

# STONY BROOK PREMIERES!

Saturday, April 26, 2008

8 p.m., Staller Center for the Arts, Recital Hall

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**Hazim's Dance** .....Sheila Silver

*For oboe, violin, viola, viola, cello and harp*

Steven Taylor, oboe  
Eugene Drucker, violin  
Elizabeth Kuefler, viola  
Adiel Shmit, cello  
Bridget Kibbey, harp

**Tilt/Shift** ..... Sebastian Armoza

Adam Barnett-Hart, violin

**DAGGER/the night has been unruly** ..... Tamar Diesendruck

*(String Quartet No. 3)*

The Escher String Quartet  
Adam Barnett-Hart, Wu Jie, violins  
Pierre Lapointe, viola  
Andrew Janss, cello

~ Intermission ~

**Backscatter** .....Margaret Schedel

*For Trombone and Electronics*

Eric Starr, trombone

**Four Shakespeare Sonnets** ..... Eugene Drucker

*For Baritone and String Quartet*

Andrew Nolen, baritone  
Escher String Quartet  
Adam Barnett-Hart, Wu Jie, violins  
Pierre Lapointe, viola  
Andrew Janss, cello

# PROGRAM NOTES

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## **Hazim's Dance**

Sheila Silver

Hazim's Dance is connected to my chamber opera, *The Wooden Sword*, which I am currently composing. I needed an instrumental dance for one of the scenes and decided to use this opportunity to compose a work that might then be (partially) incorporated into the opera. The dance is in 9/8 with a basic rhythm of 2+2+2+3 (and many permutations thereof.) It is cast in a loose rondo form, with alternating sections being a little darker in spirit. The opening violin cadenza, inspired by gypsy fiddling, sets up the dance.

*The Wooden Sword* takes place "long ago" in a kingdom of Western Asia (story originates in Afghanistan) and is about a rich king who has everything but is not happy, and a poor man who has nothing but has faith that everything will be OK -- and thus is happy. Disguised as a wanderer, the king repeatedly visits the poor man and his family in their hut, where he always finds them singing and dancing with joy. The king sets all kinds of tests for the poor man, expecting him to succumb to worry and sadness, but the poor man cleverly and ingeniously surmounts each of the tests. *The Wooden Sword* is recipient of the 2007 Raymond and Beverly Sackler Prize in Music Composition and will be premiered in Connecticut and Moscow in the fall of 2009.

## **Tilt/Shift**

Sebastian Amoroza

*Tilt/Shift* follows a simple ABAB form plan. The first AB pairing concludes with a climactic "half-cadence". The second pairing closes the piece with a satisfying repose. *Tilt/Shift* is approximately 4 minutes and 30 seconds in duration.

## **DAGGER/the night has been unruly**

Tamar Diesendruck

In this piece, I worked with texts from texts extracted and arranged from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, doing away with plot and specific characterization, creating a psychic scenario. I chose speeches and parts of speeches that describe malaise, confusion, chaos within and without, the destruction caused by belief in fantasy and illusion. In a number of sections of the piece, the words are the basis for the players' parts, as words are a basis for chant—the players are expected to learn the words and enact them in their own committed speech rhythm. This idea is based on a sonic image I have from the only time I attended an orthodox Jewish service. The freedom of people to intone prayers in their own rhythm, yet simultaneously as a community,

was very vivid and moving—a complex texture created by the layering of intense individual expressions of prayer. I tried to create a framework in which the group sound of the string quartet is based on passionate, individual expression, simultaneously performed. Instead of the traditional focus on group interpretation, the sound is the sum of unique personal interpretations. The Shakespearean text, removed from the specific references of the play, provides a deep poetic world for each player to respond to.

### **Backscatter**

Margaret Schedel

The second in a series of pieces exploring a single extended technique from the Berio Sequenzas. Backscatter, uses multiphonics and a notated mute line. The trombonist uses a combination of two mutes, a harmon mute, and a plunger that has been "prepared" using a combination of thumbtacks and push pins. Backscatter is a scientific term defined as the reflection of waves, particles, or signals back to the direction of origination. The term is used in several fields of physics, as well as underwater photography. In this piece, the reflections of the played note return to the performer through the use multiphonics. Backscatter is also the term for a side-effect of e-mail spam; email servers receiving spam and other mail send bounce messages to an innocent party, eventually shutting the server down. This piece, with its four notated lines will hopefully not shut down the innocent performer. Backscatter was written for Eric Starr, and would not have been possible without his generosity and talent.

### **Four Shakespeare Sonnets**

Eugene Drucker

Ever since I was a schoolboy, I've loved Shakespeare. It's impossible to sing his praises without repeating what has been said thousands of times about the power and seductive beauty of his language, and his deep insight into character and motivation. Whatever I say about Shakespeare will reveal more about myself. If I were an actor, there is nothing I would love more than to feel my voice transformed and galvanized by those resonant cadences. Since I am neither actor nor scholar, my only chance to interpret Shakespeare is through music.

In these settings of four sonnets, I have tried to notate as closely as possible the rhythms and pitch fluctuations of an expressive recitation. No syllable is prolonged beyond its speech value, and there are very few wide intervals between syllables; leaps and swoops are not natural characteristics of English speech. Every reader would have his or her own interpretation, resulting in tonal emphasis of different words within a line. My understanding of the text has served as my compass when choosing meter and harmony. Sonnets 29 and 30 are plaintive and grief-stricken, but in the final couplet each takes a turn toward a brighter view of things, paying homage to the dedicatee of the verse. Whether this was heartfelt or the mere fulfillment of a flowery

convention is an interpretive matter; in a musical setting, this shift affords various possibilities for tone-painting. I move from dissonant harmonies toward an ambiguous tonality, following the change in mood but trying to convey a modern, somewhat doubtful perspective on the happy ending. At the end of Sonnet 30, repeating a resonant phrase from the second line, I attempt to call into question the accuracy of remembrance, and our tendency to gild our recollections of earlier, happier times. This moment is spoken rather than sung, but it is the only point in the whole cycle in which I depart from speech rhythm, allowing the voice to dwell nostalgically and enigmatically on a few syllables.

The jagged, violent portrayal of lust in Sonnet 129 has no such turnaround in its final couplet, only a grim, sardonic summary of the trouble caused by lust. Sonnet 73, a melancholy, bittersweet meditation on mortality, concludes with a plea to be loved well in the face of the imminent, irrevocable separation that death will bring.

## BIOGRAPHIES

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**Eric Starr**, a native of Nevada City, California, is a Doctor of Musical Arts candidate at Stony Brook University. Eric earned a Bachelor of Music from the University of Southern California as well as a Master of Music and Artist Diploma from the Cleveland Institute of Music. He has also studied at the Tanglewood and Aspen Music Festivals and the Music Masters Course in Kazusa, Japan. Eric has performed as a soloist with the Twin Cities Concert Association (Grass Valley, CA), the Stony Brook Premiers! concert series, and the CIM New Music Ensemble.

**Tamar Diesendruck** favors virtuosic chamber music as a compositional medium, although she has also composed solo, orchestral and vocal works. Her music is often characterized as having a very wide range of expression. Works include experimental pieces like 8 ----->8 for eight cellos ("eight tends toward infinity"), and unusually slow, stark music, the grief that does not speak. Ms. Diesendruck's work has been performed throughout the U.S. and in Europe by an array of excellent performers including the Pro Arte Quartet, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Lions Gate Trio, Speculum Musicae, New Millennium Ensemble, Dinosaur Annex, Phantom Arts Ensemble, San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, New Century Players, League of Composers-ISCAM, Earplay, Musica D'Oggi, Composers, Inc., Parnassus, Washington Square Contemporary Music, Prism Players, Music on the Edge, San Francisco Chamber Singers, Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra, Cabrini Quartet, pipa virtuoso Wu Man, avant garde violinist Carla Kihlstedt, pianist Donald Berman and numerous other groups and soloists. Ms. Diesendruck earned an M.A. and Ph.D. in composition from the University of California, Berkeley and a B.A. from Brandeis University. Ms. Diesendruck is currently serving as Visiting Associate Professor at the University of Southern California.

Bass-baritone **Andrew Nolen** has performed for the Edinburgh Festival, Santa Fe Opera, Opera Theater of St. Louis, Orchestra of St. Luke's, American Symphony Orchestra, Wooster Group, Festival Lyrique-en-Mer, Waverly Consort, Gotham Chamber Opera, Juilliard Opera Center, Seattle Opera Young Artists Program, Aspen Music Festival and the Music Academy of the West. Mr. Nolen has performed as bass soloist in numerous concert works including Haydn's Lord Nelson Mass, Mozart Requiem, Brahms Requiem, Handel's Messiah and Dettinger Te Deum, Mozart Mass in C, Schütz's Christmas Story, Purcell's Dioclesian, Carissimi's Jepthe, and Arvo Pärt's Passio.

**Sebastian Armoza** is a PhD candidate in composition at SUNY Stony Brook. His principal teachers have been Dary John Mizelle, Daria Semegen, and Daniel Weymouth.

**Margaret Anne Schedel** is a composer and cellist specializing in the creation and performance of ferociously interactive media. Her works have been performed throughout the United States and abroad. While working towards a DMA in music composition at the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music, her interactive multimedia opera, *A King Listens*, premiered at the Cincinnati Contemporary Arts Center and was profiled by apple.com. She is working towards a certificate in Deep Listening with Pauline Oliveros and has studied composition with Mara Helmuth, Cort Lippe and McGregor Boyle. She serves as the musical director for Kinesthetech Sense and sits on the boards of the BEAM Foundation, the Electronic Music Foundation Institute, the International Computer Music Association, the New West Electronic Arts and Music Organization, and Organised Sound. Her chapter "Electronic Music and the Studio" was recently published in the Cambridge Companion to Electronic Music. Her work has been supported by the Presser Foundation, Centro Mexicano para la Música y les Artes Sonoras, and Meet the Composer. As an Assistant Professor of Music at Stony Brook University, she is Co-Director of Computer Music and a core faculty member of cDACT, the consortium for digital art, culture and technology.

**Sheila Silver**, winner of the 2007 Sackler Prize in Music Composition for opera, has written in a wide range of mediums: from solo instrumental works to large orchestral works; from opera to feature film scores. Her musical language is a unique synthesis of the tonal and atonal worlds, coupled with a compelling rhythmic complexity. "Only a few composers in any generation enliven the art form with their musical language and herald new directions in music. Sheila Silver is such a visionary." (Wetterauer Zeitung, Germany, 2004)

Sheila Silver's compositions have been commissioned and performed by numerous orchestras, chamber ensembles, and soloists throughout the world. Her honors include: a Bunting Institute Fellowship; the Rome Prize; the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters Composer Award; twice winner of the ISCM National Composers Competition; and awards and commissions from the Rockefeller

Foundation, the Camargo Foundation, the MacDowell Colony, New York State Council of the Arts, the Barlow Foundation, the Paul Fromm Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Cary Trust. Her teachers include Erhard Karkoschka, Gyorgi Ligeti and Arthur Berger.

Recent recordings include the DVD film of her opera, *The Thief of Love*, released by Hummingbird Films, as well as two discs on the Naxos label: Piano Concerto and Six Preludes for Piano on poems of Baudelaire, with Alexander Paley, piano, and the Lithuanian State Symphony Orchestra, Gintaras Rinkevicius, conductor; and Shirat Sara (*Song of Sarah*) with Gerard Schwarz and the Seattle Symphony Strings.

Silver is Professor of Music at the State University of New York, Stony Brook. Her music is published by MMB Music, Marimba Productions, and Argenta Music, and is recorded on various labels.

Violinist **Eugene Drucker**, a founding member of the Emerson String Quartet, has also been active as a solo artist. He has appeared with the orchestras of Montreal, Brussels, Antwerp, Liege, Austin, Hartford, Richmond, Toledo and the Rhineland-Palatinate, as well as the American Symphony Orchestra and the Aspen Chamber Symphony.

A graduate of Columbia University and the Juilliard School, where he studied with Oscar Shumsky, Mr. Drucker was concertmaster of the Juilliard Orchestra, with which he appeared as soloist several times. He made his New York debut as a Concert Artists Guild winner in the fall of 1976, after having won prizes at the Montreal Competition and the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels.

Mr. Drucker has recorded the complete unaccompanied works of Bach, recently reissued by Parnassus Records, and the complete sonatas and duos of Bartok, for Biddulph Recordings. In the fall of 2002, he began a teaching affiliation with his Emerson colleagues at the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

# LIBRETTO

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## Four Shakespeare Sonnets

Eugene Drucker

Act II, sc. iii

Len. The night has been unruly: where we lay,  
Our chimneys were blown down, and, as they say,  
Lamentings heard i' the air, strange screams of death,  
And prophesying with accents terrible  
Of dire combustion and confused events  
New hatch'd to the woeful time: the obscure bird  
Clamour'd the livelong night: some say, the earth  
Was feverous and did shake.

Don. WHAT IS AMISS/

MacB. YOU ARE, AND DO NOT KNOW'T.

Act II, sc. iv

Old M. Threescore and ten I can remember well:  
Within the volume of which time I have seen  
Hours dreadful and things strange, but this sore night  
Hath trifled former knowings.

MacB. Had I but died an hour before this chance,  
I had lived a blessed time; for from this instant  
There's nothing serious in mortality:  
All is but toys: renown and grace is dead;  
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees  
Is left this vault to brag of.

Act I, sc. iii

MacB. ...why do I yield to that suggestion  
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair  
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,  
Against the use of nature? Present fears  
Are less than horrible imaginings:  
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,  
Shakes so my single state of man that function  
Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is  
But what is not.

MacB. Confusion now hath made his masterpiece.

Act II, sc. i

MacB. Is this a dagger which I see before me,  
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.  
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.  
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible  
To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but  
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,  
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?  
I see thee yet, in form as palpable  
As this which now I draw.  
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going;  
And such an instrument I was to use.  
Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses.  
Or else worth all the rest: I see thee still;  
And on the blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,  
Which was not so before. There's no such thing:  
Is the bloody business which informs  
Thus to mine eyes.

Act IV, sc. ii

L. MacD. Our fears do make us traitors.

Ross. But cruel are the times, when we are traitors  
And do not know ourselves; when we hold rumour  
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,  
But float upon a wild and violent sea  
Each way and move.

Act V, sc. iii

MacB. Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,  
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,  
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,  
And with some sweet oblivious antidote  
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff  
Which weighs upon the heart?