ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation:  THE INFLUENCES OF AMERICAN POPULAR MUSIC UPON TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICAN SONG AND CHAMBER MUSIC

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American concert music enters the 21st century having found its voice. The “Great Cultural Melting Pot” has resulted in a blending of different types of original American popular music with European forms to create a sound that is uniquely American. This dissertation focuses primarily on this combination through the presentation of three recitals of song and chamber music. The American popular music genre includes ragtime, blues, jazz, folk-music, and musical theater.

I have incorporated many different combinations of instruments and voices to create interesting, varied programs of American music. These recitals represent the gradual inclusion of the original American genre onto the classical concert stage. In order to make my dissertation topic relevant to the present day, I have included many works of living composers with whom I have had personal contact, either in coachings or masterclasses. They are: William Bolcom, John Musto, Richard Hundley, and Ricky Ian Gordon. Other important represented composers are Leonard Bernstein, Aaron Copland, Andre Previn, David Schiff, Morton Gould, and George Gershwin.
The originality of this music is helping to establish a national music for the United States. The quality and variety of the music confirms the importance of this repertoire to the world of music. This dissertation comprises three recitals that showcase American art song and chamber music, which took place on December 10, 2002, May 11, 2004, both in Ulrich Recital Hall, and on May 19, 2005 in the Gildenhorn Recital Hall of the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center in College Park, Maryland. Recordings of these recitals may be obtained in person or online from the Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library of the University of Maryland, College Park.
Table of Contents

Recital I: A Lecture Recital on William Bolcom (b. 1938)

Graceful Ghost Rag

Second Sonata for Violin and Piano in F Major
   Summer Dreams
   Brutal, fast
   Adagio
   In Memory of Joe Venuti

   Michael Keelan, violin

Over the Piano
   from Cabaret Songs, Vl.1
The Crazy Woman
   from I Will Breathe a Mountain
Amor
   Waitin’
   from Cabaret Songs, Vl. 1
Toothbrush Time
   from Cabaret Songs, Vl. 2

Twilight: After Haying
   from Briefly It Enters
Never More Will the Wind
   from I Will Breathe a Mountain

Love in the Thirties
   from Cabaret Songs, Vl. 3
At the Last Lousy Moments of Love
   from Cabaret Songs, Vl. 4
Satisfaction
   from Cabaret Songs, Vl. 3
George
   from Cabaret Songs, Vl. 1

   Carolyn Black-Sotir, soprano and Siobhan Kolker, soprano
Recital II

Sonata for Violin and Piano (1943)  
Andante semplice  
Lento  
Allegretto giusto  

Michael Keelan, violin

Sonata for Clarinet and Piano  
Grazioso  
Andantino, Vivace e leggiero  

Lynda Dembowski, clarinet

Shadow of the Blues  
Silhouette  
Litany  
Island  
Could Be  

Phillip Collister, baritone

After Hours Suite for Flute and Piano  
Waltz for Strayhorn  
Tomcat  
Bluebird  
Café con Leche  

Jessica Dunnivant, flute
Recital III

Two Pianos                   Morton Gould  
Chords                       (1913-1996)  
Blues                        
Waltzes                      
Echos                        
Triplets                     

Susan Slingland, piano

Will There Really Be a Morning?                    Richard Hundley  
(R. 1931)                                        
Will There Really Be a Morning?                    Ricky Ian Gordon  
(b. 1956)                                        
Will There Really Be a Morning?                    Andre Previn  
(b. 1929)                                        

Ah Hong, soprano

Summer                          Ricky Ian Gordon  
                                            (b. 1956)  
Leneida Crawford, mezzo-soprano, and Ah Hong

Coyotes                   Ricky Ian Gordon  
Waterbird                  Richard Hundley  
The Elephant is Slow to Mate  
Leneida Crawford

Porgy and Bess Fantasy for Two Pianos  
arr. Percy Aldridge Grainger  
(1882-1961)  
George Gershwin  
(1898-1937)  

Arno Drucker, piano

He Loves and She Loves  
The Babbit and the Bromide  
Our Love is Here to Stay  
Summertime/Prelude II/Prelude I  
Carolyn Black-Sotir, soprano  
Tom Williams, double bass