



Raleigh *Civic*
Symphony
Chamber
Orchestra

African American Heritage Concert II



Daniel Bernard
Roumain



Roque Cordero



Duke Ellington



George Walker



Raleigh Civic Chamber Orchestra
Randolph Foy, Conductor

Thursday, April 24, 2003 at 8:00 P.M.

Talley Student Center Ballroom
NC State University, Raleigh

Program

Eight Miniatures for Small Orchestra (1944-48) Roque Cordero
(b. 1917)

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| I. Marcha Grotasca | V. Nocturno |
| II. Meditación | VI. Mejorana |
| III. Pasillo | VII. Plegaria |
| IV. Danzonete | VIII. Allegro Finale |

Lyric for Strings (1941) George Walker
(b. 1922)

The River – four movements from the ballet (1971) Edward Kennedy (Duke) Ellington
Orchestrated by Ron Collier (1899-1974)

Spring
Meander
Twin Cities (Village Virgins)
Riba

————— *Intermission* —————

Grace (1996) Daniel Bernard Roumain
(b. 1972)

Daniel Roumain, vocalist

Voodoo (Violin Concerto no. 1) (2002) Daniel Bernard Roumain
Cadenza (hollerin' in the night)

Filtering
Prayer
Tribe

Daniel Roumain, violinist

Notes

Roque Cordero – Eight Miniatures



Roque Cordero

The Afro-Panamanian composer Roque Cordero has spent a large part of his career in the United States, serving as professor of composition at Indiana University (Bloomington), and joining the faculty at Illinois State University (1972) as professor of composition. He retired from that institution in

1987 as Distinguished Emeritus Professor of Music. From a modest family background with no connections with the classical music world, he nevertheless began to write band music at an early age and to conduct, gaining a local reputation and winning several prizes. Cordero pursued his musical studies in his native Panama City and later at the University of Minnesota.

Cordero's early style is essentially tonal and influenced by nationalistic rhythms and forms. His study with Ernst Krenek at Hamline University introduced the use of elements of serialism in works from the mid 1940's, such as *Eight Miniatures*. Dominique-René de Lerma comments about the miniatures: "In just

under a dozen minutes, Cordero successfully captures the essence of Panama's popular musical culture and, at the same time, transforms it into something more enduring." Continuing:

1. *Marcha grotesca*. A humorous introduction to the suite with fragmentary motives scattered among the instruments
2. *Meditación*. Solo cello with higher shimmering strings.
3. *Pasillo*. Descended from the European waltz, this dance is Africanized by the hemiola division of six into two groups of three units and three groups of two.
4. *Danzonete*. The prominent rhythm here, strongly Afro-Caribbean, is the pattern of 3+3+2, weaving as a background for brass solos and string passages.
5. *Nocturno*. The transparent textures of this contrasting movement are set for winds and strings.
6. *Mejorana*. The additive rhythms return, serving as a background to the aggressive trumpet.
7. *Plegaria (prayer)*. This highly ardent and expressive movement for strings is almost minimalist in the economy of its material, virtually unharmonized.
8. *Allegro Finale*. The suite concludes with reminders of previously stated ideas in an extended Finale.

George Walker – Lyric for Strings

When the 73-year old George Walker notified that he had won the 1996 Pulitzer Prize in music for his composition *Lilacs*, the first African-American to receive the honor in its 80-year history says he could hardly believe the news. But it was indeed a well-deserved, if belated recognition

of his compositional skill and long musical career in piano performance, composition, and teaching.

Walker, born in Washington, D.C., in 1922, was immersed in classical music from his earliest years. His physician father, George Walker, had taught himself to play

the piano, and encouraged his son to devote his time to musical studies; his mother, Rosa King Walker, was an accomplished pianist who supervised her son's first lessons when he was 5. "We had nothing but classical music growing up," Walker recalls. He entered the Oberlin Conservatory

of Music at 15 and immediately after graduation went on to earn an Artist Diploma from the Curtis Institute, studying piano with Rudolph Serkin and composition with Rosario Scalero and Gian Carlo Menotti. He obtained a second diploma in piano, studying with Robert Cadeuseus at The American Academy in Fontainebleau, followed by a doctorate in music from the Eastman School of Music, awarded in 1957. That same year he

returned to Paris on a Fulbright Scholarship to study composition with Nadia Boulanger and Gregor Piatigorsky.

Lyric for strings is perhaps Walker's most-performed work, though it is quite atypically romantic in spirit. Written in 1941 as a memorial to his grandmother, it is a tender and heartfelt tribute, employing eloquent melodies and remarkable expressiveness.



George Walker

Duke Ellington – Excerpts from the ballet, *The River*

Born 104 years ago this month in Washington, DC, composer, bandleader, and pianist Edward Kennedy (“Duke”) Ellington was recognized in his lifetime as one of the greatest jazz composers and performers. He was nicknamed “Duke” by a boyhood friend who admired his regal air, and the name stuck, becoming indelibly associated with the finest creations in big band and vocal jazz. He had a real gift for instrumental combinations, improvisation, and jazz arranging that brought the world the unique “Ellington” sound that found in works like *Mood Indigo*, *Sophisticated Lady*, and the symphonic suites *Black, Brown, and Beige* and *Harlem*. The exact number of his compositions is unknown, but is estimated at over 2000, including hundreds of three-minute pieces.

Early in 1970, Lucia Chase, director of the American Ballet Theater, commissioned Ellington to compose a ballet celebrating the company's 30th anniversary, with Alvin Ailey as choreographer. In first meeting with Ellington, Ailey found that the jazz composer already had a concept, and was doing extensive research on water music from various periods of history, including Handel's *Water Music*, Debussy's *La Mer*, Smetana's *The Moldau*, and Britten's *Peter Grimes*.

In his memoir, *Music Is My Mistress*, Ellington outlines his original concept for *The River* in great detail, from “The Spring” representing a newborn baby wriggling, squirming, “The Meander,” where the baby rolls from one side to another, then sees the door (flute solo) to the



Duke Ellington

outside world, to finally the rebirth at the “The Mother, Her Majesty, the Sea.” Mercer Ellington (Duke's son) saw the ballet suite in less literal terms, as a religious allegory, “of birth, of the wellspring of life, of reaffirmation, of heavenly anticipation...”

Daniel Bernard Roumain – Grace

The words to the familiar hymn “Amazing Grace” were written by the former slave-trader John Newton in Olney, England in 1772. In 1835, a South Carolina singing instructor named William Walker published a widely popular hymn book combining the now-familiar tune with Newton’s words. The origin is thought to be a plantation song.

Roumain calls *Grace* a “hip-hop setting,” but the composer refers only obliquely to the original words by Newton, instead using his own text (see below). However, he does quote the familiar tune in the main section, appearing in the

woodwinds in a dissonant setting against the driving beat.

From the start, *Grace* employs textures and effects that quickly shift from edgy, driving accented sounds, to short spurts of rhythmic activity, to warm, vibrant measures, all with colorful instructions like “aggressively, always moving forward,” “percussively here,” “laid-back,” “hovering,” “Intensely!” and “solemnly and with reverence.”

The driving, edgy nature of the main part of the piece, with the vocal text below, is suddenly interrupted by a slow, quiet closing section, reminiscent of Copland’s reflective moments. Marked



Daniel Bernard Roumain

“with dignity,” “with resolution and peace,” and “with passion, strength and majesty...” the close hauntingly quotes the familiar tune on piccolo.

Grace by Daniel Bernard Roumain

Grace !

The sun sets in the Midwest sky, It’s time for them to say goodbye.

Never know you history, Never gonna set you free.

Survivors of an ancient plan, searching for the promised land.

Now we want to let it show, Now we want the world to know. Let me tell ya.

Chorus:

Do not pretend its easier my friend, Don’t look the other way

I want no part of you, If that’s the price to pay. ‘Cause slavery’s alive and well today.

Grace ! Grace baby !

Second Verse:

Lies left lying in the shadows, crimes keep corrupting me, times seem troubled for us all.
Maybe amazing grace. Crying on the floor of your bedroom, try’n to make it all seem right,

Dying for the dream until we fall, Save me amazing grace. (*Chorus*)

Third Verse:

I wanna know whatcha wanna do, I wanna know whatcha wanna see,

I wanna know, got ta know whatcha wanna see Now !

I wanna give ev’ry thing that I can give, I wanna live ev’ry day that I can live,

I don’t want no one to hurt me Now! Now ! (*Chorus*)

Daniel Bernard Roumain – Voodoo (Violin Concerto no. 1)

The composer writes:

“This violin concerto is most concerned with the notion of the ritual, or our collective rites of passage.

From the current state of a highly technological country in the United States of America (the techno textures and rhythms of “Filtering”), to my own relationship with Catholicism (the meditative

tonality of “Prayer”), I find “Tribe” in all of its primitive repetition, to, perhaps, be the most accurate depiction of where we are right now, as a collective, civilized society; a collective, civilized world.

My parents are from Haiti, and I too have heard the stories, myths, and folklore of that country and its current struggle to survive. Yet I

wonder, how much different is the suffering, rioting, and sense of loss from my home of Harlem, New York City?

Moreover, how much different is the intoxication of a voodoo ceremony from the myth and propaganda of the American dream?

I don’t know.”

Daniel Bernard Roumain

— Program notes by Dr. Randolph Foy

Raleigh Civic Symphony Association ...

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Daniel Bernard Roumain **Composer in Residence – April 21-27**

Daniel Bernard Roumain’s works have been performed by groups throughout the United States, including the American Composer’s Orchestra, St. Louis Symphony, Nashville Symphony, and the Orchestra of St. Luke’s (NYC). The 2001-2002 season marked the premieres of *Ghetto Strings* by the Minneapolis Guitar Quartet, *What We Are* by the Brooklyn Youth Chorus, *Voodoo Violin Concerto No. 1* by Kitchen House Blend in NYC, and *Fast BLACK Dance Machine* by the St. Luke’s Chamber Ensemble of New York.

The New York Times lauded the Carnegie Hall premiere of Roumain’s *Harlem Essay for Orchestra and Digital Audio Tape* for its “sophistication, invention and dry wit.” Roumain has composed music for and is a featured performer in *The Breathing Show* by dancer/choreographer Bill T. Jones which was performed at the Lincoln Center Festival 2000.

Of Haitian-American heritage, Dr. Roumain holds degrees from Vanderbilt University, Nashville, and University of Michigan (masters and doctorate). He is currently Chair of Composition at the Harlem School of the Arts, Assistant Composer-in-Residence at the Orchestra of St. Luke’s, Music Director of the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company and an Artist-in-Residence at the Tribeca Performing Arts Center.



Daniel Bernard Roumain

Resources

Books

- Baker, David (ed). *The Black Composer Speaks.*, with Lida M. Belt and Herman C. Hudson. Afro-American Arts Institute, Indiana University. 1973.
- Chase, Gilbert. *America's Music: From the Pilgrims to the Present.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987, Revised Third Edition. Paperback. Updated version of the venerable 1955 classic; a standard guide to *all* genres of American music and their inter-relatedness.
- Crawford, R. *The American Musical Landscape.* Berkeley, 1993
- Franceschina, John. *Duke Ellington's Music for the Theatre.* McFarland & Company, Inc. Jefferson, NC. 2001.
- Gann, Kyle. *American Music in the Twentieth Century.* Schirmer Books, New York, 1997. Well-written, with extensive discussion of lesser-known younger composers.
- Hitchcock, H. Wiley. *Music in the United States.* Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1988.
- Nicholls, David, ed. *The Cambridge History of American Music.* Cambridge U. Press, 1998. Outstanding writing by numerous authors.
- Struble, John Warthen. *The History of American Classical Music.* Facts on File, New York. 1995. Extensive, opinionated, well-written.

Recordings

- William Grant Still, *Symphonies 1 and 2*; William Dawson, *Negro Folk Symphony*, Duke Ellington, *The River and Harlem.* Neeme Järvi, Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Chandos American Series, volumes 4 and 5.
- George Walker: *Serenata, Poem, Orpheus, Spirituals for Orchestra.* Cleveland Chamber Symphony, Edwin London. Albany Records.
- African Heritage Symphonic Series I, II, and III.* Works by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Fela Sowande, William Grant Still, Ulysses Kay, George Walker, Roque Cordero, Adolphus Hailstork, Hale Smith, Michael Abels, David Baker, William Banfield, Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson; Chicago Sinfonietta, Paul Freeman, conductor. Cedille Records, Chicago.
- Daniel Bernard Roumain. *String Quartets.* DBR Music, New York.

Web

- www.dbrmusic.com - Daniel Bernard Roumain's site
- www.indiana.edu/~aaamc - Archives of African American Music and Culture at Indiana University; access to oral histories, photographs, musical and print manuscripts, audio and video recordings, ...
- www.cbmr.org - University of Chicago Center of Black Music Research



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AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE CONCERT III

FEATURING GUEST
COMPOSER/PERFORMER

DANIEL BERNARD ROUMAIN



Raleigh Civic Symphony

Sunday, April 27, 2003
4:00 P.M.

Stewart Theatre
NC State University

Adults: \$8 Students: \$5
Ticket Central 515-1100

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Dr. Randolph Foy, Music Director

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Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Danse Negre from African Suite
George Walker Four Spirituals for Orchestra
William Dawson Movements from Negro Folk Symphony
Adolphus Hailstork Epitaph for a Man who Dreamed (MLK)
Daniel Bernard Roumain Harlem Essay



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Montarie Lanier
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