

THE BELHAVEN UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
Dr. Stephen W. Sachs, Chair

presents

Dr. Andrew Sauerwein
Faculty Composition
Concert

assisted by

Mrs. Sarah Elias, Piano; Ms. Maggie McLinden, Piano;
Ms. Libby Roberts, Piano; Dr. Owen Rockwell, Percussion;
Mrs. Megan, Rowan, Piano; Ms. Milena Rusanova, Violin;
Mr. Song Xie, Violin

Saturday, February 28, 2015 • 7:30 p.m.
Belhaven University Center for the Arts • Concert Hall

*There will be a reception after the program. Please come and greet the performers.
Please refrain from the use of all flash and still photography during the concert
Please turn off all cell phones and electronics.*

PROGRAM

Snow Music

Dr. Andrew Sauerwein • b. 1963

Ms. Libby Roberts, Piano

Inspid Digressions

- I.
- II. For Margo
- III.
- IV. Dreams of Swans
- V.
- VI. Playrude
- VII. After a Coffee Stain

Mrs. Sarah Elias, Piano

Tower

Mrs. Megan Rowan, Piano

INTERMISSION

Sakharoviana

- I. Eskaterina
- II. Balance of Power
- III. Tokamak
- IV. “The Truth is Never Simple” (π)
- V. Common Grace (In Memoriam Eskaterina)

*Mr. Song Xie, Violin (I, II, and V); Ms. Milena Rusanova, Violin (III and IV)
Dr. Owen Rockwell, Percussion; Ms. Maggie McLinden, Piano*

Sakharov Song

Mrs. Sarah Elias, Piano

PROGRAM NOTES

Snow Music (1989) is my first substantial work for piano. Its title comes from a memorable evening early in the compositional process. My small children had gone to bed, my wife was working around the house, and I was writing by lamplight at an old upright piano. At one point I looked out the front window of our apartment at an unexpected snowfall. The beauty and

serenity of the falling flakes at that moment seemed to fit the music taking shape on the page. Thus, the music is not really about snow, any more than snowfall is about the music—but the two became acquainted then, and each continues to speak of the other whenever I meet it.

The collection of pieces initially titled **Inspid Digressions** began as a casual, cheeky exercise in joint composition—not *genuinely* inspid, I think, but capturing various musical digressions over a twenty-year period (1990-2010). While studying at the University of Oregon, one evening, fellow composer Kurt Landré and I took turns writing a few measures, often handing the draft off in the middle of a phrase, until the first piece (Inspid Digression I, named according to our shared taste in improbable satire) was done—all without speaking to one another about our ideas or the results. Some days later, Kurt gave me a twelve-tone row and a rhythmic figure to work with, and the result became movement III. Movements IV and V are my own works, following in the vein of the others. Expressively speaking, the tone is pleasantly thoughtful, with a contradictory air of sincere silliness. The second movement, *For Margo*, is more pointedly sincere, and came later. I composed it on the spot during a workshop exploring collaborations between composers and choreographers. To fulfill an assignment, choreographer Margo Van Ummersen went off to work out a minute or two of solo dance, while I composed a short piano piece. We then put the two together, sight unseen, to see what might happen. The result was surprising, gently stunning: Margo's smooth, slow variation on a single gesture mirrored the music (played on an old upright piano used for rehearsals). I added the score to the Digressions to provide sober contrast. The remaining pieces, *Playrude* and *After a Coffee Stain*, are impelled by a moment's dyslexia, a brown spot on the manuscript, and a persistent interest in the line between sober urgency and bemused wonder.

Tower (2014) presents the musical first-fruits of my ongoing collaboration with Jacob Rowan, a graduate from Belhaven's visual art program. Both this music and Jacob's recent triptych (*The Plains of Shinar: Construction, Theophany, Desolation*) grew out of a series of conversations we have had about the Old-Testament account of the Tower of Babel. Jacob

explains: "They are not meant to be a literal illustration of the events in the story. Rather, I have sought to imbue the images with an aesthetic experience parallel to the narrative. We seek to illuminate the Genesis 11 account by creating a visual and auditory experience through which to contemplate the events before, during, and after the construction of the Tower of Babel." In the music, a recurring figure builds upward from its drone-like foundation in the vain hope of supporting an irregular, abstruse melody above it. Faced with the resonant, stable overtone series which closes the piece, the melody achieves nothing, lost in its own high-minded, confused abstraction.

Sakharoviana (2012) is a reflection on the life and legacy of Soviet physicist and human-rights advocate Andrei Sakharov. The topic was chosen by percussionist Scott Eddlemon, who commissioned the work for performance on the Oak Ridge Symphony Orchestra's Isotone Concert Series in January 2013. Though he is noted for his work on developing the hydrogen bomb for the Soviet Union, Sakharov is also remembered for his persistent support of human rights in the face of Soviet persecution and exile. He has been admired for his wisdom, which involved "not just thinking but acting, not just intellect but character." Such character included unusual integrity, passion, humility in the search for truth, a marked lack of hatred and bitterness, perseverance in his commitments, listening to others without imposing his own views, joy in close relationships, warm hospitality, and enduring hopefulness even amidst insistent persecution. It seems likely that his mother, Eskaterina, an Orthodox believer, had a profound formative influence on her young son's character, even though he left the church at the age of 13 to follow his father's example of humanism and atheism. Sakharov pursued the development of the hydrogen bomb with good intentions, convinced that doing so would preserve the balance of power between the Soviet Union and the United States and thus promote peace.

Over time, he began to see a stark difference between the Soviet constitution and the “unwritten ideological rules” imposed by the communist ruling elite (which undoubtedly offended his sense of integrity). He became involved in using his status and influence to promote human rights within the Soviet Union, and was known for compassionately helping anyone who came to him. The Soviet state could not openly condemn him, because of his position and status in the scientific world, but it did subject him to covert persecution and even a period of internal exile. Nevertheless, he continued to further the cause of peace, arguing that “the division of mankind threatens its destruction”. When the dangers of nuclear testing became evident, Sakharov advocated the partial test ban, which was enacted in 1963—incidentally, the year of his mother’s death. Sakharov died peacefully in 1989, suffering a heart attack while resting before the delivery of a speech.

Sakharoviana is cast in five movements, each exploring a dimension of the physicist’s story. The first, *Eskaterina*, is a meditation on the source of his character, evoked by reference to a Lutheran chorale known in American hymnals as “If Thou but Suffer God to Guide Thee”—this tune figures throughout the work in various guises. The second movement, *Balance of Power*, is a bald evocation of the cold-war race to develop the hydrogen bomb, casting

opposing figures in an active dialogue marked by mounting anxiety and bewildering detonations. *Tokamak* follows with a different kind of balance: Its name comes from the geometry of a fusion reactor Sakharov helped design. The musical texture emulates the reactor’s doughnut-shaped electromagnetic field and the hydrogen particles spiraling within it, striving to contain an anxious fusion reaction. The fourth movement takes its title from a phrase Sakharov used repeatedly, “the truth is never simple”. Its rhythmic framework incorporates the significant digits of π —the ratio of a circle’s circumference to its diameter—a simple geometric relationship whose numerical value is beyond rational account. The last movement, *Common Grace (In Memoriam Eskaterina)* revisits and transforms the meditation of the first, musically pondering God’s gracious gifts of good character to the world.

Sakharov Song distills the language of Sakharoviana into a brief meditation. It imagines the old scientist’s inner frame of mind, as seen through the eyes (or, more precisely, heard through the ears) of a composer who finds such topics beyond reach and yet reaches for them anyhow. Actually, I am more curious about how you relate to the music—all of this music. I can already tell what I make of it (to some degree, at least), so I am eager to hear the responses you make....

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC MISSION STATEMENT

The Music Department seeks to produce transformational leaders in the musical arts who will have profound influence in homes, churches, private studios, educational institutions, and on the concert stage. While developing the God-bestowed musical talents of music majors, minors, and elective students, we seek to provide an integrative understanding of the musical arts from a Christian world and life view in order to equip students to influence the world of ideas. The music major degree program is designed to prepare students for graduate study while equipping them for vocational roles in performance, church music, and education. The Belhaven University Music Department exists to multiply Christian leaders who demonstrate unquestionable excellence in the musical arts and apply timeless truths in every aspect of their artistic discipline.

The Music Department would like to thank our many community partners for their support of Christian Arts Education at Belhaven University through their advertising in "Arts Ablaze 2014-2015." It is through these and other wonderful relationships in the greater Jackson community that makes many of our concerts possible at Belhaven. We praise God for our friends and are truly thankful for their generosity. Please mention The Arts at Belhaven University when you visit our community partners.

For a complete listing of Music Department scheduled spring semester programs, please visit our website at <http://www.belhaven.edu/music/recitals.htm>. A complete listing of major Belhaven University arts events may be found at <http://www.belhaven.edu/arts/schedule.htm>.

Thank you to those working behind the scenes to make today's program a success: music faculty supervisor, Dr. Shelt; student workers –house manager, Tyler Scrivner; ushers, Maddi Jolley & Mali Lin; stage manager, Wil Murphy; stage hands, Constance Prince & Billy Overton; recording/sound, Anne Hilleke; lighting, Stephen Craig; videographer, Joy Kenyon; photographer Faith Schumacher; reception hosts, Brandon Smith & Mariah Taylor.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday, March 4, 7:30pm, Concert Hall
Thursday March 26, 7:30pm, Concert Hall
Friday April 10, 7:30pm, Concert Hall

Shellie Brown Alumni Violin Recital
Night of Percussion & Classical Guitar
Belhaven strings and Orchestra Concert

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC, FACULTY AND STAFF

Dr. Stephen Sachs, pianist, chair • Dr. Paxton Girtmon, director of bands, woodwind specialist • Dr. Andrew Sauerwein, composer, theorist • Dr. Christopher Shelt, coordinator of vocal activities, director of choral ensembles and Singing Christmas Tree • Song Xie, violinist, director of string ensembles • Nancy Bateman, cello adjunct • Dennis Bonds, jazz guitar adjunct • Richard Brown, string bass adjunct • Sybil Cheesman, flute adjunct • Dr. Dennis Cranford, music theory adjunct • Carol Durham, organ adjunct • Sarah Elias, piano and music theory adjunct • Doug Eltzroth, worship arts adjunct • Gena Everitt, vocal adjunct • Dr. Rebecca Geihlsler, vocal and music history adjunct • Kenneth Graves, clarinet adjunct • Christina Hrivnak, vocal adjunct • Andrew Lewis, jazz and music theory adjunct • Amanda Mangrum, harp adjunct • Randy Mapes, double reed adjunct • Dr. Marlynn Martin, music ed adjunct • Maggie McLinden, staff accompanist • Dr. Tanja Miric, classical guitar adjunct • Christopher Phillips, vocal and choral adjunct • Dr. Owen Rockwell, percussion adjunct, director of percussion ensembles • Carolyn Sachs, piano adjunct • Margaret Sprow, music ministries adjunct • Dr. Carla Stovall, low brass adjunct • Lloyd Turner, trumpet adjunct • Grace Anna Randall, administrative assistant

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