

# SONOKLECT

A Festival of Modern Music

Terry Vosbein, director

## The Columbia Trio

Saturday

1 November 2008

8PM

WILSON HALL

WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY  
Department of Music

# PROGRAM

**Trio No. 1** (1993)

Terry Vosbein (b. 1957)

**Piano Trio in E minor**, op. 67 (1944) Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

*Andante*  
*Allegro non troppo*  
*Largo*  
*Allegretto*

## INTERMISSION

**Trio No. 2** (1995)

Terry Vosbein

*Allegro*  
*Adagio*  
*Scherzo*

**Cuatro estaciones porteñas**

Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992)

*Primavera Porteña* (Spring)  
*Verano Porteño* (Summer)  
*Otoño Porteño* (Autumn)  
*Invierno Porteño* (Winter)

*This concert is dedicated to composer Donald Erb.  
He was a friend of SonoKlect and will be greatly missed.*



Donald Erb  
1927-2008



## PROGRAM NOTES

### **Vosbein Trio No. 1**

Having written a cello sonata for Jesus Morales and David Riley in 1993, it was natural for Vosbein to want to compose a trio for them when Jasper Wood was added to the ensemble. Trio No. 1 was premiered in Idaho, at Gunther Schuller's Sandpoint Festival in 1995. It is dedicated *Los Tres Musicos*, the trio of Wood, Morales and Riley, who have performed it on numerous occasions throughout the United States.

The trio is written in one continuous movement. It begins with a soft trill in the piano, which becomes a major recurring element as the work unfolds. A more rhythmic idea is soon introduced, setting up the contrapuntal texture that pervades the composition. The first section climaxes in angst-ridden cacophony before giving way to a delicate violin and cello duo. A set of variations begin, forming the central section of the work. And the contrapuntal jousting returns bringing the work to a close with a flurry of trills, tremolos and a final burst of notes.

### **Shostakovich Piano Trio in E Minor, Opus 67**

Certainly one of the most popular pieces of chamber music ever written, the E minor piano trio of Dmitri Shostakovich is a work of great emotional power. The first movement engages in violent mood swings, from opening despair to an almost athletic joy to pure fury. Shostakovich brings the latter two into even sharper opposition in the following Scherzo. The triple-time rhythm pounds relentlessly. The scherzo trio, which normally brings some kind of rhetorical relief, dances just as manically. To that extent, the movement might almost be described as a scherzo without trio.

The slow third movement is a chaconne. Like Brahms in the Fourth Symphony finale, Shostakovich uses a sequence of chords as the background to a set of variations. His basic harmonic progression moves

from Bb-minor to B minor – a feat in itself – in a way that really doesn't allow a listener to get his bearings. When the composer adds melody lines, however, the progression begins to make more sense. This runs counter to the composer's usual symphonic practice, where "recitative" melody makes little sense without its harmonic underpinnings. The movement doesn't rise to the passion of its counterpart in the quintet, and consequently serves as a kind of bitter relief

In the finale, the trio becomes a klezmer band, in an idiom that owes much to Prokofiev's Quintet. Themes from earlier movements reappear, transformed in the fun-house mirror of Shostakovich's klezmer. The movement becomes progressively angrier, until the opening theme of the entire work breaks the tension in an imitative passage for all instruments. The klezmer begins again until it hits one last surprise: the chords of the chaconne, against which the strings eventually are reduced to the strumming of mandolins and guitars. Given the original context of those chords, the work should end in a blank of despair, but the effect really comes off as more of a resolution of grief.

## **Vosbein Trio No. 2**

When *Los Tres Musicos*, whose name was borrowed from the Picasso painting, was selected for a residency at the Banff Centre in Alberta, Canada, they asked Vosbein to compose a second trio for them. Amidst the hecticness of a busy teaching schedule he managed to complete the score and have it in the trio's hands just in time for rehearsals to begin. Having not yet heard the work, he camped his way across the Trans Canada Highway, arriving at Banff the day before the premiere.

The first movement is a rondo. The adagio second movement is a fugue of sorts, with the strings providing the counterpoint while the piano makes rhapsodic interjections. All three instruments are swept into the rhapsody before concluding in a fugal manner. The final movement, a scherzo, is based entirely on the two melodies heard simultaneously in the first few measures.

As is often his custom, Vosbein spoke briefly to the audience prior to the premiere. Among his extemporaneous remarks, he said "In music appreciation classes they often tell us that music is divided into what is called programmatic music, music that tells a story, such as 'Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun' or 'The Rite of Spring,' and absolute music, music with titles such as 'Symphony No. 1' or 'Divertimento.' They usually tell you that this is music that does not have a story. Well, what I have to tell you is that my Piano Trio No. 2 is what *they* would call absolute music; but I don't think it means that it is without a story. I think it means that you can create your own story as you hear it."

## Piazzolla: Cuatro estaciones porteñas

The Four Seasons are some of Astor Piazzolla's best-known *tango nuevo* (new tango) compositions. They derive from one of his most fertile and creative periods, during which he advanced the venerable Argentine dance/popular music form into new territory.

By the time he wrote this work, Piazzolla must have realized that he was in the position of the proverbial prophet without honor in his own country. He had returned to Buenos Aires in July 1960 after a disappointing attempt in the United States to create what he then called "tango-jazz." His spirit was, however, far from broken, but he was personally disappointed that just the type of revolution he was seeking in tango had been accepted in Brazil when that country's national dance, the samba, evolved into a new form called either jazz-samba or *bossa nova*, ("new thing").

At home, however, Piazzolla's efforts ran into walls of controversy. He and a leading exponent of classic tango, the dancer Jorge Vidal (whose style Piazzolla detested and called "archaic"), actually came to blows in the studios of Argentina's Channel 7. Sometimes taxi drivers would refuse to transport him, accusing him of having "destroyed the tango." He enjoyed some success among certain segments of the public and was encouraged when RCA Victor, CBS, and Philips Records all issued LPs or 45 rpm EPs of his music. This raised interest abroad in Piazzolla's music. Argentine president Arturo Illia responded to requests to include Piazzolla on cultural exchanges by backing a tour to Brazil and the United States.

Before Piazzolla left on the trip, he had a commitment on the table: a set of four compositions for a play called *Melenita de Oro*, by Alberto Rodriguez Muñoz. One of the pieces was *Verano porteño*. The word "Porteño" is an adjectival nickname pertaining to Buenos Aires, so the title is an informal way to say "Buenos Aires Summer." Newspapers found the music "original and agreeable." Piazzolla over time wrote three other pieces with similar titles for spring, winter, and autumn, and later assembled the four into a suite called "Buenos Aires Seasons." As a sort of exotic modern counterpart to the Four Seasons violin concertos of Vivaldi, these have enjoyed particular popularity among Piazzolla's large corpus of tangos, even though they were not initially conceived as a set. Either separately or as part of this suite, the very pretty, lightly swaying tango *Verano porteño* became one of Piazzolla's most beloved works. Often heard in a version for guitar solo, it has also been arranged for the small instrumental combinations in which the composer's music is typically heard.



The **Columbia Piano Trio**, founded in 2007, brings together three versatile musicians with rich solo, orchestral and chamber music backgrounds. All trained at the Eastman School of Music, the Columbia Piano Trio emerges as a new, premiere ensemble based in Eugene, Oregon.

Pianist **David Riley** has received rave reviews throughout the U.S. and Canada, including “Absolutely exquisite technique” (New York Concert Review), “A soloist’s dream, star quality, gifted and sensitive” (Billings Gazette). He has extensive experience as a professional recitalist, frequently performing at many of North America’s most prestigious venues such as the National Art Gallery in Washington D.C., Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall, Merkin Hall with the New York Philharmonic Chamber Players, the Dame Myra Hess Series in Chicago, the Gardner Museum in Boston, the Phillips Collection in Washington D.C., the 92nd St. Y in New York City, Bellas Artes in San Juan P.R., the Ottawa Chamber Music Festival, and Salle de Concert Pollack in Montreal, among others.

Mr. Riley has been featured on dozens of radio broadcasts throughout North America, including NPR Performance Today & Morning Edition, CBC National Radio, and WQXR and WNYC in New York City. Along with violinist Jasper Wood, he received the 2004 East Coast Music Award “Best Classical Recording” for a CD of works for violin and piano of Igor Stravinsky. Reviewers have stated, “A beautiful recording of lush and nimble Stravinsky, a first-class product and a strong recommendation.” (Gramophone); “Absolutely exquisite accounts of these works” (Ottawa Citizen); “This one gets the full five stars” (CBC Sound Advice). Other violinists with whom Mr. Riley has concertized include Juyoung Baek, Jennifer Frautschi, Ilya Gringolts, Phillippe Quint, and Giora Schmidt, along with cellists Denise Djokic and Jesus Morales, and clarinetists Alex Fiterstein and Ricardo Morales.



David Riley is Assistant Professor and Director of Accompanying and Chamber Music at the University of Oregon, where he joined the music faculty in 2004. He holds degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music and the Eastman School of Music, where he studied with Dr. Jean Barr.

Violinist **Fritz Gearhart** has performed for audiences from coast to coast. October 2003 marked his sixth appearance in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie since 1998. Several compact discs featuring Gearhart have been released in the last few years to rave reviews. A sampling from the press: "a sizzling performance" (The Wall Street Journal), "supple and imaginative" (The New York Times), "a superlative evening of music making" (New York Concert Review), "Gearhart is a bold assertive player" (Strad), and "a magnificent young violinist" (American Record Guide). Mr. Gearhart has been heard frequently on National Public Radio including several live broadcast performances. He has also been featured on the nationally syndicated program Performance Today.

First violinist of the Chester String Quartet in the early 90's, Gearhart continues to be very active in chamber music and now performs regularly with the Oregon String Quartet, which was a featured performer at the 1999 Oregon Bach Festival. In January 2001 Gearhart appeared as soloist with the Oregon Festival of American Music performing Bernstein's Serenade, and in 2004 he performed Corigliano's Red Violin Chaconne to a sold out audience of over 2000: "Gearhart gave a stunning performance. His warm tone sang out above the orchestra...the technical challenges of the piece did not faze him in the least" (Eugene Register-Guard). Gearhart received his Master's Degree and Performer's Certificate from the Eastman School of Music where he studied with Donald Weilerstein. Earlier studies at the Hartt School included work with Charles Treger and members of the Emerson Quartet. Mr. Gearhart is currently on the faculty of the University of Oregon School of Music.

Cellist **Andrew Kolb** has performed as a soloist and chamber musician throughout the United States as well as in Canada, England, Switzerland and Sweden. For six years he was a member of the Fairmount String Quartet and principal cellist of the Wichita Symphony Orchestra. Committed to new music, Andrew has premiered several works as a member of *Acidophilus (live culture)*, a new music sextet made up of young American and Scandinavian musicians. They have toured Sweden and gave their U.S. debut at the Scandinavian House in New York City. He has also premiered works in New York City as a member of the Stony Brook Chamber Players.

Andrew studied with Timothy Eddy at SUNY Stony Brook, Ross Harbaugh at University of Miami and Steven Doane at the Eastman School of Music. He has taught on university faculties in Newfoundland (Canada) and Kansas. Summer festival appearances include Taos, Norfolk, Spoleto, Sarasota, Bach Aria, Fontana, Coos Bay, Cascade, Oregon Bach Festival, Ernen and Prussia Cove. He is currently principal cellist of the Eugene Symphony Orchestra.

# 2008-2009 Schedule

## **THE COLUMBIA TRIO**

Saturday, 1 November 2008, 8PM

## **PROGRESSIVE JAZZ 2009**

### **THE KNOXVILLE JAZZ ORCHESTRA**

Saturday, 24 January 2009, 8PM

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