think you're an idiot. But if you actually tell them on the front page that you know you're an idiot, then they'll take you seriously." And that's what I did. When I made the score on the very first page I put, "Here's how you play the rhythm," and I gave them three options. And now people can figure it out and they get into it and they go, "Oh yeah, it looked really weird, but I realized I can play this."

Yo Shakespeare is largely constructed from three independent lines—each with their discrete rhythmic profile, and each implying its own quite unique meter—being layered upon each other in a dense contrapuntal net. The resulting rhythmic texture begs the question of where the "real" pulse is to be found: it appears to flicker between the instrumental groups depending on where one focuses attention. (As Bob Gilmore quips: "In performance this creates the amusing situation of the musicians bopping in time with the music as they read it from the page but apparently out of time with the music itself.") The result is a new kind of rhythmic exuberance close to rock music; a way of composing that comes from popular music but is not about it. In fact, Gordon admits that he has "always been interested in [rhythm] since my days playing in rock bands. Rhythm that makes you energized and makes you want to move, but at the same time is complex." Kyle Gann, then, believes that *Yo Shakespeare* is a virtuosic display of rhythmic energy and creativity. Gann writes that in *Yo Shakepeare*, the music is "stripped down to almost pure rhythm—in fact, with the sound often dominated by overdriven electric guitar and 80's keyboards, it sounds like math rock without the drums. It's tricky as hell, full of incomplete tuplets and impossibly complex nested polyrhythms. Often you hear what sounds like three independent tempos going on at once, but once the initial shock wears off, you begin to feel the underlying common pulse. This is a piece that could easily come off as a dry proof of concept, but the music quickly steamrolls right over any such objections." Gordon describes *Yo Shakespeare* as "basically three types of dance rhythms going on at the same time. The three rhythms are almost as if there are three different dance rooms with three different dance bands playing at the same time. As if they're playing different songs and different tempos, but somehow you could dance to it or somehow you could feel that there was a common rhythm. That's how I think of *Yo Shakespeare*, and that's how it began in my mind. It began as this thing I wanted to move; I want to feel like my body's moving.

Brian Simalchik: *when I lived in permanence* (2009)

Brian Simalchik is a junior at Williams College, majoring in music with a focus on composition. His score for the documentary *Child of Hope: Darfur Dreams of Peace* won best soundtrack at the 2008 Kent Film Festival, and the Williams Percussion Ensemble premiered his work *The Light is Electric* last spring. This year, the Williams Symphonic Winds premiered *Untitled* with choreography by Darran Moore `09 in a concert of collaborations with Dance Company, Leo Brown '11 premiered a new work for solo violin, *Topography 1, 2, 3* in April, and his arrangements of *The Mountains* and Eric Satie's *Sports et Divertissements* were premiered this year—by the brass section of the Williams Symphonic Winds during September's *Convocation* and at last weekend's Student Symphony concert, respectively.

When I lived in permanence is the second in a series of almost-concertos written by Williams juniors for Symphonic Winds seniors. (The first was *Forgotten Skies* by Ben Wood '08, written a few years ago to feature English hornist Ian Jessen '07.) Brian has provided the following comments about *when I lived in permanence*:

> Last spring Steven Bodner approached me with the idea of writing a piece for the final Symphonic Winds concert of the 2008-2009 year. We settled on a piece featuring three cellos—specifically, two senior cellists, Mimi Lou and Betsy Ribble, and junior Katie Palmer as soloists—and an assortment of winds and percussion. I settled on an ensemble comprised of four trumpets, four low woodwinds (tenor and baritone saxophones, bass and contrabass clarinets), synthesizer, drum kit and two percussionists.
>
> The resulting work, *when I lived in permanence*, is neither a concerto nor a traditional wind band piece. It is a sort of sonic landscape, an attempt to create an acoustical space from limited material but with broad

proportions. This broadening is accomplished by elongating time, stretching the distance between new events and moving into new sections slowly and smoothly so that the piece is a continuously evolving stream of sounds. Conventional melodies and identifiable harmonic progressions are abandoned so as to allow the listener to become lost inside this landscape, to simply lose track of "time."

The work opens with mournful, sustained cello chords paired with the eerie sound of bowed crotales and long notes in the trumpets and woodwinds. This is the most relaxed (or, perhaps, least agitated) texture of the piece: each moment building on the one before, gaining momentum and getting wider, louder and more anxious. The cellos begin to interject more forcefully, the trumpet and woodwind lines become more active and the percussion shifts to savage bass drums. A drum kit enters, the winds begin to hocket, each playing half of a single line, and the cello texture thickens. By the end of the piece the ensemble has become an unstoppable force, relentless and brutal, endlessly repeating a single dissonant chord while the cellos swell and diminish underneath.

The final section, which sounds nothing like the opening, is built with the same chords, given to more instruments and played fast and loud instead of quiet and slow. [This is a similar process of perpetual escalation that Ravel utilizes in *Bolero* and Lois V Vierk uses in her *Red Shift* series; here, though, the process yields a very different response—perhaps not so much of breathless exhilaration, but instead of crushing rage.] The piece is stubbornly undeveloped in this way, never straying from its opening pitches… as if it never considers change, obstinately clinging to the only notes it knows, even as it becomes unbearably restless and descends into an overwhelmingly anxious place. It seems to me that the landscape the piece is trying to create is really a psychological one, a place where anxiety and fear spiral out of control and a person is trapped by their own inability to change.

Brian would like to thank Steven Bodner for his guidance, support, and enthusiasm; Katie Palmer, Mimi Lou and Betsy Ribble for the time and energy they have put into this piece; and the rest of the ensemble for their hard work and effort. Brian would also like to thank his composition teachers David Kechley and Ileana Perez-Velazquez, his friends, and his family for their support and encouragement through the years.

Martin Mailman: *for precious friends hid in death's dateless night* (1988)

Dr. Martin S. Mailman (1932-2000) served on the College of Music faculty at the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas for thirty-four years as the Coordinator of Composition, Regents Professor of Music, and Composer in Residence. He served for two years in the United States Navy, was a Ford Foundation composer in Jacksonville, Florida, and was the first Composer-in-Residence at East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina. He wrote many works for concert band, including: Concertino for Trumpet and Band, op. 31; *Liturgical Music*, op. 33; *Night Vigil*, op. 66; *for precious friends hid in death's dateless night*, op. 80; *Toward the Second Century*, op. 82; Concertino for Clarinet and Band, op. 83; and *Secular Litanies*, op. 90.

A composition student of Louis Mennini, Wayne Barlow, Bernard Rogers, and Howard Hanson, he earned his B.M., M.M., and Ph.D. degrees from the Eastman School of Music, Rochester, New York. He was among the first of contemporary American composers chosen in 1959 to participate in The Young Composers Project sponsored by the Ford Foundation and the National Music Council. Dr. Mailman received numerous awards and grants for composition, which include two American Bandmasters Association/Ostwald prizes for composition, th, and the Edward Benjamin Award. He won the 1982 Queen Marie-Jose Prize for composition in Geneva, Switzerland for his Concerto for Violin and Orchestra. His works include chamber music, band, choral, and orchestral music, film scores, television music, an opera, and a requiem for chorus, orchestra, and soloists. A frequently

sought-after clinician and teacher, Dr. Mailman served as guest conductor-composer at more than ninety colleges and universities across the United States and Europe. He was a leader in promoting comprehensive musicianship programs through MENC throughout his career and gave presentations at conventions and schools across the country. Mailman was named Composer of the Year by the Texas Music Educators Association in 1989 (just after he wrote *for precious friends*). He was particularly intrigued by the compositional process and the concept of music as "sound with intent over time."

for precious friends hid in death's dateless night is three-movement work for band inspired by Shakespeare's sonnets. It was first performed on the 10 November 1988, the University of North Texas Symphonic Winds Ensemble, conducted by Dr. Robert A. Winslow. The work was awarded the National Band Association and the American Bandmasters Association's Ostwald prizes for composition. While title of the second movement was written by the composer, the titles of the first and third movements and the piece as a whole were taken directly from lines of Shakespeare's sonnets. (The work title comes from Sonnet No. 30, while the first and third movements' titles are from Sonnets No. 102 and No. 73, respectively.) Mailman writes the following about the piece:

> The dilemma of, on the one hand, my long-standing aversion to writing program notes for my music, and on the other, a request from a valued colleague for written comments about *for precious friends hid in death's dateless night* may very well remain unresolved. While I do not mind making appropriate verbal remarks to performers during a rehearsal of my music, I do find myself loathe to write or to speak comments under other circumstances. I feel that if I have done my work as a composer properly, the music will not benefit from my words.
>
> I am reminded of the time when I was being interviewed by a reporter after the premiere of my Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in Geneva. She began the interview by telling me a wonderful story of her impression of my piece, and then asking me if this was indeed my creative motivation for the work. It was not, but had I written whatever my thoughts about the work may have been, she would have never had the freedom to create her own rich imagery.
>
> I can say that very few of my works had the same birth as this one. I was sitting reading the Sonnets of Shakespeare when I came across the title line. I was stunned by it and within an hour or so had composed the opening of the work. The remainder of the work came about as much of my music has, through very hard work and hours of private labor. The titles of the first and third movements were not difficult to settle on, and as a matter of fact, may have been selected before the music. Search as I may, Shakespeare presented no appropriate title for the second movement and finally I had to settle for words less eloquent than his but descriptive nonetheless.
>
> In the end, I hope the magnificent words that inspired me will offer each listener an opportunity to share the experience I had when I read them and attempted to express in sound and time the incredible sense of humanity and spirit of Shakespeare:

Sonnet No. 30
When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:
Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long since cancelled woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanished sight:
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,

And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before.
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restor'd and sorrows end.

<u>Sonnet No. 102</u>
My love is strengthened, though more weak in seeming;
I love not less, though less the show appear;
That love is merchandized, whose rich esteeming,
The owner's tongue doth publish every where.
Our love was new, and then but in the spring,
When I was wont to greet it with my lays;
As Philomel in summer's front doth sing,
And stops his pipe in growth of riper days:
Not that the summer is less pleasant now
Than when her **mournful hymns did hush the night**,
But that wild music burthens every bough,
And sweets grown common lose their dear delight.
Therefore like her, I sometime hold my tongue:
Because I would not dull you with my song.

<u>Sonnet No. 73</u>
That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou seest the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire
Consumed with that which it was nourish'd by.
This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.