

Fifth House Ensemble
Americana

Program description: Fifth House Ensemble performs contemporary American piano trios of Stacy Garrop, Dan Visconti, Donald Crockett, and Paul Schoenfield, rich with inspirations of film noir, jazz, pop, and folk songs. Costa Rican artist, Angela Bermúdez, has created a stunning visual narrative to showcase these works, each representing the wildly diverse sound worlds of the music of our time with their own unique aural landscape.

Program

Silver Dagger (5:00)

Stacy Garrop (b. 1969)

Night Scenes (18:00)

Donald Crockett (b. 1951)

I. Scatter the Barbarians

II. The Blue Guitar

III. Midnight Train

IV. Night Hawks

Intermission

Lonesome Roads (17:00)

Dan Visconti (b. 1982)

Café Music (16:00)

Paul Schoenfield (b. 1947)

I. Allegro

II. Rubato, Andante Moderato

III. Presto

Players

Charlene Kluegel, violin

Herine Coetzee Koschak, cello

Katherine Petersen, piano

Program Notes

Stacy Garrop – Silver Dagger

In 1994, I heard for the first time an Appalachian folk song called *Silver Dagger* at a folk festival. The simplicity of the melody joined with a cautionary love tale enthralled me, and I spent the next several years researching the song. What emerged from my research were dozens of variants of the song, both in terms of text as well as melody and title. The variants that I discovered could be grouped more or less under three different titles: *Silver Dagger*, *Drowsy Sleeper*, and *Katie Dear*. All of these versions revolve around the same Romeo and Juliet premise: a boy asks a girl for her parents' consent to marry. The story has various endings: the

parents won't give approval, so the girl and boy each end their lives with a silver dagger; the girl turns the boy down and sends him away to find another love; the girl forsakes her parents and runs away with the boy; and so on. In my trio, I incorporate two complete versions of the folk song, one of *Katie Dear* and one of *Silver Dagger*, as well as motives from a variant of *Drowsy Sleeper*.

– Stacy Garrop

Donald Crockett – Night Scenes

Donald Crockett's Piano Trio, *Night Scenes*, is a tasting plate for the imagination. Crockett himself alludes to the work as "meant to evoke scenes from imaginary movies." It is easy to imagine the characters from each of these vignettes, popping out of the musical motifs. The first movement, *Scatter the Barbarians*, is a quick and aggressively fleeting work. The main motif of small sixteenth note segments is progressively lengthened one sixteenth note at a time until it is halted by harsh cluster chords that signal its passage to a different instrument. These chords are almost certainly the theme of the barbarians, huffing and puffing as they scatter in fear. Eventually, these cluster chords assert themselves more regularly on top of the modifying rhythmic fragment, forcing it into a regular meter. The Blue Guitar projects sultry melodies, sung from a chesty voice, accompanied by the piano in the role of the blue guitar. Eventually, the work digresses into momentary chaos. As Crockett describes it, "perhaps several guitarists showed up and it's too dark or late to play together." Heralded by a steady groove, the third movement *The Midnight Train* gathers steam slowly. Bell like gestures represent the train's signal as it arrives in the station. Finally, the work ends with *Night Hawks*, inspired by the famous Edward Hopper painting by the same name. Crockett invites the listener to imagine the music as accompanying a scene with the characters from the painting.

– Katherine Petersen

Dan Visconti – Lonesome Roads

Lonesome

Roads was inspired by memories of long, cross-country car trips and the rumbling, uneven grooves that underscore a constantly-shifting landscape. Beginning from the faintest murmurs, the music evokes a vast space that can be alternately lonely, hypnotic, or hard-driving and rhythmic.

Across several brief, fragmentary movements, the initial melodic murmurings assemble themselves into propulsive ostinato figures and wild, aggressive riffs colored with raw timbres and powerful rhythms characteristic of rock and beat-driven music. These movements may be played in any order so that each ensemble can make their own journey with the piece, which becomes a kind of road atlas with many routes connecting any two points. It's pure "driving music", a mixtape populated with the vastness, diversity, and flavor of the North American landscape.

This work was commissioned for the Gryphon, Desert, and Triple Helix piano trios by the Barlow Endowment for Music Composition at Brigham Young University and the 2010 International Barlow Prize. – Dan Visconti

Café Music – Paul Schoenfield

The idea to compose *Café Music* first came to me in 1985 after sitting in one night for the pianist at Murray's Restaurant in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Murray's employs a house trio that plays

entertaining dinner music in a wide variety of styles. My intention was to write a kind of high-class dinner music – music which could be played at a restaurant, but might also (just barely) find its way into a concert hall. The work draws on many of the types of music played by the trio at Murray's. For example, early 20th-century American, Viennese, light classical, gypsy, and Broadway styles are all represented. A paraphrase of a beautiful Chassidic melody is incorporated in the second movement.

– Paul Schoenfield

About Angela Bermúdez

With over 9 years of experience, Angela has been sharing her work in different places being a special guest, exponent of her art, panelist and speaker at several conventions in North & South America and Africa. Her work has been recognized worldwide through interviews on radio, television and important sites and magazines focused on Gaming and Technology.

Angela is also recognized by companies and communities such as Sony, PlayStation, Konami, Warner, Mensa, etc; for her collaborations in art, costume making, character design and others. Her work has been seen in TV Commercials, SM Campaigns and Billboards around the streets of Costa Rica. Now that she discovered a better way to express her skills in the world of live painting, she has been showing a different way to collide the colors in front of many people in several occasions for the past 2 years and many more to come.

About Fifth House Ensemble

Praised by the New York Times for its “conviction, authority, and finesse,” the Chicago-based Fifth House Ensemble harnesses the collaborative spirit of chamber music to reach beyond the traditionally-perceived limits of classical music. The ensemble’s artistic, educational, and civic programs engage theater groups, video game designers, corporate innovators, and folk bands to share stories as diverse as the communities it serves.

Performances in previous seasons include those at Texas Performing Arts, Civic Music Association (IA), Old Town School of Folk Music, WFMT Impromptu, Steppenwolf Theater, Rush Hour Concerts at St. James, National Sawdust (NY), and the Miller Theatre (NY).

In addition to the ensemble's work on the concert stage, Fifth House reaches 17,000 students annually through its arts-integrated programming and trains emerging artists nationwide as a curriculum design partner to higher education institutions and through its summer festival, **fresh inc.**

For more information, visit www.fifth-house.com.

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