



Friends of Today's Music commissions Nine New Bagatelles for Piano by William Bolcom

William Bolcom has written "Nine New Bagatelles" for the Friends of Today's Music project. This set of miniatures aimed at advanced level pianists requires imagination and creativity along with an impressive technique and sensitive touch. Evocative, poignant and humorous, similarities to the "Nine Bagatelles" written in 1996 for the Tenth Van Cliburn Piano Competition are evident. Mr. Bolcom will attend the premiere performance at the 2006 MTAC Convention in Los Angeles and will work with the pianists in a master class. The work will be published by E.B. Marks and will be available for purchase at the convention. Students and teachers interested in premiering this new piece should contact: Catherine O'Connor, chair (510) 581-6457, email: cathoc@aol.com

Composer/pianist **WILLIAM BOLCOM** was born in Seattle, Washington, in 1938. Exhibiting musical talent while still very young, he began (at age 11) private composition studies with John Verrall and piano lessons with Berthe Poncy Jacobson at the University of Washington. He continued to perform extensively in the Seattle area and throughout the Northwest. Bolcom earned his B.A. from the University of Washington in 1958, studied with Darius Milhaud at Mills College in California and at the Paris Conservatoire de Musique, and earned a doctorate in composition in 1964 from Stanford University, where he worked with Leland Smith. Returning to the Paris Conservatoire, he won the 2e Prix in Composition in 1965. While in Europe he began writing stage scores for theaters in West Germany, continuing at Stanford University, in Memphis, Tennessee, at Lincoln Center/New York, and the Yale Repertory Theater.

Various awards throughout his career include: a BMI award, two Guggenheim fellowships, several Rockefeller and NEA grants, two Koussevitzky Foundation awards, 1988 Pulitzer Prize in Music for **12 New Piano Etudes**, several awards from the University of Michigan, investiture in the American Academy of Arts and Letters, honorary doctorates from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Albion College, the New England Conservatory and the New School University in New York and numerous other awards and honors.

Commissions have come from leading orchestras including: Philadelphia, St. Louis, Seattle, Saint Paul, Saarbrücken (Germany), Vienna Philharmonic, Baltimore, National Symphony, Pacific Symphony, Boston, the MET Orchestra and San Francisco Opera Orchestra. Numerous soloists and chamber music organizations worldwide have commissioned Mr. Bolcom: the American Music Theatre Festival of Philadelphia, the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, the Western Wind, Orpheus Chamber Players, Chamber Music Northwest, Aolian Chamber Players, Carnegie Hall, Aspen Music Festival, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Pacific Northwest Ballet.

In addition to concertizing together for over 30 years throughout the United States, Canada, and abroad, Bolcom and his wife, mezzo-soprano Joan Morris have recorded two-dozen albums together. Their first one, **After the Ball**, garnered a Grammy nomination for Ms. Morris, as did Bolcom's **Fourth Symphony** (featuring Morris as soloist) with Leonard Slatkin and the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra and *Orphée-Sérénade*, recorded by the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra with Bolcom as pianist. The most recent Bolcom and Morris albums are: two albums of songs by Vincent Youmans (*Orchids in the Moonlight* and *The Carioca*) with tenor Robert White, available on the Arabesque label, *Moonlight Bay - Songs As Is and Songs As Was* on Albany, and an album of songs by lyricist E. Y. "Yip" Harburg on Original Cast Records.

James Levine and the Vienna Philharmonic premiered the **Fantasia Concertante for viola, cello, and orchestra** in 1986 at the Mozarteum in Salzburg; the **Fifth Symphony** was premiered in 1990 by The Philadelphia Orchestra and Maestro Davies. Also under Davies' baton, **McTeague** - starring Ben Heppner in the title role and Catherine Malfitano as his wife Trina - was premiered by the Lyric Opera in Chicago on October 31, 1992, and subsequently played to nine sold-out houses. The University of Indiana at Bloomington presented four performances in February and March 1996. Maestro Davies also presided at nine sold-out performances of **A View from the Bridge** in October and November 1999 in Chicago, as well as at The Metropolitan Opera in December 2002.

Bolcom wrote stage music for Arthur Miller's play, **Broken Glass**, starring Ron Rifkin and Amy Irving, which played at the Booth Theater in New York in the spring of 1994. (**Broken Glass** was nominated for a Tony award as Best Play of 1994.) Also, during the winter of 1998 he wrote the score for John Turturro's movie, **Illuminata**, which opened nationwide in August 1999; the CD of the score, featuring Bolcom and Morris on one track, is available on 1m1 Trax/Hybrid Recordings. Bolcom and Weinstein's 1990 cabaret opera, **Casino Paradise**, was revived by the Prince Music Theater in Philadelphia in May 2004. His future commissions include a fourth opera for Lyric Opera of Chicago, solo pieces for clarinet, for organ, and for piano, a quintet for oboist Richard Woodhams and the Guarneri String Quartet, and an adaptation of *Idiot's Delight*, featuring Joan Morris, for Milwaukee's Florentine Opera, the Prince Music Theater in Philadelphia, and the New York City Opera.

Compositions include: four violin sonatas; seven symphonies; two operas, **McTeague** and **A View from the Bridge**, plus several musical theater operas; eleven string quartets; two film scores (**Hester Street** and **Illuminata**); incidental music for stage plays, including Arthur Miller's **Broken Glass**; fanfares and occasional pieces; and various chamber and vocal works. A selected listing follows:

- **Turbulence: A Romance** for soprano, baritone, and piano - set to poems by Alice Fulton
- **Nine Bagatelles** for piano - compulsory piece for contestants at the Van Cliburn Competition; recorded by gold medalist Jon Nakamatsu on Harmonia Mundi.
- **Second Piano Quartet** for clarinet, violin, cello, and piano - for The Beaux Arts Trio and Richard Stoltzman, clarinet
- **Sonata for Cello and Piano** for Yo-Yo Ma and Emanuel Ax
- **Lyric Concerto for Flute and Orchestra**, written for James Galway, is available on Equilibrium with flutist Amy Porter and the University of Michigan Symphony Orchestra conducted by Kenneth Kiesler.
- **Gaea for two left-handed pianists and two chamber orchestras** for Leon Fleisher and Gary Graffman
- **Sonata for Two Pianos in One Movement** - for The Paratore Brothers
- two song cycles for soprano Benita Valente - **Briefly It Enters**, drawn from the poems of the late Jane Kenyon, and **Let Evening Come**
- an all-Bolcom album of two song cycles for soprano Benita Valente - **Briefly It Enters** (drawn from the poems of the late Jane Kenyon) and **Let Evening Come** - and **Cabaret Songs, Vol. III and IV**, featuring Bolcom and Morris, are available on Centaur.
- two song cycles (**I Will Breathe a Mountain** and **A Whitman Triptych**) and a song (**The Digital Wonder Watch**, words by May Swenson) for mezzo-soprano Marilyn Horne. **I Will Breathe a Mountain** is available on RCA Victor Red Seal.
- **24 Cabaret Songs** (with lyrics by Arnold Weinstein) and **Ancient Cabaret** (translations from Greek and Latin texts by Weinstein) written for his wife, mezzo-soprano Joan Morris, and often performed by Bolcom and Morris - as well as countless other singers - will be released on Centaur in 2004.
- **A Wedding**, an opera based on the Robert Altman/John Considine movie (with libretto by Arnold Weinstein and Altman) premiered at the Lyric Opera of Chicago in December 2004 and ran for a total of ten performances.

Bolcom has taught composition at the University of Michigan since 1973; he has been a full professor since 1983 and was Chairman of the Composition Department from 1998 to 2003. In the fall of 1994 the University of Michigan named him the Ross Lee Finney Distinguished University Professor of Music in Composition. During the fall 2003 semester he was in residence at the American Academy in Rome, where he completed his opera, **A Wedding**, for Lyric Opera of Chicago.