

UB Department of Music presents

Slee Sinfonietta

Magnus Mårtensson, Music Director
David Felder, Artistic Director

Tuesday, April 4, 2006 • 8pm
Lippes Concert Hall in Slee Hall

PROGRAM

Silouan's Song
Arvo Pärt

(b. 1935)

Fratres
Arvo Pärt

<i>Violin I</i>	<i>Sarita Kwok, Concert Mistress</i> <i>Matt Zerweck</i> <i>Emily Vardanyan</i> <i>Tigran Vardanyan</i>
<i>Violin II</i>	<i>Semyon Ziskind, Principal</i> <i>Paul Miller</i> <i>Paul Goodman</i> <i>Vicki Scotto</i>
<i>Viola</i>	<i>Maria Boncaldo, Principal</i> <i>Brian Walnicki</i> <i>Elisa Rega</i> <i>Jeremy Lambert</i>
<i>Cello</i>	<i>Jonathan Golove, Principal</i> <i>Mary Artmann</i> <i>Bennet Walker</i>
<i>Bass</i>	<i>Jeff Weeks</i>
<i>Claves</i>	<i>David Pinchoff</i>

Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen
Gustav Mahler

(1860-1911)
arr. Schoenberg

Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht
Ging heut Morgen übers Feld
Ich hab' ein glühend Messer
Die zwei blauen Augen

Alexander Hurd, baritone

Sarita Kwok, violin I
Semyon Ziskind, violin II
Maria Boncaldo, viola
Mary Artmann, cello
Jeff Weeks, bass
Cheryl Gobbetti Hoffman, flute
Kara Bancks, clarinet
Alison d'Amato, piano
Stephen Manes, harmonium
Dave Pinchoff, percussion



We regret to announce that Gunther Schuller's
A Bouquet for Collage will not be performed this evening.
If another piece is to be substituted, it will be announced
from the stage.



The Slee Sinfonietta Series gratefully acknowledges
financial support from the Cameron Baird Fund,
Robert E. Morris, and Carol L. Morris.

Please join the UB Music Department for a reception,
hosted by Kappa Kappa Psi,
in the lobby of Slee Hall following the concert.

Program Notes

annotated by Marc McAneny

Arvo Pärt's simple, circular melodies and parallel harmony evoke the sounds of ceremonial chant, and much has been written of the qualities of spirit and silence permeating this composer's *oeuvre*. Pärt himself has stated, "If anybody wishes to understand me, they must listen to my music; if anybody wishes to know my 'philosophy', then they can read any of the Church Fathers." Eastern Orthodox Christian philosophy generates his musical approach, creating an almost allegorical idiom in which sound and silence are treated as symbols as much as sonic events.

Silouan's Song pits sound against silence in a seemingly irreconcilable alternation. But their interrelationship is not antithetical, for silence is the veritable source of all sound. Paul Hillier has written of this silence as a musical version of *hesychasm*, the Orthodox mystical prayer of the heart. In these silences reside vestiges of sounds recently heard and now dying; in these silences lies the anticipation of new sound-forms being born. Sound rises from and falls back to the silent source, which is never disturbed or obviated by the presence of sound itself. The title of this piece refers to the Orthodox saint named Silouan, whose teachings were transcribed by Archimandrite Sophrony at the Russian monastery of St. Panteimon on Mount Athos, Estonia. The subtitle, "my soul yearns after the lord . . ." is from the text that inspired this composition, which tonight's orchestration for strings is itself Pärt's ninth revision of this work.

Similarly, between 1977 and 2003 Arvo Pärt has produced at least thirteen versions of his work, *Fratres*. The revision for string orchestra and percussion performed tonight is the sixth of those and is dedicated to fellow Estonian composer, Eduard Tubin. Here, the interruptive percussion motif mediates the peripatetic melodies and the drone of cellos and basses with its monolithic presence. Within this dramatic opposition, a quality of static immobility overtakes these gestures, revealing the eternal background against which human and musical time runs its inexorable course.

When Arnold Schoenberg founded the *Vereinigung Schaffender Tonkünstler* (Society of Creative Musicians) in 1904 "to give modern music a home in Vienna", it was

Gustav Mahler who agreed to serve as honorary president. These composers are often presented as inimical, with the elder Mahler representing a last hurrah for Romanticism while the upstart Schoenberg appears as the torchbearer for a new musical language. However, the professional regard each held for the other is revealed in Mahler's moral and financial support for the younger composer as well as Schoenberg's chamber settings of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* (Song of the Earth) and *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (Songs of a Wayfarer). The Society of Creative Musicians was short-lived, but after World War I Schoenberg spearheaded the *Verein für musikalische Privataufführungen* (Society for Private Musical Performances). This society sought to provide well-rehearsed performances of little-heard works and to provide repeat performances in order to give audiences a chance to better acquaint themselves with these pieces. Instrumental forces were limited, so Schoenberg made pared down versions of works, including the Mahler song cycles.

Songs of a Wayfarer were composed around 1885 and orchestrated between 1891-3 and 1896. The texts are based on the folk poem collection *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (The Youth's Magic Horn), which were a regenerative source of inspiration for Mahler. The songs portray nature as the mirror of a young man's mercurial emotions after having been rejected by his beloved (probably based on Mahler's unhappy relationship with the soprano, Johanna Richter). The images of nature alternately reflect, intensify, and finally heal the wayfarer's emotional wound. Schoenberg's re-orchestration gives us the impression of hearing these familiar songs through a musical prism, as if to reveal the secret inner workings of Mahler's huge score. The crystalline textures provide ample space for the presence of the singer, as if returning these songs to the intimacy of their original setting for voice and piano.

Artist Biographies

Baritone **Alexander Hurd** has appeared throughout the United States and Europe in concert and opera. Recent performances include Bach's *Der Streit zwischen Phoebus und Pan* under the direction of Craig Smith at Tanglewood, a recital of Twentieth-Century Art Song at the University at Buffalo, the world premiere of George Crumb's *A Journey Beyond Time* (in the version for male voice) with Speculum Musicae at New York's Merkin Hall, and the role of

Starveling in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, also at Tanglewood. Mr. Hurd has received numerous prizes and fellowships including the 2005 Joy In Singing Award, 2nd Prize in the 2004 Young Concert Artists International Auditions, 1st Prize in the Vocal Arts Resource Network Song Competition and fellowships to the Aspen Music Festival and the Tanglewood Music Center. In 2003, a CEC International Partners ArtsLink Grant took him to Slovenia to present a series of recitals and lectures on Twentieth-Century American Art Song. A Fulbright Grantee, he studied the Lied repertoire in Stuttgart, Germany.

Magnus Mårtensson, born in 1966, studied piano, voice, conducting and composition at Malmö Musikhögskola and conducting at the Cleveland Institute of Music. Between 1989 and 1992 he was conductor of Opera Semplice in Malmö as well as the Saint Cecilia Oratorio Society of Lund. During this time he also founded and conducted the Malmö Chamber Orchestra in numerous performances. From 1995 to 1996 he served as the conductor of the Contemporary Music Ensemble at the Cleveland Institute of Music. He is the conductor of the Slee Sinfonietta, the professional chamber orchestra in residence at the University at Buffalo, the UB Symphony, and serves additionally as an instructor in conducting and viola performance. Also active as a composer, his numerous commissions have included incidental music for theater plays, chamber music and songs. His latest work, *Before the Law*, a chamber opera in one act with libretto by Henry Sussman after Franz Kafka's *The Trial* was premiered at UB in December of 1997.

The **Slee Sinfonietta** was formed in 1997 by composer David Felder and conductor Magnus Mårtensson. This ensemble, the professional chamber orchestra in residence at UB, performs a series of concerts each year devoted to lesser-known repertoire, particularly that of the pre-classic era and recent contemporary music. Advanced students in performance are invited to participate along with faculty artists, soloists, and regional professionals in the production of these unique concerts designed to contribute new possibilities for concert goers within the University and the Western New York region.