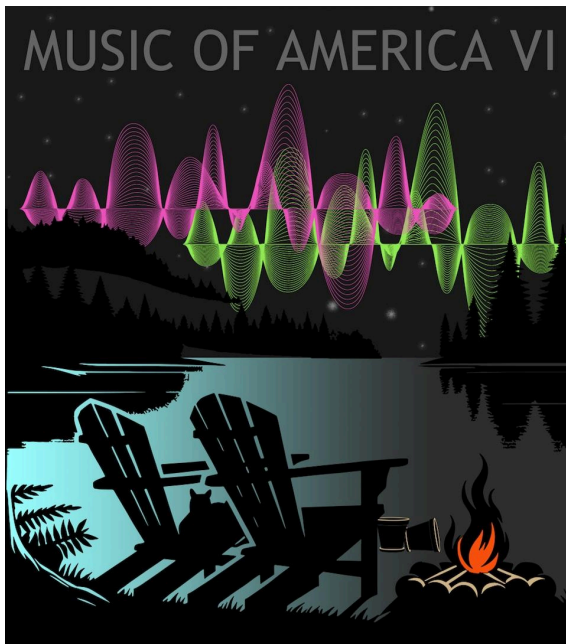


Cleveland Chamber Collective: Music of America VI.

by Mike Telin



On Saturday, August 3 at 7:00 pm at Disciples Christian Church, The Cleveland Chamber Collective will present Music of America VI. The program includes works by Caroline Shaw, Missy Mazzoli, Jessie Montgomery, Michael Oesterle, Trevor Kazarian, and Eric Charnofsky. The concert is free.

During a recent telephone conversation Cleveland Chamber Collective director and conductor Ty Alan Emerson said that the Music of America series has evolved over time.

“When we started out, we were calling it American Icons, which was our way to feature music by composers such as Lou Harrison, George Crumb, and Leonard Bernstein. Then we thought, there’s all this other music being made in America that isn’t getting played. So several years ago we started to look at who else is out there and who are we missing.”

Emerson noted that right now, inclusion is the hot button in classical music, and that for several years the ensemble has been trying to find ways to be more inclusive.

“I sat down with the band and we had an awesome conversation. They came up with so many people I’d never heard of that I felt like Alice in Wonderland. I just looked at the list and thought, holy cow, there’s this great diversity of voices and styles, and it’s going to be great to put programs together.”

Ironically, when Emerson presented the draft of the Music of America VI program to the group, pianist Eric Charnofsky pointed out that he was the only guy on the playlist.

“Since then we’ve added some more men. Now I’m thrilled with the gender parity, and also with the number of composers of color on the program.”

The concert will open with Trevor Kazarian’s *Hope* for cello and loop pedal, which captures a moment in the morning, as the sun started to rise slowly over Lake Erie.

Caroline Shaw’s *Boris S. Kerner* is part of a series of expositions on the curious phrase “the detail of the pattern is movement.” Kerner, who lives in Stuttgart, is the author of *Introduction to Modern Traffic Flow Theory and Control: The Long Road to Three-Phase Traffic Theory*.

Missy Mazzoli’s *Orizzonte*, for piano and electronics, consists of gently overlapping sine waves that set the stage for a meditative and introspective piano melody.

Michael Oesterle’s *Ayre* for violin and vibraphone was inspired by a book of 16th Century English Lute pieces that the composer bought as a teenager, hoping it would help him write impressive acoustic guitar intros for progressive rock tunes.

Peace, by Jessie Montgomery was written just a month after the first COVID-19 quarantine orders. The composer said that “facing the shock felt by the whole globe as well as my personal crisis, I found myself struggling to define what actually brings me joy.”

Eric Charnofsky’s *Four Characters* for flute and piano has four distinct personalities presented in “Reverie” (mostly atmospheric), “Popcorn Music” (pointillistic and lively), “Elegy” (serious and serene), and “Octatonica” (in arch form with octatonic scales and chords).

Finally, Caroline Shaw’s *Limestone and Felt* for viola and cello presents two kinds of surfaces — hard and soft. In the work, hocketing pizzicati and peeling motivic canons are part of a whimsical world of sounds echoing and colliding in the imagined eaves of a gothic chapel.

The August 3 concert marks the second performance by the Chamber Collective’s new line-up of musicians that includes flutist Linda White, violinist Emily Cornelius, violist Brian Slawta, cellist Trevor Kazarian, percussionist Dylan Moffitt, and pianist Eric Charnofsky.

Emerson said that during rehearsals for their program *Oath Breaker*, the ensemble felt very comfortable with each other and wanted to do more than play the right notes at the right time. They began discussing musical details such as phrasing and momentum.

“I was a sax player and a jazz player long ago,” Emerson recalled, “and one of the best things about playing with other people was when the bass player would look at you, and all of a sudden the groove would change. This group loves playing with each other, and they’re excited about that.”

Published on ClevelandClassical.com July 31, 2024

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