

Carriage Barn

Bennington College

June 14, 1961  
8:30 P. M.

presents

PATSY ROGERS & KAY HOLMES

in a concert of contemporary music

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- I. Song from "Das Stundenbuch" Kay Holmes  
by Rainer Maria Rilke

Kay Holmes, soprano  
Doug Barstow, oboe  
George Finckel, cello

- II. Octet for Wind Instruments Patsy Rogers

Henry Brant, Debby Sprague, flutes  
Gunnar Schonbeck, Graeme Fincke, clarinets  
Charles Thompson, Robert Nowak, bassoons  
Doug Barstow, oboe  
Kay Barschdorf, horn  
Patsy Rogers, conductor

- III. Song Cycle, "Seven Macabre Songs" Patsy Rogers  
by Howard Nemerov

Kay Holmes, soprano  
John Holmes, baritone  
Lionel Nowak, piano

I N T E R M I S S I O N

- IV. 15 Songs from "Das Buch der Hängenden Gärten" Arnold Schoenberg  
by Stefan George

Orchestrated and conducted by  
Patsy Rogers  
Kay Holmes, soprano  
Gail Rodier, Gail Rockwell, flutes  
Lisa Hartmann, Jack Sirulnikoff,  
Kim Wheelock, clarinets  
Betsy Walker, violin  
Kit Fairbank, Sandy Broches, violas  
Katey Day, cello  
Diane Bulgarelli, bass  
Paula Epstein, piano

You, neighbor God, if sometimes in the night  
I rouse you with loud knocking, I do so  
only because I seldom hear you breathe;  
I know: you are alone.  
And should you need a drink, no one is there  
to reach it to you, groping in the dark.  
Always I hearken. Give but a small sign.  
I am quite near.

Between us there is but a narrow wall,  
and by sheer chance; for it would take  
merely a call from your lips or from mine  
to break it down,  
and that all noiselessly.

The wall is builded of your images.

They stand before you hiding you like names,  
and when the light within me blazes high  
that in my inmost soul I know you by,  
the radiance is squandered on their frames.

And then my senses, which too soon grow lame,  
exiled from you, must go their homeless ways.

II. Seven Macabre Songs (dedicated to Louis Calabro) by Howard Nemerov

1. a dream

The ground swayed like a sea,  
Uneasily, where the dead fought free  
Of my preserved desires. In one bed  
Godhead and maidenhead  
Wrestled out of necessity.  
I slept, but restlessly,  
Lusting for what I dreamt I saw  
Under the deserts of the law.

2.

The officer wore a thin smile  
Over his dental plate.

The nurse had carrot hair,  
But I saw black at the roots.

The doctor's eye frightened me,  
And it was made of glass.

The priest had fair hair as he knelt.  
I saw the seam and smelt the glue.

My death bugged from my eyes  
At recognizing theirs.

3. from the last dream of a dying woman  
aged eighty (see Ella Freeman Sharpe,  
Dream Analysis)

I did not want to suffer again  
Or ever feel pain.  
Last night I dreamed that I could see  
My sickness in me  
Gathered together, each a rose.  
And I saw that all those  
Roses were planted and grew again  
Out of my pain.

4.

Under the pie crust,  
Behind the attic door,  
Inside the camera or  
The cathode tube, I must --  
(Inside the frigidaire,  
Under the manhole cover  
Where rumpsteak and lover  
Run out of air) -- It is there  
I must -- (under the rug,  
Behind the arras, dug  
Into the basement floor) --  
Though there may be no more  
Than dust,  
I must.

5. Bluebeard's wife

My husband Bluebeard has a blue beard.  
 I have heard this story before. It is night  
 In the palace, and the Minotaur,  
 Our janitor, is smoking in the cellar,  
 Sitting alone among turds and bones and dottle.  
 To him, enter the naked Athenian youths and maidens.

Now moms and dads are shrunken into sleep,  
 And Bluebeard's beard curtains the tiny room  
 Where I have always been forbidden to go  
 (Husband, I come!), why, it is now and never  
 That I may beard him and unlock the door  
 Where the Athenian adolescents fell,  
 and find his soul, maybe, and crack it like an egg.

6.

It is forbidden to go further.  
 Darkness stands in the wall  
 Spattered with blood.

These are the Gates of Hercules.  
 You shall not pass again  
 Those giant knees,

Not to the open Atlantic water,  
 Not to the blessed Mount.  
 No son or daughter dares

Stand with unbandaged eyes  
 Before the bloodied black seawall,  
 Before the opening seas.

7.

My death with a nail in his foot  
 Came dragging at the ground.  
 He carried a long tooth for a cane,  
 He carried his eye cast down.

The sunlight pierced his body through  
 With shafts of shadow; hung  
 Under the shadows of his breast  
 A perching sparrow sang.

My crippled death for my sake bears  
 (While life is, life is long)  
 Both tooth and nail, and for my heart  
 The sweetly beating song.

III. "das buch der hängenden gärten" by stefan george

translated by patsy rogers  
 bennington college, 1961

I

Under the protection of thick foliage,  
 Where fine flakes of light snow down from the stars,  
 Gentle voices tell of their despair  
 And from their brown throats fabled beasts  
 Spit jets of water into marble basins,  
 Whence little streams glide away, lamenting.  
 Sparks of light came to kindle the bushes,  
 White forms to divide the waters.

II

In this paradise groves  
 Alternate with flower-meadows  
 And halls of multi-colored tiles.  
 The beaks of slender storks  
 Ripple the ponds, aglitter with fish;  
 Rows of birds in glistening dun  
 Trill on the sloping house-tops;  
 Golden reeds murmur in the wind:  
 But my dream pursues only one thing.

## III

I entered your realm as a novice;  
 Before I saw you no awe was in my face,  
 No desire living in me.  
 Look with favor on my young folded hands,  
 Elect me to the ranks of those who serve you,  
 And have mercy and patience  
 For the one who still staggers on this new path.

## IV

My lips are motionless and burn;  
 I notice first that my feet have taken me  
 Into the magnificent realm of other masters.  
 Perhaps I could still have turned away,  
 But then, through the high gate,  
 The glance before which I had always knelt  
 Seemed to question me, or give a sign.

## V

Tell me on what path She will pass by today,  
 That I may draw  
 Delicate silks from my chest,  
 That I may pick roses and night flowers,  
 And that I may offer my cheek  
 As a resting place for Her feet.

## VI

Now I am dead to anything except  
 To remember you with all my senses,  
 To think of new things to speak of with you,  
 To serve, the reward granted or forbidden --  
 Of all things, only these have meaning now --  
 And to weep, because the images  
 Which arise in the beautiful darkness  
 Always vanish when the cold clear dawn threatens.

## VII

Fear and hope in turn oppress me.  
 My words become long sighs  
 And such violent longing comes upon me  
 That I care not for rest or sleep.  
 My bed is flooded with tears;  
 I deny myself any joys, and do not want  
 The comforting of any friend.

## VIII

If I do not touch your body today  
 The fiber of my soul will snap  
 Like a tendon overstretched.  
 Love's sighs will become the veils of mourning,  
 For I have suffered since I've known you.  
 Judge whether I deserve such torment;  
 Refresh me, now so hot with fever,  
 As I lean, trembling, at your gate.

## IX

Our joy is stern and brief.  
 What avails a fleeting kiss.  
 Falling like a drop of rain  
 On a pale and burnt desert which  
 Drinks but cannot quench  
 Its thirst, must thirst again  
 And crack once more with heat.

## X

I look at the lovely flower-bed while I wait.  
 It is enclosed with purple-black thorn.  
 Within are cups with spotted spurs,  
 Velvet feathered ferns bending,  
 Bushels of flakes, water-green and round;  
 And in the center soft white bells.  
 The fragrant breath of their moist lips  
 Is like sweet fruit in heavenly fields.

## XI

When at last behind the flowered gate  
 We felt only our own breathing,  
 Did we know the bliss of which we'd dreamed?  
 I remember that silently we both began  
 To tremble like fragile reeds,  
 As we softly touched each other;  
 And that our eyes were wet with tears.  
 You remained so with me for a long time.

## XII

When in holy rest on heavenly mats  
 Our hands touch each other's temples  
 And veneration soothes our burning limbs,  
 Think not of the formless shadows  
 Rocking up and down on the wall,  
 Nor of the watchman who may separate us soon,  
 Nor that the white sand outside the city  
 Is ready to drink our warm blood.

## XIII

You leaned against a silver willow  
 On the shore, and shielded your head  
 With the fixed tips of a fan, with sparks,  
 And twirled them, as if playing with your jewels.  
 I was in a boat, under protecting foliage  
 And thence in vain invited you to come.  
 I saw the willow bending lower  
 And scattered flowers drifting in the water.

XIV

Think not always  
Of the foliage,  
Prey of the wind;  
Nor of the bursting  
Of ripe quince  
Nor of the sickle  
That destroys  
Late in the year;  
Nor of the dragon-fly  
In a storm;  
The lightning bug,  
Whose shine  
Perishes.

XV

We walked through the evening-darkened arbors,  
Through light temples, on paths and flower-beds.  
Happily - she smiling, I whispering -  
Now she has gone forever.  
Tall flowers pale and break;  
The mirror of the pond dims and cracks;  
I slip in the withered grass  
And palms prick me with pointed fingers.  
Heaps of withered leaves rustle  
As if moved by invisible hands.  
Outside the pale walls of Eden  
The night is clouded and sultry.