



Thornton Edge

Tuesday, April 12th

7:30 pm

Newman Recital Hall

University of Southern California

Donald Crockett, *director*

USC Thornton
School of Music

WITOLD LUTOSŁAWAKI
1913-1994

Chain 1

performers

Marley Eder, *flute*
Liz Plescia, *oboe*
Espen Aas, *clarinet*
Robin Jones, *bassoon*

Siri Storheim, *horn*
Talitha Duckworth, *trumpet*
Stephen Hannan, *trombone*

Laura Gamboa, *violin*
Agatha Blevin, *violin*
Yu-Ting Hsu, *viola*
Quenton Blache, *cello*
Avery Weeks, *bass*

Paul Matthews, *percussion*
Christina Gasparich, *harpsichord*

Donald Crockett, *conductor*

QUENTON BLACHE
2001-

Afloat

performers

Evan Llafet, *violin*
Quenton Blache, *cello*
Kiko Velasco, *piano*

DONALD CROCKETT
1951-

The Cinnamon Peeler

performers

Mingjia Chen, *voice*

Marley Eder, *flute*
Espen Aas, *clarinet*
Emma Antonides, *viola*
Alexander Mansour, *cello*
Christina Gasparich, *piano*

Donald Crockett, *conductor*

OLLY WILSON
1937-2008

Agitato
Adagio
Allegro

A City Called Heaven

performers

Marley Eder, *flute*
Espen Aas, *clarinet*

Agatha Blevin, *violin*
Emma Antonides, *viola*
Alexander Mansour, *cello*

Dominic Grande, *percussion*
Mary Lablanc, *percussion*
Anthony Cardella, *piano*

Donald Crockett, *conductor*

Text

The Cinnamon Peeler

by Michael Ondaatje

If I were a cinnamon peeler
I would ride your bed
and leave the yellow bark dust
on your pillow.

Your breasts and shoulders would reek
you could never walk through markets
without the profession of my fingers
floating over you. The blind would
stumble certain of whom they approached
though you might bathe
under rain gutters, monsoon.

Here on the upper thigh
at this smooth pasture
neighbour to your hair
or the crease

that cuts your back. This ankle.
You will be known among strangers
as the cinnamon peeler's wife.

I could hardly glance at you
before marriage
never touch you

-- your keen nosed mother, your rough brothers.

I buried my hands
in saffron, disguised them
over smoking tar,
helped the honey gatherers...

When we swam once

I touched you in water
and our bodies remained free,
you could hold me and be blind of smell.

You climbed the bank and said
this is how you touch other women
the grass cutter's wife, the lime burner's daughter.

And you searched your arms
for the missing perfume
and knew

what good is it
to be the lime burner's daughter
left with no trace
as if not spoken to in the act of love
as if wounded without the pleasure of a scar.

You touched
your belly to my hands
in the dry air and said
I am the cinnamon
peeler's wife. Smell me.

Program Notes

CHAIN 1

Written for and dedicated to Michael Vyner and the London Sinfonietta.

The title *Chain 1* suggests both the form used in this work and the intention of composing more 'chains' in the future.

This principle has already been used in my previous compositions as a base for particular stages of the form or in whole movements, as in the Passacaglia of my Concerto for Orchestra. In *Chain 1* the principle of chain-form serves to construct the greater part of the piece. Towards the end the texture becomes more complex and consists of several individual parts played 'ad libitum', which form a network of melodies to be played 'cantabile'.

I have composed *Chain 1* for the fourteen principal players of the London Sinfonietta as a souvenir of our common music-making.

- Witold Lutosławski

AFLOAT

Afloat is about keeping one's head up and "above water" during hardship. It is comprised of three main underlying motifs that transform throughout, undergoing constant harmonic and rhythmic changes. This is a representation of focus and determination even through the surrounding chaos.

-Quenton Blache

THE CINNAMON PEELER

When the Canadian group Blue Rider Ensemble asked me for a new piece, their cellist, Paul Pulford, sent me some Canadian poetry to consider setting. I was immediately gripped by Michael Ondaatje's work, which was new to me. As it happened, the day I discovered *The Cinnamon Peeler* and called Paul to say hi, that this was the poem I had to set, I went to the supermarket, stood in line, and read all about Mr. Ondaatje's Booker Prize-winning novel, *The English Patient*, in Newsweek and Time. Synchronicity strikes again. During the following summer I had the enormous pleasure of reading *The English Patient* while composing *The Cinnamon Peeler* - quite a memorable experience indeed. Not too much needs to be added in preparation to hearing this piece, beyond the suggestion that you read the poem before listening to the music. The music itself is cast in a single-movement dramatic scene. I have tried at every moment to keep the vivid textual images clear, and to mirror them in the music. While composing the piece I imagined it might be sung by candlelight, or by campfire, or in a jazz club, with a few strums on the cello to set the mood. *The Cinnamon Peeler* was composed in April-September, 1993.

-Donald Crockett

A CITY CALLED HEAVEN

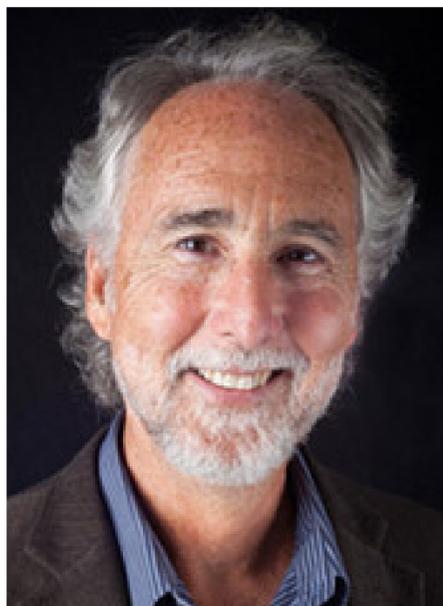
A City Called Heaven was commissioned by the Boston Musica Viva ensemble and given its world premiere in April 1989. The title of the composition is taken from a traditional Black American spiritual whose principal theme serves as the musical inspiration for the central slow movement of the piece. The chorus of this spiritual has the following text:

*Sometimes I am tossed and driven -- Lord
Sometimes don't know where to roam --
I've heard of a city called heaven
I'm trying to make it my home.*

The composition contains three movements in a fast-slow-fast arrangement, each of which is inspired by different genres of African-American music transformed by my own contemporary musical language. The first movement is based on a reinterpretation of a blues "riff" -- a short definitive melodic motive which, in traditional practice, is repeated against a changing harmonic background. The piece opens with a somewhat rhetorical statement of a riff, whose inherent "swing" qualities gradually take on greater importance as the piece progresses. The movement utilizes a great deal of unison writing, cross rhythms and blues-like melodic patterns, that collectively create a composed realization of an abstract blues improvisation. After the first movement builds to a climax, there is a short, contrasting, harmonically static section before the return of an altered version of the opening blues riff.

-Olly Wilson

Biographies



Los Angeles-based composer and conductor Donald Crockett has received commissions from a wide spectrum of organizations including the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra (composer-in-residence, 1991-1997), the Kronos Quartet, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Hilliard Ensemble, the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, Xtet, the San Francisco-based chamber chorus, Volti, the California EAR Unit, the Guitar Foundation of America and the University of Southern California for its 125th anniversary, among many others. Recent projects include an all-Crockett orchestral disc released by Boston Modern Orchestra Project on BMOP/sound, commissions from New Music USA for SAKURA cello quintet, Kaleidoscope Chamber Orchestra, Aspen Music Festival and Oberlin Conservatory for *And the River*, a concerto for duo pianists and chamber

orchestra, the Harvard Musical Association for violist Kate Vincent and Firebird Ensemble, a chamber opera, *The Face*, based on a novella in verse by poet David St. John, a consortium commission from 22 college and university wind ensembles for his *Dance Concerto for Clarinet/Bass Clarinet and Wind Ensemble*, and commissions for new string quartets from the Dilijan Chamber Music Series and the Caramoor Festival. A frequent guest conductor with new music ensembles nationally, Crockett has been very active over the years as a composer and conductor with the venerable and famed Monday Evening Concerts, the Jacaranda concert series, as well as leading the Aspen Contemporary Ensemble. As conductor of the USC Thornton Symphony's annual *New Music for Orchestra* series, Crockett has premiered over 150 new orchestral works by outstanding Thornton student-composers. His recordings as a conductor can be found on the Albany, CRI, Doberman/Yppan, ECM and New World labels. Deeply committed to education, Donald Crockett is professor and chair of the USC Thornton Composition program, director of Thornton Edge new music ensemble and associate dean for faculty affairs at the USC Thornton School of Music, as well as senior composer-in-residence with the Bennington Chamber Music Conference.

Upcoming Events

Apr. 15 at 7:30 p.m.

**The USC Thornton Composition
department presents Marco Fusi**

Apr. 15 at 7:30 p.m.

USC Thornton Chamber Orchestra

Apr. 18 at 7:00 p.m.

Jazz Night at Carson

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