

**SONOKLECT '97-'98**

*A Concert Series of Twentieth-Century Music*

Terry Vosbein, Director

***Bassam Nashawati***

violinist

***David Riley***

pianist

WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY  
JOHNSON THEATRE • 8:00 P.M. • 8 MAY 1998

## PROGRAM

### Liebesleid

Fritz Kreisler  
(1875-1962)

### Sonata for Violin and Piano

*Allegro vivo*  
*Intermede (Fantasque et leger)*  
*Finale (Tres anime)*

Claude Debussy  
(1862-1918)

### Six Poems for Violin and Piano

*A dream within a dream* (Edgar Allan Poe)  
*Hope is the thing with feathers* (Emily Dickinson)  
*Jabberwocky* (Lewis Carroll)  
*And death shall have no dominion* (Dylan Thomas)  
*Jazzonia* (Langston Hughes)  
*Credo* (Edwin Arlington Robinson)

Terry Vosbein  
(b. 1957)

— INTERMISSION —

### Remembering a Friend

Terry Vosbein

### Three Fantastic Dances

transcribed by Harry Glickman  
*Allegretto*  
*Andantino*  
*Allegretto*

Dmitri Shostakovich  
(1906-1975)

### Sonata for Violin & Piano

No. 1 in F minor, Op. 80  
*Andante assai*  
*Allegro brusco*  
*Andante*  
*Allegrissimo—Andante assai*

Serge Prokofiev  
(1891-1953)



## BASSAM NASHAWATI

Violinist Bassam Nashawati has been acclaimed as the "finest violinist in Syria, perhaps the entire Arab speaking world" after sold out performances of the Beethoven violin concerto with the Syrian National Symphony in 1995. Born in Damascus, Syria, he studied at the National Institute of Music in Syria. He rose quickly to local fame at the age of 16 by becoming the concertmaster of the National Chamber Orchestra of Syria.

After several solo performances with the orchestra, and a degree from the National Institute of Music, he came to the US to study at the San Francisco Conservatory with the late Isadore Tinkleman, earning his Bachelor of Music degree. Studies at the Cleveland Institute of Music with world-renowned violinist and teacher, Donald Weilerstein, led to a Master of Music degree as well as a Professional Studies Certificate.

In June of 1990, he returned to the Syrian music scene to give a critically acclaimed solo concert in Assad's Library Hall. The Syrian newspaper *Teshreen* said, "Watch out for this young violinist; he is going to make it big some day."

In December of 1995 the Minister of Culture in Syria invited Nashawati back home for a performance of Beethoven's great violin concerto. His performance was hailed in all three of the major newspapers in Syria and taped for television broadcast all over the Middle East and Europe.

Since September of 1996 Nashawati has been performing with the highly regarded New World Symphony in Miami Beach, under the direction of Artistic Director Michael Tilson Thomas.



## DAVID RILEY

David Riley, a native of Boston, Massachusetts, has had extensive experience as a collaborative pianist, most recently in a twelve-concert tour throughout Canada, which included a residency at the Banff Centre for the Arts and a live Canadian Radio broadcast. Prior to this engagement Riley performed on guest artist series throughout the United States and Canada, including the Miami University Guest Artist Series, the Kessler Debut Series, the Serie de Conciertos Dominicales in San Juan and the Convo Concert Series of the University of Saskatchewan.

As a staunch supporter of contemporary music, Riley has premiered more than ten works, including two piano trios written by Washington and Lee University composition professor Terry Vosbein and a work for cello and piano composed by Eastman School of Music composition professor Robert Morris. He has performed with the Cleveland Institute of Music Contemporary Music Ensemble at Severance Hall and the Musica Nova Ensemble of the Eastman School of Music at Kilbourn Hall. He was also part of a visiting composers concert at Cornell University and a concert in honor of Milton Babbitt at an honorary degree concert in his name.

Riley is currently a doctoral student at the Eastman School of Music. He received a masters in accompanying and chamber music in 1995 from the Cleveland Institute of Music. He has performed at numerous festivals, most notably the Aspen Music Festival, the Music Academy of the West and the Tanglewood Institute. In 1995 he was the top prize winner at the Cleveland Darius Milhaud Competition and in 1997 was the recipient of the Excellence in Accompanying award at the Eastman School of Music.

Upcoming engagements include a performance of romantic cello works on Buffalo Public radio, a five-concert tour throughout Puerto Rico, a concert with Eastman violin professor Zvi Zeitlin at the Rochester Memorial Art Gallery and a summer tour of Japan with the Eastman Wind Ensemble.

## PROGRAM NOTES

### Liebesleid

Fritz Kreisler

Fritz Kreisler was one of the most popular musical figures of the 20th century. In his time he was acknowledged as the "King of Violinists" and was beloved by concert audiences everywhere. Born in Vienna and trained at the Vienna Conservatory (where at age 7 he was the youngest student ever admitted), Kreisler also attended medical school and served in the Austrian army for two years during World War I. During World War II he became an American citizen and settled in New York City. In addition to his achievement as a violist, he was also an exceptionally gifted composer, having been thoroughly trained in harmony and counterpoint by Bruckner and Delibes. Many of his original compositions, including *Liebesleid*, are firmly established as an essential part of the violin repertoire.

### Sonata for Violin and Piano

Claude Debussy

One of the greatest French composers and also one of the most potent influences on the course of music in the 20th century was Claude Achille Debussy. His approach to composition is one that aims to evoke moods and sensuous impressions mainly through harmony and tone color. It differs from the romantic music that preceded it in that the works of composers such as Chopin and Brahms usually express deeply felt emotions, while the music of Debussy focuses on fleeting sentiments and airy atmospheres. He accomplishes this through the use of occasional reminiscences of natural sounds, dance rhythms and bits of melody. The *Violin Sonata* of 1917 is his last composition, and although Debussy would die of cancer soon after its completion, the work is imbued with an optimistic, almost life-affirming quality.

Each movement of *Six Poems for Violin and Piano* takes its inspiration from a particular poem. The poems that I selected are from some of the greatest writers of the English language: Edgar Allan Poe, Emily Dickinson, Lewis Carroll, Dylan Thomas, Langston Hughes and Edwin Arlington Robinson. Each poem is unique, and searching for a common thread will yield results of dubious meaning.

The movements are not literal re-tellings of the poems, nor do they necessarily intend to capture the mood of the poem. In most cases the poem served as a springboard of invention.

*Six Poems* was composed for tonight's performance and this marks its premiere. It is dedicated to tonight's performers, Bassam Nashawati and David Riley.

1. **A dream within a dream** (Edgar Allan Poe) begins with a violin melody that will reappear at times throughout the six poems in various guises. The movement is divided into two sections, the first being the unfolding of the opening melody. At around the halfway point the music settles into a quicker waltz which carries through to the conclusion.

2. **Hope is the thing with feathers** (Emily Dickinson) is based on a setting for voice and piano that I composed several years ago. It is in a three-part form: the outer two present a lyrical melody, while the quicker middle section contains a flowing piano accompaniment to the violin playing a melody in octaves.

3. **Jabberwocky** (Lewis Carroll) is perhaps the best known of the poems that I have selected. Its quirkiness seemed to inspire a set of variations that take the listener on a fun journey, never taking itself too seriously.

4. **And death shall have no dominion** (Dylan Thomas) is the most somber movement of the six poems. It is a slow dark movement which remains loud almost to the very last measure.

5. **Jazzonia** (Langston Hughes) is a rhythmic movement which takes the blues as its jumping off point. The blues is interrupted by a contrapuntal section, and then returns with a restatement of the opening rhythmic figures.

6. **Credo** (Edwin Arlington Robinson) features a variation on the melody from the first movement over a flowing piano accompaniment. Elements from each of the other movements are presented, often subtly, sometimes not. The final melody heard is once again the opening melody from movement one, ending the journey where it began.

— Terry Vosbein

## Remembering a Friend

Terry Vosbein

Throughout life we are faced with many trying times. Perhaps the most trying is the loss of a loved one. In February of 1998 I faced such a trying time, when my good friend Kathy Henderson passed away. Her death was expected and yet took us all by surprise. Somehow it was inconceivable that this woman who had been victorious over so much during her too-short life could ever leave. But she did. Faced with the feelings that accompany such a loss, I sat down with pen and paper the day that I heard and put my thoughts and memories into this tribute to her.

*Remembering a Friend* is not meant to be a mournful composition, but a celebration of a wonderful life. In it you will hear references to Detroit and Nashville, two places in which she spent much of her life. It was premiered in Nashville, Tennessee in February of 1998 by David Angell at a memorial service celebrating the life of Kathy.

— Terry Vosbein

## Three Fantastic Dances

Dmitri Shostakovich

Shostakovich broke upon the international music scene at the age of 19 with his *First Symphony* in 1926, and every one of his subsequent symphonies was eagerly awaited and received. Educated at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, he was a virtuoso pianist as well as being the most promising Soviet composer after Prokofiev. The *Three Fantastic Dances* were written at the age of 13, and the way in which the Russian public received such new works can best be illuminated by the writings of Yuri Tyulin, who was a professor during Shostakovich's student years: "Our attention was focused on the young Shostakovich, for all were delighted by the sure mastery of his striking and individual fantastic dances."

## Sonate for Violin and Piano No. 1 in F minor, op. 80

Serge Prokofiev

Prokofiev was educated at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, and along with being possibly the most talented composer of his generation, he was also a formidable piano virtuoso, tearing through the most fiendish difficulties with the utmost ease. The *F minor Violin Sonata* was completed in 1946 and is probably the darkest work of the composer's entire output. At the same time, it is also a piece full of soaring melodies and moments of blissful transcendence. As Prokofiev stated in a letter, "I have never questioned the importance of melody. I love melody, and I regard it as the most important element in music. I have worked on the improvement of its quality in my compositions for many years. To find a melody instantly understandable even to the uninitiated listener, and at the same time an original one, is the most difficult task for a composer."

## TEXT FOR POEMS

### *A dream within a dream*

by Edgar Allan Poe

Take this kiss upon the brow!  
And, in parting from you now,  
This much let me avow:  
You are not wrong, who deem  
That my days have been a dream;  
Yet if hope has flown away  
In a night, or in a day,  
In a vision, or in none,  
Is it therefore the less gone?  
All that we see or seem  
Is but a dream within a dream.

I stand amid the roar  
Of a surf-tormented shore,  
And I hold within my hand  
Grains of the golden sand—  
How few! Yet how they creep  
Through my fingers to the deep,  
While I weep—while I weep!  
O God! Can I not grasp  
Them with a tighter clasp?  
O God! Can I not save  
One from the pitiless wave?  
Is all that we see or seem  
But a dream within a dream?

### *Hope is the thing with feathers*

by Emily Dickinson

Hope is the thing with feathers  
That perches in the soul  
And sings the tunes without the words  
And never stops at all.

And sweetest in the Gale is heard;  
And sore must be the storm  
That could abash the little Bird  
That kept so many warm.

I've heard it in the chillest land  
And on the strangest Sea,  
Yet, never, in Extremity  
It asked a crumb of Me.



"Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!  
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!  
Beware the Jjubub bird, and shun  
The frumious Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand;  
Long time the manxome foe he sought—  
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,  
And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,  
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,  
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,  
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and through  
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!  
He left it dead, and with its head  
He went galumphing back.

"And has thou slain the Jabberwock?  
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!  
O frabjous day! Callooh, Callay!"  
He chortled in his joy.

"Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.

*And death shall have no dominion*

by Dylan Thomas

And death shall have no dominion.  
Dead men naked they shall be one  
With the man in the wind and the west moon;  
When their bones are picked clean and the clean bones gone,  
They shall have starts at elbow and foot;  
Though they go mad they shall be sane,  
Though they sink through the sea they shall rise again;  
Though lovers be lost love shall not;  
And death shall have no dominion.

And death shall have no dominion.  
Under the windings of the sea  
They lying long shall not die windily;  
Twisting on racks when sinews give way,  
Strapped to a wheel, yet they shall not break;  
Faith in their hands shall snap in two,  
And the unicorn evils run them through;  
Split all ends up they shan't crack;  
And death shall have no dominion.

And death shall have no dominion.  
No more may gulls cry at their ears  
Or waves break loud on the seashores;  
Where blew a flower may a flower no more  
Lift its head to the blows of the rain;  
Though they be mad and dead as nails,  
Heads of the characters hammer through daisies;  
Break in the sun till the sun breaks down,  
And death shall have no dominion.

Oh, silver tree!  
Oh, shining rivers of the soul!

In a Harlem cabaret  
Six long-headed jazzers play.  
A dancing girl whose eyes are bold  
Lifts high a dress of silken gold.

Oh, singing tree!  
Oh, shining rivers of the soul!

Were Eve's eyes  
In the first garden  
Just a bit too bold?  
Was Cleopatra gorgeous  
In a gown of gold?

Oh, shining tree!  
Oh, rivers of the soul!

In a whirling cabaret  
Six long-headed jazzers play.

*Credo*

by Edwin Arlington Robinson

I cannot find my way: there is no star  
In all the shrouded heavens anywhere;  
And there is not a whisper in the air  
Of any living voice but one so far  
That I can hear it only as a bar  
Of lost imperial music, played when fair  
And angel fingers wove, and unaware,  
Dead leaves to garlands where no roses are.

No, there is not a glimmer, nor a call,  
For one that welcomes, welcomes when he fears,  
The black and awful chaos of the night;  
For through it all—above, beyond it all—  
I know the far-sent message of the years,  
I feel the coming glory of the light.

## 1997-98 SONOKLECT Schedule

4 October  
*The Core Ensemble*

6 December  
*The Tommy Flanagan Trio*

24 January  
*Christopher Taylor*  
Pianist

21 March  
*A Vocal Festival*  
Scott Williamson, director

8 May  
*Bassam Nashawati*  
Violinist