

Clement Reid, *composer and performer*

Tuesday, April 6, 2021 at 8pm
Lagerquist Concert Hall, Mary Baker Russell Music Center

Pacific Lutheran University
School of Arts and Communication / Department of Music presents

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We look forward to the day when we can safely welcome audiences to Lagerquist Concert Hall.
In the meantime, we are pleased to offer a series of concerts via live stream.
We hope that you enjoy the performance!

PROGRAM

- Spring Ceremony** **Clement Reid (b. 1955)**
- Dance in Bulgarian Rhythm No. 6**.....**Béla Bartók (1881-1945)**
from *Mikrokosmos*
- Northern Lights**..... **Clement Reid**
- Northwest Fanfare** **Clement Reid**
- Film Suite**..... **Clement Reid**
I. Military Absurdist March
II. Film Rag No. 1
III. Villains
IV. Film Rag No. 2

INTERMISSION

- Kinderszenen (Scenes from Childhood), op. 15**..... **Robert Schumann (1810-1846)**
XI. Furchtenmachen (Frightening)
XII. Kind im Einschlumern (Child Falling Asleep)
XIII. Der Dichter Spricht (The Poet Speaks)
- Explorations**..... **Clement Reid**
- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>Part I:</i> | <i>Part II:</i> | <i>Part III:</i> |
| <i>I. Fanfare</i> | <i>VI. Exploration 1 (Kheyal)</i> | <i>XI. African Ceremony</i> |
| <i>II. Sunrise</i> | <i>VII. Exploration 2</i> | <i>XII. Side Comments 1</i> |
| <i>III. Project</i> | <i>VIII. Improvisation</i> | <i>XIII. Tale</i> |
| <i>IV. Dream 1</i> | <i>IX. Dream 3</i> | <i>XIV. Side Comments 2</i> |
| <i>V. Dream 2</i> | <i>X. Dream 4</i> | <i>XV. Plains</i> |

Program Notes

The music featured on this program combines some favorite short pieces by Robert Schumann and Béla Bartók with my own music. I've been interested in writing solo works that share musical threads from works for larger groups. The solo pieces tend to crystallize some of the basic musical ideas from music for larger ensembles.

Walter Kovshik, friend and collaborator, commissioned me to write *Spring Ceremony* for a program at United Arts of Central Florida in Orlando in 1992, requesting a Robert Schumannesque texture and a hidden quotation of an Irish song. The quotation (*Danny Boy*) is not so hidden, and in addition, another brief quote shows up. An earlier piano duet which Walter and I had performed, *Sons of the Desert* (1976), features the theme from the Laurel and Hardy movies – *The Cuckoos*. A fragment of this theme appears like a brief memory, near the end of *Spring Ceremony*.

Dance in Bulgarian Rhythm No. 6 from Mikrokosmos (1940), the final piece in Béla Bartók's extraordinary six volume set of piano studies, illustrates the dramatic use of asymmetrical rhythms and unique sense of tonality. As a younger composer and ethnomusicologist, along with Zoltán Kodály, he had recorded and notated a great deal of folk music from Hungary and nearby regions, and assimilated the features and styles into his own music, in his orchestral works and to a great extent in his piano and chamber music.

Northern Lights for Orchestra was commissioned by Anthony Spain and the Northwest Symphony Orchestra and premiered April 27th, 2013 at the Highline Performing Arts Center in Burien, WA. This version for piano is altered from the original, but attempts to translate some of the orchestral color by the use of plucked and strummed strings as well as keys. For the orchestral program, *Nordic Nights Concert*, the phenomenon (northern lights) was suggested, so I searched for ways of creating a musical picture with different instrumental combinations. Here, percussion parts are sometimes played on the strings, the pedal becomes important for creating certain sustained sonorities, and durations are sometimes changed. One aleatoric measure in the orchestral version is expanded to two measures in the piano version. A small rapid harp cadenza towards the end suggests a kind of rushing forward, and the piano version modifies this somewhat in dynamics and register, but should convey a similar impression with the different instrumental sound. *Northern Lights for Piano* was first performed in concert at the Seattle Composers Salon on March 7th, 2014, with the composer performing.

Northwest Fanfare was premiered along with other fanfares celebrating the millennium in 2001 by the Tacoma Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Harvey Felder. I've arranged this orchestra piece for piano, and attempted to write music that would be optimistic, hopeful, and celebratory.

Film Suite was created to accompany a film entitled *The 480 Experience*, which was itself a documentary about the making of a movie. *Film Suite*'s music depicts the attempt to convert part of Los Angeles into a military state, hence the title of the first movement, *Military Absurdist March*. *Film Rag No. 's 1 and 2* were featured as music to accompany the movie's credits. Movement III, *Villains*, depicts a failed attempt to break into a city office building, with sounds suggesting guilty tiptoeing away from the scene. *Film Suite* was premiered at the Los Angeles International Film Festival (1979), and played on a variety of recitals and the Seattle Spring Festival of Contemporary Music (1991), and the Polk County Art Museum for a travel convention in Florida (2005).

Kinderszenen is a collection of thirteen piano pieces in which Schumann captures the images of childhood, written in a way that one can identify with and understand as having a young person's sensibility. "Child Falling Asleep," for example, has a peaceful serene quality, and ends quietly, fading away, creating the universal image of an adult watching over a child at night or naptime! Other pieces in the collection feature topics that would be of interest to young people, such as "Pleading Child," "At the Fireside," and "Knight of the Hobbyhorse."

Explorations for Piano is comprised of three sections, with *Part I* employing contemporary styles and techniques, such as serialism and extended piano usage – playing inside on the strings. *Part II* features Indian rhythms and melodies, including the incorporation of ragas, and textures which gives the impression of improvisation. *Part III* references African musical textures, utilizing asymmetrical rhythms (3+2+3/8, 5/8, 7/8) and modified pentatonic harmonies. Listening to older Folkways Recordings of African Music, and studying the writing of Bonnie C. Wade opened up these interesting worlds of music to me.

The sections are structured similarly, where each one consists of five movements and the first and fifth are palindromes of each other. The fifth movement is a modified retrograde of *Movement I*. The second and fourth movements have the same relationship, with *Movement IV* a retrograde of *Movement II*, and *Movement III* serving as a kind of centerpiece. The individual movements in this retrograde relationship tend to be contrasting in pacing and style from one another, though structurally related. *Movement XI. African Ceremony* has a gradually moving forward feeling and lilt, but in *Movement XV. Plains*, after a short quiet introduction, the pace charges along to the end.

Sections of the piece, *Dreams*, *Improvisations* and *Three Stories*, have been performed at the Seattle Composers Salon, on a variety of recitals, and with the Pacific Northwest Chamber Ensemble (2014-2019).

The following descriptions should give the flavor and feeling of each piece, as well as approaches for listening or performing:

Part I.

I. Fanfare projects a sense of exhilaration, with steady continuous runs, sudden dynamic changes, and strong attacks, contrasting with flowing, syncopated parts. Sometimes the pedal is vital for sustaining sonorities, at other times it should be skipped!

II. Sunrise. The steady rising and syncopated motive suggested the title, and it was inspired by early morning drives, when I took my daughter to school! On p. 6, third system, a rhythmically compressed version of the beginning motive leads the music to a continuous pattern of sixteenths, which goes until the end. In counterpoint to this, the rising bass melody (also a reiteration of the beginning motive) fills in the texture, with strong, almost trombone or horn-like prominent attacks. The movement ends with a very wispy chord, like a train that has approached and is now leaving and fading far away.

III. Project inhabits the murky area where abstract sounds (plucked and strummed notes inside the instrument) transform into functional and impressionistically used triads. Patterns plucked on the strings are also imitated with a ghostly texture on the keys. The other predominant sound features are long strings of triads descending or ascending by fourths.

IV. Dream 1 is the first movement in *Explorations* to use as its overall structure the altered retrograde of another movement, in this case *Movement II. Sunrise*. Despite the similarity of notes, *Dream 1* gives a different impression, a suspended-in-time feeling, with phrases moving rhythmically, but also with a sense of being unmoored, or floating freely.

V. Dream 2 is similarly modeled after another movement, *I. Fanfare*, but also projects a contrasting musical feeling, especially with the high shimmering random material near the beginning, the syncopated thirds, and full, overlapping sounds at the end. Dynamics need to be observed, especially with the shimmering patterns in measures 4-6, giving the idea of a distant rain storm, cloud or wind gaining momentum and coming closer and closer!

Part II.

VI. Exploration 1. (Kheyal). Listening to live recordings of Ravi Shankar, *A Panorama of Indian Music*, and reading Bonnie C. Wade's *Music in India (The Classical Traditions)*, and *The Ragas of Early Indian Music: Modes, Melodies, and Musical Notations from the Gupta Period to c. 1250* by Richard Widdess, I was drawn to applying this approach and aesthetic to piano music, and wanted to incorporate it into the piece, to see what would happen! Mixing certain Indian ragas and the suggestion of drones and tabla rhythms with the piano creates an effect that combines two traditions, but seems somewhat different from either of them. *Exploration 1 (Kheyal)* starts softly, and with each reiteration of the raga material, grows until a reflective coda concludes the piece with strumming on the strings in combination with a distant sounding melody on the keys.

VII. Exploration II continues with the same material as *Movement VI*, but has a more active, continuous driving rhythm, underlying the raga. The E-A modified ostinato pattern creates a drone-like feeling, but modulates up to F-Bb as the piece builds to a high point with the suggestion of improvisation. This too concludes with a soft, lyrical contemplative section that features keys, as well as strummed and plucked strings.

VIII. Improvisation carries the free-form improvisatory idea further, starting quietly, and building to rapid right-hand septuplets, while the left hand "B" drone continues through to the ending. I was inspired by the building, exciting dramatic improvisations of Ravi Shankar.

IX. Dream 3 These next two pieces, concluding *Part II*, give a calm, very distant, reflective feeling, where the inside piano sounds introduce or frame melodies or melodic fragments on the keys. Because *IX. Dream 3* is structured from the retrograde of *Movement VII. Explorations 2*, it feels somewhat like a faraway recollection, an experience that would be tumultuous, remembered in tranquility.

X. Dream 4 continues the feeling of tranquility, but incorporates even more plucked and strummed material. While the piece is based on Indian ragas, a short but emphasized snippet near the beginning sounds like part of a slow blues melody, expanding and coloring the chromatic raga-like music.

Part III.

XI. African Ceremony. Listening to the Folkways recording of *Central and West African Music (1957)*, compiled with field recordings by ethnomusicologist Laurie C. Bolton, I noticed that rhythms are structured with asymmetrical groupings (3+3+2,

for example) and layers of rhythm that build up and interact in a lively way. This piece is structured around a three-measure pattern (measures 1-3) that alternates with a two measure one in 7/8 (measures 5-6). The varied repetition seemed as if it could take place within a formal ceremony, as music is frequently incorporated into public occasions. Towards the end, the “ceremony” dissolves, with rapid tremolos and an altered pentatonic chord.

XII. Side Comments 1 is a portrayal or programmatic setting of what I thought of as two individuals making remarks to one another, perhaps watching a public event, and criticizing the pageantry as it happens, or commenting as a parade passes before them. Each hand personifies one of the commentators. Much of the sound is pentatonic, but towards the end, a chromatic passage adds a touch of the absurd, or suggests a humorous event, as if another individual had heard, confronting and rebuking the reviewing commentators!

XIII. Tale. One of the characteristics of traditional African music is its juxtaposition of continuous rhythmic patterns, often played by several drums, with free or contrasting rhythmic singing above the percussion. *Tale* has a repeating four measure ostinato, over which are added different melodies that break out of the pentatonic harmony. The right hand really tells the “Tale,” and should be expressive and energetic, exaggerating the dynamics.

XIV. Side Comments 2. Here the “commentators” from *Movement XII* are more agitated. Each gesture is a kind of excited or indignant utterance, and the ranges are wider, with more chromatic additions. Moments of calm and serenity are pushed aside by sharp attacks which begin and end the episode!

XV. Plains is meant to portray Africa’s open spaces, and features the asymmetrical rhythmic patterns of *Movement XI. African Ceremony*, but with more impetus and energy. Contrast of pedaled sections with staccato ones, and varied dynamics should dramatize the different passages. The piece grows more energetic towards the end, and concludes with a fleeting motive that first appeared in *African Ceremony*, but now becomes a free rising fanfare-like melody.

– Clement Reid

About the Composer and Performer

Clement Reid has written orchestral, wind ensemble, choral, vocal, and chamber music as well as educational books for guitar, piano, and composition. Born in New York City (1955), he is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music, and the University of Southern California, studying composition with Allen Brings, Joseph Schwantner, Samuel Adler, Warren Benson, Earle Brown, Frederick Lesemann, and Leonard Rosenman. His music has been featured on radio broadcasts, festivals, and concerts in the United States, Europe, Canada, and China. The *Seattle Times* described one of his pieces on the Seattle Spring Festival of Contemporary Music as, “Thoughtful, lyrical.” His music is published by Classical Vocal Reprints, CNY Publishers, Jellynote (Paris, France), and Subito Publications. He served as a panelist for Artist Trust, in Seattle, and has taught and presented lectures for St. Martin’s University, Stephen F. Austin University, and Pacific Lutheran University (teaching composition since 2002), and the Aspen Composers Conference in 2010. His music has been performed at Juilliard, Steinway Hall (2014), and he was a second-place winner for the American Prize in Instrumental Chamber Music Composition (2019), and has won silver medals from Global Music Awards (2017-2021). In addition, he has won ASCAP awards, grants, commissions, is included in Who’s Who in America, and was chosen as Washington State Commissioned Composer of the Year (1999) by the Music Teachers National Association.