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Ritz Chamber Players



In Memory of H. Edward Tibbs



Reynolds-Kirschbaum Recital Hall
October 3, 2010



Ritz Chamber Players

Alison Buchanan, soprano • Ashley Horne, violin
Caleb Jones, cello • Kevin Sharpe, piano
Terrance Patterson, clarinet

The Ritz Chamber Players was hailed by *The Baltimore Sun* as “one of the most interesting and dynamic ensembles to emerge in recent years.” Boasting some of the world’s preeminent musicians spanning the African diaspora, it brings a fresh, new energy to the classical music genre. Its members perform with prestigious organizations including the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra and the London Symphony. Founded in 2002 by clarinetist and Artistic Director Terrance Patterson, the Ritz Chamber Players present a landmark subscription series at the Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts in Jacksonville, Florida, combining exceptional artistry on stage with inspiring educational programs in schools and throughout the community.

Through its concert series in Jacksonville and performances across the United States, the Ritz Chamber Players continue to build the participation of multicultural audiences that reflect our diverse society.

The Ritz Chamber Players is also unique in its dedication to showcase the works of African-American composers with exceedingly artistic and informed interpretations. Its highly successful debut concert at New York’s Weill Recital Hall in Carnegie Hall was marked by a standing room only crowd, with critics proclaiming the group’s performance “extraordinary” and “vital and fresh.”

The group made its international radio debut on the BBC World Service and WNYC New York with a concert broadcast to more than 40 countries, and its first national television appearance on the 37th Annual NAACP Image Awards. The Ritz Chamber Players have been guests of the highly-praised National Public Radio and the Tavis Smiley Show and are regular performers at the Madison and Amelia Island Chamber Music Festivals.

Ritz Chamber Players is managed by John Gingrich Management, Inc.,
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Program

ROGER QUILTER (1877-1953)

Pastoral Songs for voice and piano trio, Op. 22

ALISON BUCHANAN, SOPRANO • ASHLEY HORNE, VIOLIN • CALEB JONES, CELLO • KEVIN SHARPE, PIANO

I will go with my father a-ploughing

Cherry valley

I wish and I wish

COLERIDGE-TAYLOR PERKINSON (1932-2004)

Blues Forms for Solo Violin (1972)

ASHLEY HORNE, VIOLIN

MARGARET BONDS (1913-1972)

Three Dream Portraits

ALISON BUCHANAN, SOPRANO • KEVIN SHARPE, PIANO

Minstrel Man

Dream Variation

I, Too

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797-1828)

Der Hirt auf dem Felsen, Op. 129 (D.965) "The Shepherd on the Rock"

ALISON BUCHANAN, SOPRANO • TERRANCE PATTERSON, CLARINET • KEVIN SHARPE, PIANO

Intermission

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809-1847)

Piano Trio No. 1 in D minor, Op. 49

ASHLEY HORNE, VIOLIN • CALEB JONES, CELLO • KEVIN SHARPE, PIANO

Molto allegro e agitato

Andante con moto tranquillo

Scherzo

Finale

Quilter: Pastoral Songs

Text by Joseph Campbell

I Will Go With My Father A-Ploughing

I will go with my father a-ploughing
To the green field by the sea,
And the rooks and the crows and the seagulls
Will come flocking after me.
I will sing to the patient horses
With the lark in the shine of the air,
And my father will sing the plough-song
That blesses the cleaving share.

I will go with my father a-sowing
To the red field by the sea,
And the rooks and the gulls and the starlings
Will come flocking after me.
I will sing to the striding sowers
With the finch on the flow'ring sloe,
And my father will sing the seed-song
That only the wise men know.

I will go with my father a-reaping
To the brown field by the sea,
And the geese and the crows and the children
Will come flocking after me.
I will sing to the weary reapers
With the wren in the heat of the sun,
And my father will sing the scythe song
That joys for the harvest done.

Cherry Valley

In Cherry Valley the cherries blow:
The valley paths are white as snow,
And in their time with clusters red
The heavy boughs are crimsonèd.
Now the low moon is looking through
The glimmer of the honey-dew.
A petal trembles to the grass,
The feet of fairies pass and pass.
In Cherry Valley the cherries blow:
The valley paths are white as snow.

I Wish and I Wish

I wish and I wish
And I wish I were
A golden bee
In the blue of the air,
Winging my way
At the mouth of day
To the honey marges
Of Lochciuinban;
Or a little green drake,
Or a silver swan,
Floating upon
The stream of Aili,
And I to be swimming
Gaily, gaily!

I wish and I wish
And I wish I could be
A bud on a branch
Of the red-thorn tree
That blows at the head
Of Blanaid's Bed,
And sheds a petal
At ev'ry breath;
Or a white milestone
On the shining path
That climbs the cairn
And dips the hollow,
Up to the hills
of bright Maghmeala.

If wishes were fairies
I would not stay,
But they would wile
My soul away;
And peace would creep
Into my sleep
As soft as a dream
At evenfall,
When the crickets sing
And the curlews call;
And 'tis I would wake
For no new morrow
On the grey round
Of this world of sorrow.

Bond: Three Dream Portraits

Text by Langston Hughes

Minstrel Man

Because my mouth
Is wide with laughter
And my throat is deep with song
You do not think
I suffer after
I have held my pain so long?
Because my mouth
Is wide with laughter,
You do not hear my inner cry
Because my feet are gay with dancing,
You do not know I die?

Dream Variation

To fling my arms wide
In some place in the sun,
To whirl and to dance
Till the white day is done.
Then rest at cool evening
Beneath a tall tree
While night comes on gently,
Dark like me —
That is my dream!

To fling my arms wide
In the face of the sun,
Dance! Whirl! Whirl!
Till the quick day is done.
Rest at pale evening ...
A tall, slim tree ...
Night coming tenderly
Black like me.

I, Too, Sing America

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed —

Shubert: Der Hirt auf dem Felsen
“The Shepherd on the Rock”

Text by Wilhelm Müller (stanzas 1-4, 7)
and Helmine von Chézy (stanzas 5 & 6)

Wenn auf dem höchsten Fels ich steh,
Ins tiefe Tal hernieder seh
Und singe,

Fern aus dem tiefen dunkeln Tal
Schwingt sich empor der Widerhall
Der Klüfte.

Je weiter meine Stimme dringt,
Je heller sie mir widerklingt
Von unten.

Mein Liebchen wohnt so weit von mir,
Drum seh'n ich mich so heiss nach ihr
Hinüber.

In tiefem Gram verzehr ich mich,
Mir ist die Freude hin,
Auf Erden mir die Hoffnung wich,
Ich hier so einsam bin.

So seh'nend klang im Wald das Lied,
So seh'nend klang es durch die Nacht,
Die Herzen es zum Himmel zieht
Mit wunderbarer Macht.

Der Frühling will kommen,
Der Frühling, meine Freud',
Nun mach ich mich fertig
Zum Wandern bereit.

When on the highest peak I stand,
looking down into the deep valley,
and sing,

the echo from the deep dark valley
drifts upward from
far away.

The further my voice travels,
the clearer it comes back to me
from below.

My love dwells so far from me
that I yearn ardently for her
over there.

I am consumed by deep grief,
my joy is gone;
all hope on earth has vanished;
I am so lonely here.

So longingly sounds the song in the wood,
so longingly it sounds in the night,
drawing hearts upwards to heaven
with wondrous power.

Spring is coming,
Spring, my joy;
now I will prepare
for my journey.

Program Notes

Quilter • Pastoral Songs for Voice and Piano Trio

Roger Quilter was a minor but endearing figure in the English musical renaissance of the early 20th century. He was born into a prominent family in Brighton in 1877 and educated at Eton before undertaking five years of professional music studies at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt. When Quilter returned to London, he soon began establishing a reputation as a song composer with his tasteful settings of verses by several of the best English poets. Quilter's health was never robust, and he died in London in 1953. Quilter's music is marked by delicacy of expression and sensitivity to the text, a style that the musicologist and conductor Denis Stevens said represented "a peak in the English tradition of decorous romanticism."

Perkinson • *Blues Forms* for Solo Violin

Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson was born in 1932 into a musical family in New York City – his mother was a professional pianist, organist and director of a local theater – and he seemed destined to musical prominence by his very name, given after the London-born composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. Perkinson early demonstrated musical gifts, and he was admitted in 1945 to New York's prestigious High School of Music and Art. Perkinson began composing while still a teenager, and he received the LaGuardia Prize from the school for his choral work upon his graduation in 1949. He entered New York University as an education major in 1949, but transferred to the Manhattan School of Music two years later to study composition and conducting. He received his baccalaureate in 1953 and his master's degree the following year. The life-long influence of jazz on Perkinson's musical personality was nurtured at Manhattan by his classmates Julius Watkins, Herbie Mann, Donald Byrd and Max Roach. In 1964-1965 he played piano in the Max Roach Quartet and at various times served as arranger and music director for such eminent popular artists as Marvin Gaye, Lou Rawls, Barbara McNair, Melvin Van Peebles and Harry Belafonte. He went on to teach at Brooklyn College and Indiana University, hold conducting positions, serve as music director, and co-found the Symphony of the New World, the first integrated symphony orchestra in the United States, and serve as both its Associate Conductor and Music Director. In 1998 Perkinson was appointed Artistic Director of the Performance Program at the Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College Chicago. At the time of his death, in 2004, Perkinson was also serving as Composer-in-Residence for the Ritz Chamber Players of Jacksonville, Florida.

Perkinson composed *Blues Forms* in 1972 for Sanford Allen, who was appointed by Leonard Bernstein in 1962 as the first African-American musician in the New York Philharmonic. Allen premiered the work in Carnegie Hall in 1972. *Blues Forms* comprises three virtuosic interpretations of the genre's traditional styles and characters – fast and jazzy in the outer movements, slow and smoky in the second one.

Bonds • Three Dream Portraits for Soprano and Piano

The remarkable Margaret Bonds, born in Chicago in 1913, was the daughter of a physician, Dr. Monroe Alpheus Majors, and organist and music teacher Estelle C. Bonds. (When she was divorced four years later, Estelle reclaimed her maiden name, and Margaret kept it for the rest of her life.) Margaret was immersed in music from an early age not just by her mother but also by the household's many artistic visitors, including Florence Price, whose *Symphony in E minor* became the first orchestral work by an African-American woman to be performed by a major American orchestra. Bonds studied composition while still in high school, and subsequently won a scholarship to Northwestern University, where she earned both bachelor's and master's degrees by age 21. She won the Wanamaker Foundation Prize for her song *Sea Ghost* while still an undergraduate, and became the first African-American soloist to appear with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra when she performed John Alden Carpenter's jazzy *Concertino* on the same program as the premiere of Price's *Symphony* in 1933. Bonds concertized and founded the Allied Arts Academy for music and ballet in Chicago before moving in 1939 to New York, where she studied piano and composition at Juilliard, served as music director for a church and for several theaters, worked as a music editor, organized a chamber society to foster the work of black musicians and composers, and performed. She also composed prolifically in a style that enriched the classical genres with the influences of jazz, blues, spirituals and her own social awareness. Bonds moved to Los Angeles to work at the Inner City Institute and Cultural Center and later died unexpectedly, on April 26, 1972. Margaret Bonds' work was recognized with awards from the National Association of Negro Musicians, National Council of Negro Women, Northwestern University Alumni Association and American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers.

Bonds based *Three Dream Portraits*, like many other of her vocal works, on poetry by her friend Langston Hughes. *Minstrel Man* evokes the painful irony of the showman whose lighthearted appearance masks deep pain. *Dream Variation* is a wistfully hopeful vision of the equality of dark and light. *I, Too, Sing America* is Hughes' plea for the inclusion of African-Americans among the classes of people that Walt Whitman listed in his well-known *I Hear America Singing*, "Each singing," wrote Whitman, "what belongs to him or her and to none else."

Schubert • Der Hirt auf dem Felsen "The Shepherd on the Rock"

Anna Milder-Hauptmann, one of the leading German sopranos of her day, requested from Schubert a bravura concert piece for her recitals, and he created for her the delightful song *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen* ("The Shepherd on the Rock"). The text (which Anna may have suggested) is a conflation of verses by Wilhelm Müller (poet of *Die Schöne Müllerin* and *Winterreise*) and Helmine von Chézy (author of *Rosamunde*) that concerns the longing of a shepherd boy for his lady love and the welcome arrival of spring. To partner the soprano, Schubert included a part for clarinet, giving this song something of the quality of a vest-pocket operatic scena in which the agility and limpid sonority of the instrument serve as foil and collegial challenge for the voice. *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen* was the last of Schubert's more than 600 songs, composed just a month before he died, on November 19, 1828.

Mendelssohn • Trio No. 1 in D minor, Op. 49

The most intensely busy time of Mendelssohn's life was ushered in by his appointment in 1835 as the administrator, music director, and conductor of the Leipzig Gewandhaus concerts. In very short order, he raised the quality of musical life in Leipzig to equal that of any city in Europe, and in 1842 he founded the local Conservatory to maintain his standards of excellence. In 1841, he was named director of the Music Section of the Academy of Arts in Berlin, a cultural venture newly instituted by King Frederick William IV of Prussia, which required him not only to supervise and conduct a wide variety of programs but also to compose upon royal demand. Mendelssohn toured, guest conducted, and composed incessantly, and on March 28, 1837, took on the additional responsibilities of family life when he married Cécile Jeanrenaud. The *Trio No. 1 in D minor* has remained one of Mendelssohn's most popular and beloved instrumental creations: Pablo Casals chose to play it when he was invited by President John F. Kennedy to perform at the White House in 1961.

Though Mendelssohn was careful to involve all of the participants equally in the *D minor Trio* presentation and development of the thematic material, the piano is granted the most brilliant of the three parts. The opening movement, heroic rather than mournful, is in a closely worked sonata form. The cello presents the main theme, a flowing melody of grace and eloquence, immediately at the outset. The complementary subject, also initiated by the cello, is a gently arched strain in the brighter tonality of A major. The extensive development section is an ingenious elaboration of these two lyrical inspirations. A full recapitulation of the principal themes rounds out the movement. The Andante, led by the piano, is reminiscent in its three-part structure and melodic style of the *Songs Without Words*. The Scherzo is an elfin essay in the quicksilver, effervescent manner of which Mendelssohn was the peerless master. The dactylic motive (long-short-short) given at the outset of the Finale by the piano serves as the germ from which most of the movement grows. A brief but energetic coda spawned by the same motive brings the *Trio* to a triumphant close.

Concert Notes by Dr. Richard E. Rodda

Birmingham Chamber Music Society

Remaining Concert Schedule for the 2010-11 Season

Pacific String Quartet

Sunday, February 6, 2011 • 4:00 p.m.

Reynolds-Kirschbaum Recital Hall

Trio Cavatina

Sunday, March 6, 2011 • 4:00 p.m.

Reynolds-Kirschbaum Recital Hall

Contributions to the Birmingham Chamber Music Society or gifts in memory of Ted Tibbs should be sent to Dr. Anthony Barnard, Treasurer, 3037 Westmoreland Drive, Birmingham, AL 35223.

Dr. H. Edward (Ted) Tibbs *1933 – 2010*

The Birmingham Chamber Music Society board of directors dedicates this concert to the memory of our past president and longtime fellow director, Dr. Ted Tibbs, who died on September 16, 2010 at the age of 77. Dr. Tibbs was instrumental in keeping our organization alive and healthy for more than 40 years and was personally responsible for bringing some of the world's greatest chamber music groups to Birmingham, to the delight of the city's classical music lovers.

As president, Dr. Tibbs handled the programming of performers for BCMS concerts and shepherded our financial and business affairs. For many years he held the office of vice-president in charge of booking where he continued with these responsibilities. He was an excellent steward of our resources and kept us solvent during some very lean years. He was also an enthusiastic fundraiser and successfully attracted sponsors, benefactors, and donors for the society.

Dr. Tibbs was professor emeritus of music, chair of the keyboard division, and university organist at Samford University from 1959 until his retirement in 2002, as well as organist at Birmingham's Southside Baptist Church since 1960. In addition to his work with the Birmingham Chamber Music Society, Dr. Tibbs also was past president of the Birmingham Music Club and dean of the Birmingham Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. For 15 years, he was the organist for the Alabama Symphony.

Dr. Tibbs was a gifted performer, having given recitals in this country and in Europe and was the first full time American pupil of the noted French organist, Jean Langlais at the Church of St. Clotilde in Paris. He was also a student of organ construction and had designed more than 50 pipe organs in the South, including the Samford Memorial Organ at Southside Baptist Church, the organs at Briarwood Presbyterian Church, and the Birmingham-Jefferson Civic Center Concert Hall, and four instruments on the campus of Samford University.

While Dr. Tibbs would say that his most important work was as a teacher, having had a number of students who won scholarships for graduate work in organ performance at some of America's best music schools, he was unusually dedicated to the Birmingham music community. Former Samford Arts Dean, Milburn Price, observed: "Ted's sphere of influence was not just focused on Samford. He was truly a community arts person."



The Birmingham Chamber Music Society is especially grateful to our sponsors, supporters, and benefactors for making the 2010-2011 season possible.

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This program is made possible in part by a grant from the Alabama State Council on the Arts (ASCA) and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)



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