

In Loving Memory of Beverly Hargis

Noel Wan, harpist
January 14, 2012

- Sonata in G major.....Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-1788)
I. Adagio
II. Allegro
III. Allegro
- The Secret Garden.....Peter van Onna (b. 1966)
- Rhapsodie.....Marcel Grandjany (1891-1975)

Intermission

- Suite for Harp, op. 83..... Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)
I. Overture
II. Toccata
III. Nocturne
IV. Fugue
V. Hymn (St. Denio)
- The Crown of Ariadne.....R. Murray Schafer (b. 1933)
III. Dance of the Bull
IVa. Ariadne's Dream
- Legende..... Henriette Renié (1875-1956)
- The Dancing Grains.....Yi-qiang Sun (b. 1946), arr. Noël Wan

Noël Wan (1994), winner of the first prize and Forgotten Lore prize in the 1st International Harp Competition & Festival, The Netherlands (now Dutch Harp Festival), was first introduced to the harp at the age of four. Born in San Jose, California to Taiwanese parents, Noël started lessons with Linda Wood Rollo and continued with Dan Yu, the first prize winner of the 5th USA International Harp Competition. In 2008, she began studies with Erika Waardenburg, harp

professor at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam and is currently part of Ann Yeung's studio at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Noël is an active soloist, performing in the United States and Europe since the age of eleven, and is a laureate ambassador for the Dutch Harp Festival.

Program Notes

Sonata in G Major by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach is his only original composition for harp. Although C.P.E. Bach was the son of Johann Sebastian Bach, or rather the more famous Bach, his style of composition was much different; in fact, whereas his father was known for fugues and suites, he himself preferred less contrapuntally complex music (known as *style galant*) and experimented with “shocking” harmonies (often jarring or dissonant to the ears of earlier Baroque-style composers). In Sonata in G Major, particularly the first movement, these harmonies are very present and should be highlighted as much as possible. In addition to C.P.E. Bach’s use of unusual harmonies, he also altered the order of the movements. Traditionally, the sonata form is fast-slow-fast, but in this particular sonata, he arranges the movements as Adagio (slow)-Allegro (fast)-Allegro (fast). Interestingly, although the second and third movements are both “Allegro,” the different meters changes the rhythmic swing of the melody; the second movement resembles a light bourée, and the third movement evokes a more waltz-like dance.

The Secret Garden was written by the Dutch composer Peter van Onna. Inspired by Frances Hodgson Burnett's novel, this piece vividly paints a landscape of the Netherlands. It begins mysteriously and dreamily, a depiction of the garden's many dark secrets, and gradually builds to a dramatic and turbulent climax before receding into stillness.

Rhapsodie pour la harpe, opus 10 is a work deeply and personally connected to its composer, French harpist Marcel Grandjany. The Gregorian chant on which the piece is based, *Salve Festa Dies*, is a chant usually sung at the end of the Easter Vigil for those who had been newly baptized. By referencing this chant, Grandjany, a devout Roman Catholic (as was his teacher Henriette Renié, to whom he dedicated the piece), depicts his love and dedication to the Catholic Church. For the introduction, Rhapsodie opens with a quietly somber yet beautiful theme which returns several times in throughout the piece. This dramatic exposition of the sacred melody, inspiring reverence and reflection, can be both an emotional and sensory experience for the listener.

Salve Feste Dies

Salve festa dies toto venerabilis aevo
Qua Deus infernum vicit et astra tenet
Ecce renascentis testatur gratia mundi
Omnia cum Domino dona redisse suo
Namque triumphanti post tristia tartara Christo
Undique fronde nemus gramina flore favent

Qui crucifixus erat Deus, ecce per omnia regnat
Dantque Creatori cuncta creata precem
Christe, salus rerum, bone Conditor atque Redemptor
Unica progenies ex Deitate Patris
Qui genus humanum cernens mersisse profundo
Ut hominem eriperes es quoque factus homo
Funeris exsequias pateris vitae auctor et orbis
Intras mortis iter dando salutis opem

*Hail, festal day, venerable of all ages
By which God conquers hell and holds the stars
Behold, it declares grace for a reborn world
All gifts have returned with their Lord.
For indeed, after hellish sorrows, to the triumphing Christ:
grove with green and buds with flower; everywhere give laud.*

*The Crucified One was God, behold He reigns over all things,
and all creation offers prayer to its Creator.
O Christ, the salvation of all things, good Creator and
Redeemer, only begotten Son of God the Father.
You who, seeing mankind to have plunged to the deep,
that you might save man, were also made man.
That Thou, the author of life and the world, might open the way
of death and the grave by giving hope of salvation*

Benjamin Britten's **Suite for Harp**, composed in 1969 for Welsh harpist Osian Ellis, is an understated albeit brilliant demonstration of the 20th century harp's musical potential. Unlike the romantic tendencies of common harp aesthetic, this suite is a contrast of the traditional and the modern through both articulated and flowing nuances and a vast array of timbres. Suite for Harp begins with a majestic 'Overture,' followed by a 'Toccatà,' a fast, lively movement in rondo form, which precedes the slow and hauntingly beautiful 'Nocturne.' The 'Fugue' is a short scherzo in which three voices interact playfully, followed by the last movement 'Hymn (St. Denio),' a deep, reflective movement inspired by the Welsh hymn "St. Denio" as a tribute to Ellis' heritage. Suite for Harp, dense with musical complexities and crafted in Britten's unique style, is truly a masterpiece of English harp literature.

The Crown of Ariadne, based on the myth of Theseus and Ariadne, resonates richly with exotic Eastern melodies and eclectic percussive effects. In the myth, the Cretan princess Ariadne falls in love with Theseus, an Athenian prisoner who will be thrown into a labyrinth and fed to the Minotaur. In the end, she saves his life, and they sail back to Athens. The Crown of Ariadne, consisting of seven movements, was composed for harp and percussion and is a depiction of Ariadne's story through a series of dances, beginning with I. Ariadne's Dream and ending with VI. Labyrinth Dance (Theseus and Ariadne).

Legende, composed by French harpist Henriette Renié in 1903, is a prime example of Romantic programmatic music for the harp. The piece set to Leconte de Lisle's poem "Les Elfes," a narrative about a knight traveling to his beloved, only to find himself detained by a fairy queen and her elves. Determined to seduce the knight, the fairy queen offers her trinkets in exchange for his devotion. Vowing eternal love for his betrothed, he refuses and flees—angering the queen. When he approaches his beloved, he sees only her ghost and dies from grief.

Dancing Grains, written by Yi-qiang Sun, is reminiscent of the joy of harvest in Southern China. The high-speed staccato resembling the dance of the grains enlivens the spirit. Between the fast-paced introduction and ending lies a beautiful, lyrical melody describing the rest of the farmers. The composer, implements great technical challenges in this very brief piece.