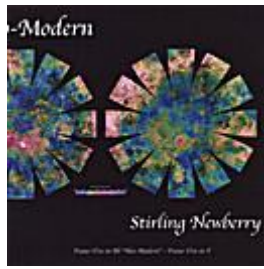


Mp3 Stirling Newberry - Neo-modern



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Details: The Piano Trio has a relatively small repertoire, especially when you consider the ensemble has been around since the classical period. That period was so rich in repertoire that the ensemble has remained viable playing this first batch of pieces, with occasional additions. Recent years have seen a proliferation of piano trios, many of them with very young players. The new generation of performers seems to be more interested in new music and they have encouraged a revival of composition for piano trio. Like so much of composition in the early 21st century, the new pieces for piano trio have an air of critiquing or examining what happened (or, in the case of this ensemble, what didn't happen) in the 20th century. In my own case, I wrote *The Beginning of Things* (2006, substantially revised 2007) to explore what could be done with the medium of the piano trio in a style that has some elements of late Modernism. It is not a piano trio, but rather a piece written for piano trio. Stirling Newberry, on the other hand, writes pieces in genres. His piano trios are Piano Trios, like those of the first flowering of the medium. The pieces on this disc are complete statements about what a Piano Trio is. His style is a critique (in the sense that a critique is an examination) of late 20th century and early 21st century "tonalisms", including minimalism and eclecticism. These pieces offer a commentary on and expression of the multi-movement tonal Piano Trio. Newberry's use of tonalist ideas and procedures extends into the use of jazz and pop rhythms and phrase structures, not as a surface feature of the music, but as a deep-seated expression of the musical concerns of our age. The incorporation of these ideas is part and parcel of Newberry's engagement with life as it is lived and art as it fits in with that life. Steve Hicken, composer and critic listen 101 :-

Composer's Notes: Notes for Piano Trio #1, in Bb "Neo-Modern" Opus 28 (May-June 2002) The Trio in Bb requires extensive playing with finger picks in the first and second

movements, after the style of the Chinese "pipa" a lute-like instrument. It is often best to have a place to rest the bow during these long sections. It is a technique required also of my Quartets in Ab, D and Db (#2, #4 and #6). The piece has a "Pictures at Exhibition" quality, because each movement is based on a print that was part of an exhibition at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts in 2002, of 20th century works. I

Apollinaire Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918) was a neo-classical modern poet active in France at the turn of the century, in the Montparnasse district of Paris, familiar with Picasso, Breton and others of the modernist artistic scene in France of that time. He coined the term "surrealism" and was the author of both novels and "concrete poetry," the latter published as *Calligrammes*. The print that was the inspiration for this movement was by Louis Marcoussis, and it is an overlooked example of early cubism with a particular dark and light overlaying quality. As in other places, the title is not the person because there is the need to express the "Apollonian" not one of Guillaume's words. This is from the concept of "superposition." In science superposition is the uncollapsed state of a quantum wave. This means that all of the possible results are present, and only an interaction will "collapse" them down to one particular result. While in this state of superposition, it is possible to be and not be. The light wave given two paths will travel both of them, and even interfere with itself. Superposition in art is where two images or impressions are simultaneously present, as with the positive and negative shapes. The texture of the work owes itself to this quality of shape in Apollinaire's work, and to the mixture of line and curve in the print, but also to the popular and film music of the 1960's, for example the music of Alexander Courage. The layout of the work begins with the expository material and a series of sections progressively developed, each repeated, until there is a cadential section at the close. II MEZ Mitteleuropäische Zeitung or "Central European Time" features interlocking gears and cogs, and so does the music, in the form of the tick tick tick of a simple baseline that turns through an entire sequence wheel. This wheel produces nuanced melodies which appear and disappear against the motion of the two strings, and which can be brought out in differing ways in differing interpretations. The structure of the work is an A/B where the remaining energy of the first part opens up a second area, more energetic and contrasting with the first part. The doorway is announced with an ostinato chord figuration in the piano, is repeated away from, and then begins in earnest. This technique, of introducing on a first repeat and then plunging into the elaboration of the material is a common one in my work. A sub text here is a movement started but incorporated into this one from a Paul Klee print in his linear style of a man on a highwire above his anxieties. This

material for *Der Seiltänzer* gave MEZ its sense of extension and length. III *Nachtsgestalten* Emile Nolde, like Klee, was a prodigal artist of a vast range of style and subject from his classical drawings, to his popular flowers, to the demonic exploration of the internal psyche, this row of scowling figures needs almost no explanation. The movement fills the function of a "scherzo" in the four movement sonata layout why the term "sonata cycle" is used is beyond me, it only adds to confusion just as MEZ filled the role of the slow movement. Rushing figures, screaming pedal points, all played up for dramatic effect. As a note, this was the first movement to be written, just after the exhibition closed. IV *Vienna 1912* An unassuming print, whose name I did not write down in my notes, featured a dark cobble stone street nestled in Vienna's hilly districts. At the heart of this movement are two ideas the simple threaded 16th notes, a kind of old German counterpoint idea, and what I term "scherzo process" music lines offset by the fraction of a beat. It is a technique I first used in the scherzo of my *Quartet in A*, however, it appears in movements of all different kinds. The reference here is to the collision of styles and forces that were taking place in that particular city at that particular moment dances, chromaticism, old music from Bach's day, the beginnings of modernity of sound, popular tunes. From this stirring the dark strain of the modern received expressionism, but also a heroic monumentality, and a love of text editing, correcting, probing.

Notes for the Piano Trio #2, in F Opus 29 (June-October 2002, revised January 2007) If the B flat is five pictures on the same wall, the Trio in F is a single story told in two parts. The dynamic in question is a single thread from which everything comes, away from which it diverges and towards which it converges, even if in a different guise. The sustained note in the first movement, and the triplet figure in the second in the guise of its double trill form is the alpha and the omega of each work. If there is a center, it is this pedal like suspension, in, if you like, a Sibelian sort of way. The titles of these movements were almost "North" and "South" but the reference to the two hemispheres of Venus, and the subtitle "Ishtar", would have been out of the range of experience. Instead, the darkness of one, and the light of the other, serve to make a duality that is sufficient to explain the impulse behind each. I *Allegro Negro* The black Allegro is caressed of darkness. The structure begins with a duo for the strings, and then is repeated in the way of an exposition with the Piano, the return to the duo theme later serves as a turning point, where the initial development is pushed into different regions. It is important to feel suspensions as the presence of this idea, just as almost any figure against it is the return of the first enunciated opening figures in that duo, and their variation through the harmonic space. The whole movement, and indeed the whole piece, is in

those opening bars, with everything else a reflection of those cells. In the middle there is a feature which is present in Beethoven and Mendelssohn in several places an exposition in the development which is at a distance from the original harmony, it's trailing away leads to a renewed burst, in the form of trills, of energy, a way of saying that we have gone as far in this direction as it is possible to go. As with the MEZ movement, this is a doorway moment, one which ushers in the final dark thundering music, with its heavily pedaled harmonic haze. This rumbling form is again stated early in the Cello rumbling in the exposition. This tension between sustained and figured is old in music what is being said here is about the deconstruction of a mode by the figuration, the harmonic function of the music is to destabilize the initial mode, and thus create half of an arch against which the second movement will lean. This arch shape is seen to smaller and smaller scales, such as the arching in different octaves of the ostinato in this last section. This use of shapes at all levels is endemic to my works, and should be noted where it appears.

II Allegro Blanco The first movement presented all of its material in one flowing statement, the second movement presents the two cells in contrast. The surface of this work is more specifically evocative than the first movement it is the surface of popular music, Beatlesque if you like, the sounds from a breezy California radio station touched with Schubert and film music. The cells of figure and suspension are joined by the piano triplet figure, and by the change of the pedal figure to a descending scale. This overlaying of cells the descending element was part of the figuration in the first movement and is now part of the pedal element, where as the regularity of rhythm which was figure in the first movement is now part of the suspension cell - is an intentional device. From the merging of these new elements comes the outright melody which is stated almost four minutes into the work. Again there is an ebbing away, which leads into trills that announce the coming of, in this case, dawn, rather than sunset in the black Allegro. Rather than storming figures out of d'Aulaire illustration of Norse mythology, these are the bright and more Hellenic mythological renderings, tinged with music that is golden and shimmering. The closing is a pair of, not fugues nor fugato sections, but more akin to the free use of imitative counterpoint from long ago, or call and response of classic Motown music, too close together to be exposition, and unconcerned with counterpoint's devices for modulatory purposes. The China-esque quality to the modality is intentional, and a way of underlining the changes in the cells over the course of the work.

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