

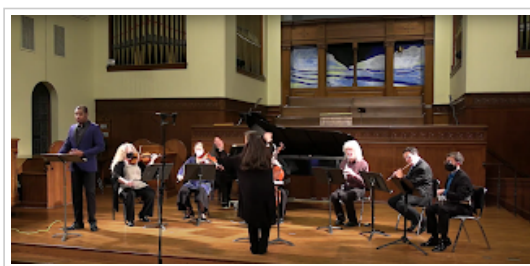
THE REHEARSAL STUDIO

A PLACE TO EXERCISE IDEAS BEFORE WRITING ABOUT THEM WITH GREATER DISCIPLINE.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2023

Earplay: Three World Premieres at Old First

Last night at the Old First Presbyterian Church, the Earplay new music chamber ensemble presented its latest program, entitled *Mirages* under the auspices of Old First Concerts (O1C). Three of the selections were world premieres, and the remaining offering was the winner of the 2020 Earplay Donald Aird Composers Competition. Only one of the world premieres deployed the entire ensemble, consisting of (in alphabetical order) Terrie Baune on violin, Tod Brody on flute, Peter Josheff on clarinets, Thalia Moore on cello, Ellen Ruth Rose on viola, and Brenda Tom on piano, all conducted by Mary Chun.



The full Earplay ensemble with guest artists Michael Dailey (left) and Bruce Leafman (right) performing “Songs on Majnun Leyla” (screen shot of last night’s performance)

The title of that composition was “Songs of Majnun Leyla” by Richard Aldag. The performance required two guest artists, tenor Michael Dailey and percussionist Bryce Leafman, whose only instrument was a Middle Eastern hand drum. Sadly, no program notes were available. Presumably the music was inspired by the ancient Arabic story “Layla and Majnun,” given a narrative account by the twelfth-century Persian poet Nizami Ganjavi. Since the text sung by Dailey was also not available, it is unclear whether his texts were taken from Ganjavi. However, if the narrative behind the music was obscured, Aldag’s approaches to instrumentation made for an engaging listening experience.

The other two world premieres were the opening selection, “Tounen” by Hendel Almetus, given a solo flute performance by Brittany Trotter, and Linda Bouchard’s “Katakana,” scored for solo viola (Rose) and electronics. The Aird winner was Carla Magnan’s “Mirages,” scored for cello (Moore) and piano (Tom). Earplay used to have a reputation for richly informative program notes (usually augmented by a pre-performance panel discussion); and the absence of such “background support” was sorely missed during this concert.

Qualifying observation: I did not attend this performance at Old First and watched the live stream instead. O1C usually provides a program book for download by those not physically present. As of this writing, there was no hyperlink for such a download either on the O1C event page or on the YouTube viewing page.

POSTED BY STEPHEN SMOLIAR AT 7:17 AM 

LABELS: CHAMBER MUSIC, KEYBOARD MUSIC, MUSIC

STEPHEN SMOLIAR



The author's construction of his reality of self!

ABOUT ME

STEPHEN SMOLIAR

Still trying to “liberate the mind from fear, superstition and pettiness.”

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