

WOOD AND WIRE Timothy Polashek

SONATAS AND CONTEMPORARY WORKS FOR ONE AND TWO PIANOS

Eric Huebner, Steven Beck, Timothy Polashek, *pianists*

All the compositions on this album were composed recently, with the oldest, *Porcupine Quest*, dating from 2002. Most of these compositions were given their premier performances by pianist Eric Huebner during concerts at Merkin Concert Hall in New York City. I am quite pleased that he was able to spend considerable amounts of time developing interpretations of these works with me and record them during two recording sessions dedicated to this project. Also, I am very appreciative of pianist Steven Beck's superb playing on the duets, both in the concerts and the recording sessions. Both pianists put much artistic thought and effort into this project and I formally thank them here.

When I was composing these works, I knew that Eric Huebner might perform them and so I kept his incredible virtuosity and spirited piano technique in mind. Writing piano music at this level of virtuosity allowed me to bring together my continuing love of complex rhythmic syncopations and contrapuntal writing with the bright colors and dissonances of jazz harmony, melodic modes, and shifting chordal voicings within the various registers of the piano.

NOTES ON THE MUSIC

The harmonic constructions of these works, however, are not based in standard jazz chord progressions, but instead range from simple tonal and modal progressions to predominantly free atonality. Overall, aesthetically, I view these works as modern classical compositions, but spoken at times in the dialect and emotion of jazz.

The first composition on this disk, **PORCUPINE QUEST** (2002), was a commission to celebrate the arrival of a new Steinway Concert Grand Piano for the Performing Arts Center in Oconto Falls, Wisconsin, where my father is the superintendent for the public school district. The following is an excerpt from my pre-concert talk at the August 18, 2002 premier.

"When I was composing *Porcupine Quest*, I had a few guiding thoughts in mind. Because this composition is to be performed today, at a concert celebrating the Steinway Piano, I wanted to write a piano solo that really showed off the huge treasure trove of musical textures and sound that this instrument is capable of creating. You will hear high notes, low notes, chords built with various combinations of high and low notes, and phrases moving swiftly throughout registers. Also, you may hear why pianos are sometimes classified as percussion instruments, since their hammer actions allow the performance of percussive passages and the clear expression of the most varied rhythms and accents.

perform it “With Excitement and Strength (jazzy in a Baroque sort of way).” My work with electro-acoustic music has influenced the first and third movements of this sonata as melodic motives occasionally descend and arise from polyphonic textures, transforming into sounds that resemble resonant filter frequency sweeps that glissando and echo loops with short delay times.

A FEW MOMENTS INSIDE (2005) is a composition for a digitally controlled modern player piano, the Yamaha Disklavier Grand Piano. It is a humble homage to Conlon Nancarrow’s music and his wonderful collection of studies for player piano, which has greatly influenced both my acoustic and electro-acoustic compositions. This composition exploits the Disklavier’s robotic playback systems to perform music with a wide dynamic range and complex rhythms that a pianist would be unable to execute due to the physical limitations of the human body. A computer following a MIDI sequence of the score of this composition controls the Disklavier. This music is for piano, yet is not limited to pianistic gestures. My specific artistic motivation for this composition was to musically explore the contrast of pianistic gestures with “mechanical” non-pianistic gestures. I would like to thank Yamaha Artist Services, Inc. for providing me with a Disklavier for this project and several other works not on this album, including my *Concerto for Disklavier and Pianist* (2005).

SOCKETS NOCTURNE (2004) is a duet for two pianos. Similar to *Garden Rain*, it is a meditation based upon modal scales portraying the dark peacefulness of the night.

—Timothy Polashek

October 16, 2005



This album is dedicated to my wife, Roscann.

Canada, Hong Kong, Brazil, Moscow and other European countries. He has recently debuted works at New York City's Merkin Concert Hall and Symphony Space, the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, the SPARK New Music Festival, the Lincoln Center Summer Festival, the American Festival of Microtonal Music, and International Computer Music Conference Festivals. The renowned new music ensemble, Speculum Musicae, has performed his music.

His research projects in audio synthesis and text/sound music are published in the Journal of the Society of Electro-Acoustic Music in the United States and the Leonardo Music Journal, published by MIT Press. Tim received his Doctor of Musical Arts in Composition degree from Columbia University, M.A. in Electro-Acoustic Music from Dartmouth College, and B.A. in Music from Grinnell College. He has studied composition and music theory with Jon Appleton, Jonathan Chenette, Charles Dodge, Joseph Dubiel, Brad Garton, Jonathan Kramer, Fred Lerdahl, Tristan Murail, and Larry Polansky.

THE PERFORMERS

ERIC HUEBNER, PIANIST. a native of Los Angeles, has drawn worldwide acclaim for his performances of new and traditional music. At the age of 17, he appeared with the Los Angeles Philharmonic in solo performances at the LA Music Center and Hollywood Bowl and has appeared as soloist with the Juilliard Symphony and Orchestra and the New Juilliard Ensemble. Eric has been a member of the award winning ensemble, Antares, since 2001.

As soloist and chamber musician, Eric has performed throughout the United States, Germany, Japan, and Brazil and has served as guest orchestral pianist with the New York Philharmonic appearing in performances of Ives' *Fourth Symphony* and Stravinsky's *Petroushka*.

Performances of *Porcupine Quest*, *Piano Sonata*, and *Garden Rain* on a 1981 Hamburg Steinway Model D Concert Grand Piano (formerly CDI47 of the Steinway Concert Division) were recorded at Joseph Patrych Studios in Bronx, New York on June 12, 2005. Joseph Patrych was the recording engineer.

Performances of *Kite Sonata for Two Pianos* and *Sockets Nocturne* on a Steinway Model D and a Bluthner Concert Grand Piano were recorded at Faust Harrison Pianos in New York, New York on July 7, 2005. Jonathan Duckett was the recording engineer.

A sequenced and computer controlled performance of *A Few Moments Inside* on a Yamaha Disklavier Model DC6 Grand Piano was recorded at the Lehman College Electronic Music Center in Bronx, New York on April 12, 2005. Yamaha Disklavier provided courtesy of Yamaha Artist Services, Inc. Timothy Polashek was the recording engineer.

DIGITAL EDITING: Studios of the Lehman College Electronic Music Center in Bronx, New York.

DIGITAL MASTERING: Studios of the Lehman College Electronic Music Center in Bronx, New York and BR Productions in New York, New York, completed on October 14, 2005.

PRODUCER: Timothy Polashek

MASTERING ENGINEER: Jonathan Duckett

EDITING ENGINEER: Timothy Polashek

ASSISTANT ENGINEERS: Scott Lawrence and Matthew Polashek

PHOTOGRAPHER: Roseann Hara Polashek

Additional thanks to Bryan Louiselle, Buryl Red, Bernard Shockett, and Yamaha Artist Services, Inc.

TROY819



ALBANY RECORDS U.S.
915 BROADWAY, ALBANY, NY 12207
TEL: 518.436.8814 FAX: 518.436.0643

ALBANY RECORDS U.K.
BOX 137, KENDAL, CLIMBRIA LAB OXO
TEL: 01539 824008

© 2005 ALBANY RECORDS MADE IN THE USA



DDD

WARNING: COPYRIGHT SUBSISTS IN ALL RECORDINGS ISSUED UNDER THIS LABEL