



Dolce Suono Ensemble

Mimi Stillman, Artistic Director

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Program Notes

My Dolce Suono Ensemble and I are delighted to be presenting the first of two concerts in our project “Samuel Barber at 100: The Composer and His World” at the Curtis Institute of Music. Most of us are Curtis alumni, and consider Curtis our musical home. We are honored to be part of Curtis’s vibrant tradition of music-making, so it is especially meaningful that we are here today to pay homage to one of Curtis’s most distinguished alumni, Samuel Barber, who is also one of the most important American composers of the 20th century. This program emphasizes music for winds and mixed ensemble, and highlights two important works by Barber, his *Summer Music* wind quintet and the *Capricorn Concerto*. Four generations of Curtis composers are represented on this program, which is intended to bring out the interesting stylistic parallels and contrasts among them.

Our appreciation to the Curtis Institute of Music for co-presenting this concert with the Dolce Suono Chamber Music Concert Series. Special thanks to President Roberto Díaz, Dean John Mangan, former Dean Robert Fitzpatrick, Vice President for Communications Melinda Whiting, Professor of Composition David Ludwig, Registrar Paul Bryan, Public Relations Manager Jennifer Kallend, and Program Coordinator Theo Smith for their support and efforts on this project.

Dolce Suono’s “Samuel Barber at 100: The Composer and His World” project has been made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts as part of *American Masterpieces: Three Centuries of Artistic Genius*. Join us Wednesday, February 17 for the second part of the project, concert (7:30pm) and panel discussion (6:00pm) at First Unitarian Church, 2125 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia featuring the Dolce Suono Ensemble, baritone Randall Scarlata, special guest pianist and speaker Charles Wadsworth, and the premiere of a new work by Benjamin C.S. Boyle.

Samuel Barber’s *Summer Music* is one of the most important works in the wind quintet repertoire. He composed it in 1955 as a commission from the Chamber Music Society of Detroit, but the piece was born through Barber’s collaboration with the New York Woodwind Quintet. He sat in on their rehearsals, and each of the players made charts for Barber analyzing the range and tone colors of their instruments. When the quintet read through the finished piece, flutist Samuel Baron described his ensemble’s delight: “what a wonderful new quintet conception. Barber has studied our charts and has written some of our favorite effects. The piece is very hard, but so far it sounds just beautiful to us.” The writing challenges wind players to create seamless blends of sound as recurring motifs are passed throughout the group. The one movement work progresses through a range of moods – indolent, lyrical, agitated, expansive. The technical demands are considerable, yet the character is spontaneous and at times playful.

Samuel Barber completed his *Capricorn Concerto* in September, 1944, while doing military service in World War II. At the time, Barber worked for the Office of War Information assisting with recording sessions for broadcast overseas. Considered a prestigious addition to the position because of his acclaim as a composer, he was given freedom to compose his own music at home

in Mt. Kisco, New York, in the house Mary Curtis Bok had helped him and Gian Carlo Menotti purchase. The composers named the house “Capricorn,” because its location gave them sunshine in the winter. Years later Barber reminisced about his time at the house, “I think I’m a country person. Most everything I’ve composed, I’ve composed in the country, and the pieces I’ve written in the city have generally been started in the country...Like Messiaen, I like birds. And I need the absolute silence of the country. I need places to walk.” The Capricorn Concerto is for the same instrumentation of Bach’s Brandenburg Concerto #2, and shares elements of a Baroque concerto grosso the way the three solo instruments weave in and out of tutti textures. Barber described it as “in a sense decorative, slightly baroque à la Brandenburg Concerto, less romantic,” and indicated his style in the work was different from his other music. Barber wrote that the piece has no set program, “just cheerful noises.” An article appeared in the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin before the work’s Philadelphia premiere in 1947 stating that motifs in the piece represent Capricorn, the house, and its three residents Barber, Menotti, and their friend the poet Robert Horan, each person linked to material in the flute, oboe, and trumpet parts respectively. It is not clear whether Barber intended these motivic links. The Capricorn Concerto is a spirited work which engages the solo instruments in playful dialogue. There is rhythmic complexity in the constantly changing meters, and sonic freshness in the colors created by the unusual combination of flute, oboe, and trumpet.

Ned Rorem, *Trio for Flute, Violoncello and Piano*

Pulitzer Prize-winner Ned Rorem, whose compositions include nearly 400 songs, three symphonies, and six operas, told me about his conception that “song is the basis for all music. Flute music is song with the voice removed, with the flute as the voice.” He began studies at the Curtis Institute of Music in 1942, and he served on faculty at Curtis since 1980. Rorem’s *Trio for Flute, Violoncello and Piano* (1960) is a staple of the ensemble’s repertoire. It is technically virtuosic, with bravura playing for all three instruments in the outer movements. The two inner movements are contrasting mood pieces. In the Largo, Rorem creates a seamless blend of flute and cello in hushed, interwoven phrases that are jaggedly interrupted by crashing piano chords. The contrasting Andante opens with a ruminative cello solo, leading to a gently lyrical movement reminiscent of Rorem’s songs. – *Mimi Stillman*

Jennifer Higdon, *Autumn Music*

When I started thinking about writing a piece for woodwind quintet, my mind began to contemplate all of the wonderful chamber music that I have played as a flutist through the years. My mind kept going back to one of the greatest contributions to the woodwind quintet literature, Samuel Barber’s *Summer Music*. Having the privilege as I do of having been a student and now a teacher at the same school where Mr. Barber was both, I am ever aware of the gratitude and esteem with which I hold this artist who created so much beautiful music. It is with a humble heart that I pay homage to him and to the genre of woodwind quintet literature with this piece.

Autumn comes to us in many guises: incredible explosions of color; air that suddenly snaps with crispness and clarity; a tinge of melancholy on the eve of change in all of our lives. This piece is a musical portrait of the essence and images of Autumn.

The first part of the *Autumn Music* (1995) represents the beginning of the season, with its explosions of color, sharp lines, and vivid imagery; always changing and always vibrant. The musical lines are sometimes present with each instrument carrying a different rhythm, reminiscent of the way leaves float down from a tree in a very unsynchronized manner. As the quintet moves into the last part of the work, there is more of an introspective and melancholy quality to the music; the music itself becomes more simplified, with a darker color to the sound. It is the passing of the season. – *Jennifer Higdon*

David Ludwig, *Haiku Catharsis*

Haiku Catharsis was written in the summer of 2004. The commission came from the American Composers Forum to write a new work for eighth blackbird. I don't think composers often start with a title, but that's exactly what I did here. I liked the inherent conflict of the words "Haiku," and "Catharsis," since haikus are all about quiet revelations and a catharsis suggests the opposite. The use of the haiku form runs throughout the piece as a thread: each short movement is inspired by its own poem, and all of the music finds different ways to group into sets of five, seven, and five—as goes the syllabic structure of traditional haiku. Each poem I chose represents a season. Haikus describe the objective details of revelation on the surface, but they speak to the deeply profound and emotional catharsis underneath. This is what I wanted to capture in creating the music.

Haiku Catharsis was commissioned by the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Composers Forum and the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts for eighth blackbird, with funds provided by the William Penn Foundation. – *David Ludwig*

These are the poems that inspired the four movements of *Haiku Catharsis*:

I. Night; and once again,
The while I wait for you, cold wind
Turns to rain. - Masaoka Shiki

II. Covered with flowers,
Instantly I'd like to die
In this dream of ours! – Etsujin

III. Late cicadas-
How much longing
In their song. – Soseki

IV. Sounds of a temple bell
Reverberate in a circle:
A long night. - Shiki

About Dolce Suono

Dolce Suono Chamber Music Concert Series has been dazzling audiences and invigorating the music world through dynamic chamber music performances by a core of artists, the Dolce Suono Ensemble, innovative programming, the commissioning and performance of important contributions to the chamber music repertoire, and the engagement of diverse communities through educational and outreach events. Founded in 2005 by flutist Mimi Stillman, Dolce Suono presents chamber music concerts on its home series at Philadelphia's historic First Unitarian Church, has touring engagements throughout the region, and forms educational outreach partnerships with Philadelphia public schools. The artists of the Dolce Suono Ensemble are drawn from Philadelphia's premier musical institutions - Curtis Institute of Music, The Philadelphia Orchestra, Temple University, and University of Pennsylvania. The artists have enjoyed long-standing, fruitful collaborations, many stretching back to their student days at Curtis.

Dolce Suono's programming encompasses Baroque to new music, and world music including Latin and Asian. Its active commissioning program has led to 14 world premieres in 5 seasons. Dolce Suono has built a large and loyal following, and garnered extensive media praise in print,

radio, and TV. Dolce Suono's educational outreach partnerships have reached over 1,500 Philadelphia public school students since 2005.

“Beautiful texturing...a stunning ensemble” – *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

“Think classical music is stuffy and inaccessible? Think again.” – *The Bulletin*

This 2009-2010 season, Dolce Suono presents 9 concerts - 4 concerts at its home venue, the historic First Unitarian Church in Philadelphia, and 5 concerts in collaboration with other organizations who are presenting and co-presenting Dolce Suono ensembles, including Curtis, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Swarthmore College, Philadelphia Museum of Art, and Moore College of Art. www.dolcesuono.com

Charles Abramovic, a Curtis Institute of Music graduate, is widely acclaimed for his international performances as soloist, chamber musician, and collaborator with leading musicians. As a recitalist he has performed throughout the United States and Europe. He is a distinguished composer as well as interpreter of new music and Professor at Temple University. A founding member of the Dolce Suono Trio with Mimi Stillman, flute and Yumi Kendall, cello, he was jointly commissioned by Dolce Suono and Philadelphia Chamber Music Society to write a new trio for the ensemble to premiere on the PCMS series on January 31, 2010.

Clarinetist **Samuel Caviezel** joined The Philadelphia Orchestra in the fall of 1998, under the baton of Wolfgang Sawallisch, after having served as principal clarinet of the Grand Rapids Symphony for two years. He is a celebrated chamber musician, and teaches privately and at Temple University. He is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, where he studied with then-Philadelphia Orchestra Associate Principal Clarinetist Donald Montanaro.

Geoffrey Deemer has served as Principal Oboe of the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia since 2002. He has performed with The Philadelphia Orchestra and the Baltimore Symphony. He graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music, where he studied with Richard Woodhams, Principal Oboe of the Philadelphia Orchestra. He has soloed with the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, at the Verbier Festival, and has recorded for Naxos. He is on faculty at the Pennsylvania Academy of Music and Franklin & Marshall College.

Paul R. Demers was appointed bass clarinet of The Philadelphia Orchestra by Christoph Eschenbach in 2006. Before his appointment, Mr. Demers performed as bass clarinetist with major orchestras, including the National Symphony and the Baltimore Symphony, and was a member of "The President's Own" Marine Band in Washington, D.C. He is featured in the Orchestra's Music from the Inside Out film. He has performed at the Saratoga Chamber Music Festival, Kingston Chamber Music Festival, and is a member of Philadelphia's Network for New Music. He graduated from DePaul University in Chicago, and is on faculty at Temple University.

Gabe Globus-Hoenich is one of Philadelphia's most promising young percussionists. As an orchestral percussionist, he has appeared at Carnegie Hall, Boston's Symphony Hall, and Shostakovich Hall in St. Petersburg. He has performed new music with Chamber Music Now! Ensemble, Ensemble No-Amnesia, with members of the Grammy-winning ensemble eighth blackbird, and as co-leader of A.I.R., a collaborative percussion quartet of fellow Curtis Institute of Music graduates, which won the 2008 Percussive Arts Society Percussion Ensemble Competition. He performs with leading jazz, improvisation, and world musicians.

Cellist **Yumi Kendall** is assistant principal cello of The Philadelphia Orchestra. She is a member of the Dryden String Quartet and has performed chamber music at Music from Angel Fire,

Verbier Festival, Marlboro Festival, Taos School of Music, and Carnegie Hall's Emerson String Quartet Workshop. She is a Curtis graduate. A founding member of the Dolce Suono Trio with Mimi Stillman, flute and Charles Abramovic, piano, the ensemble's 2010 engagements include the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Bard College, and Market Square Concerts.

Double bass player **Rob Kesselman**, a native Philadelphian, is a graduate of Temple University and the Curtis Institute of Music. In 1980 he won a section bass position with the Pittsburgh Symphony, where he remained until 1987, when he joined The Philadelphia Orchestra. He is active as soloist, chamber musician, and teacher. He was formerly on the faculty of the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore and currently teaches at Temple University.

Mu Na is a first violinist in the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia and Opera Company of Philadelphia. A prodigy in her native China, she performed throughout Asia at age 10. She graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music, where she studied with Aaron Rosand. She was a prize winner at the Yehudi Menuhin Competition. She has performed as soloist with the Beijing Radio Symphony, Central Symphony Orchestra, and Manchester Philharmonic, and chamber music at the Marlboro Music Festival.

Hirono Oka is a member of the first violin section of The Philadelphia Orchestra. Since making her debut in her native Japan with the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra at age 11, she has appeared as soloist with orchestras including The San Francisco Chamber Ensemble, Concerto Soloists of Philadelphia, and chamber music at the Marlboro Music Festival, The Philadelphia Orchestra Chamber Music Series, Network for New Music, and The Theatre Chamber Players of The Kennedy Center. She is a faculty member at Temple University, and a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music.

Michelle Rosen, Principal Bassoon of The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, graduated from The Curtis Institute of Music, where she was a student of Bernard Garfield. She has performed as soloist with The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, at Carnegie Hall, Spoleto Festival, and Evian Festival. She teaches at the University of Pennsylvania and the Haddonfield School of Performing Arts. She has recorded for Warner Bros. and EMI, with André Previn.

Shelley Showers joined The Philadelphia Orchestra in 1997. She previously performed in the Cleveland Orchestra, Utah Symphony, New Jersey Symphony, and Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. She has performed at the International Horn Symposium, International Women's Brass Conference, Aspen Music Festival, and taught at the Cleveland Institute of Music. A Curtis Institute of Music graduate, her teachers included Mason Jones, Myron Bloom, Nolan Miller, Randy Gardner, and Stephanie Fauber. She serves on the Boards of The Philadelphia Orchestra and Curtis Institute of Music.

Internationally acclaimed flutist **Mimi Stillman** has performed as soloist with The Philadelphia Orchestra, Bach Collegium Stuttgart, Orquesta Sinfónica Carlos Chávez, and at Carnegie Hall, The Kennedy Center, Verbier Festival, and other venues. She is a Yamaha Performing Artist, the winner of numerous awards including Young Concert Artists, and founder and Artistic Director of the Dolce Suono Chamber Music Concert Series. At 12, she was the youngest wind player ever admitted to the Curtis Institute of Music, where she studied with Julius Baker and Jeffrey Khaner. She holds an M.A. in history from the University of Pennsylvania, where she is a Ph.D. candidate, and is a published author on music and history. www.mimistillman.org.

Violist **Burchard Tang** is a member of The Philadelphia Orchestra. An active chamber musician, he has performed at the Marlboro Music Festival, Ravinia, Caramoor, Angel Fire, and at other

venues. He has performed as soloist with The Philadelphia Orchestra and has won the Fischhoff Competition and numerous awards. He is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music.