

*BENNINGTON COLLEGE PRESENTS... ..*

***GOTHAM GLORY: The Piano Music of David Del Tredici***

*Tuesday, October 16, 2007  
8:00 p.m.*

*Deane Carriage Barn*  
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*Ballad in Yellow* (1997)  
(after Lorca)

David Del Tredici  
(b.1937)

*Scherzo* (1960)  
For Piano, four hands

*Three Gymnopedies* (2003)

No.3 My Loss

*S/M Ballade* (2006)

***INTERMISSION***

*Gotham Glory* (2004)  
(Four Scenes of New York City)

West Village Morning (Prelude)  
Museum Piece (Fugue)  
Missing Towers (Perpetual Canon)  
Wollman Rink (Grand Fantasy on the Skaters' Waltz)

## Gotham Glory: The Piano Music of David Del Tredici

This program celebrates the rich diversity of David's piano writing. The earliest work on the program is the Scherzo for piano four hands. This piece was written in a period when he was working with atonality. One can hear harmonies in the piece that are already yearning for tonality. It's a rhythmically charged work.

The other works are more recent pieces. The Ballad in Yellow is the first of three Ballads that David has written. The third Ballad (S/M Ballade) was written for Marc Peloquin and will be premiered on October 1. The Ballad in Yellow is a transcription of a song by that name. The composer Robert Helps loved the song so much he suggested to David that he write a piano version.

### **Ballad in Yellow (1997)**

BALLAD IN YELLOW is a 1997 transcription of a song I wrote that year to a Garcia Lorca poem. The pianist-composer Robert Helps, upon hearing the premiere of the song, said to me, "I wish, David, that that song was a piano solo. I'd love to play it." The moment he said this, I realized that a piano arrangement would require little alteration: I simply removed the vocal line and added a more pianistic ending. Needless to say, the piece is dedicated to Robert Helps, who played the premiere.

David Del Tredici  
2001

### **Scherzo (1960)**

The *Scherzo* for four hands was written while David Del Tredici was studying at Princeton with Roger Sessions and Earl Kim. The work is a sonic adventure, combining episodes of biting atonal counterpoint with those of expressive lyric calm.

### **THREE GYMNOPEDIES (2003)**

The gymnopedie is a slow, solemn dance in three-quarter time, evocative of Ancient Greece. It is of course closely associated with Eric Satie, coiner of the word and composer of the first set of three. Thus, my set, written in 2003, is indebted to that enigmatic French composer.

### **Gymnopedie No.3 (MY LOSS)**

NO.3, MY LOSS, is an *in memoriam* for my dear teacher and friend, the pianist/composer Robert Helps, who died in December 2001. It is the longest and weightiest of the three. The melody, always exploring the interval of the perfect fifth, two octaves apart, is accompanied by bass chord of (for me) surprising dissonance. Tonality barely enters the picture. After an ecstatic climax and a falling-away, however, we reach the coda, and, with it, the first arrival of clear-cut tonality. In G-sharp minor, then, the piece comes to a very sad close.

David Del Tredici, 9/11/05

### **S/M Ballade**

*S/M Ballade* is a 12-minute, two-part, pianistic terror.

The first and shorter part is a prelude that nevertheless has the figuration, consistency and difficulty (once it gets going) of an etude.

The second section – a grand fugue in F-minor – follows. A repeated-note subject in three-quarter time is pursued by a counter-subject in 4/4 time. Throughout the piece, the juxtaposition and combination of these two opposing rhythms remain a contrapuntal constant. A contrasting, more lyrical, theme appears in A-flat major and is spun out, leading to an elaborate development of the fugue subject in remote keys. The interplay of warring rhythms, begun earlier, climaxes with the augmentation of the main theme against diminution of its accompanying motives. In the midst of this frenetic activity, the second theme reappears – now embellished with glistening sixteenth notes. At length, all activity slows, then stops. The coda begins like an octave etude and comes to an ecstatic peak. There is a brief reminiscence of the work's opening, and then a final virtuosic descent from the top of the keyboard to the bottom. A crashing cacophony of F-minor vs F-major ends the piece, with F-major ultimately victorious.

In recent years, I have enjoyed celebrating aspects of gay life in my music, mostly by making musical settings of gay poetry that I love. *S/M Ballade* has no words, but its rigor, its rugged insistence and its almost painful pianistic difficulties bring to my mind the intensity of the S/M experience. As well, the title alludes to my friends Marc Peloquin ("M") and his life partner, Seth Slade ("S"). Marc commissioned – and inspired – the piece, which I dedicate to him with deep affection and admiration.

David Del Tredici  
September 2007

**GOTHAM GLORY (2004)**  
(Four Scenes of New York City)

West Village Morning (Prelude)  
Museum Piece (Fugue)  
Missing Towers (Perpetual Canon)  
Wollman Rink (Grand Fantasy on the Skaters' Waltz)

“Having lived and loved in New York for more than 40 years, I thought it time to celebrate the place in my own idiosyncratic way. “West Village Morning” is an appropriately sunny, short work which acts, as well, as a prelude to the ensuing fugue, “Museum Piece.” A ten-minute, highly developed work, the fugue pays homage both to old musical forms and the New York’s museum riches. “Missing Towers” (referring of course to the World Trade Center towers that the city lost on September 11, 2001) is a mysterious piece. The two voices in continuous canon with each other are my way of recalling those two significant buildings. At the very end, the pianist leaves the keyboard to play, on the inside of the piano, a further expression of vanished glory. The final movement, “Wollman Rink” is a virtuoso extravaganza – a 15 minute fantasy on Emil Waldteufel’s *The Skaters’ Waltz*. With cascading run, arpeggios, and general pianistic fireworks, it stands to test any performer’s mettle”.

---David Del Tredici

## DAVID DEL TREDICI

David Del Tredici is generally recognized as the father of the Neo-Romantic movement in music. He was trained in serial techniques, but his early works, many of them settings of poems by James Joyce, reflect quirky individuality in the handling of those orthodox musical materials. Soon, however, he broke away from the language of his teachers to explore the fantasy world of Lewis Carroll and, in so doing, developed his own unique voice -- a rich musical idiom of color, humor and sentiment -- worked out on vast orchestral canvases of tonal sound. His fascination with Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland books yielded a surprising diversity -- from the spiky, witty settings of *Pop-Pourri* and *Adventures Underground* (which include folk and rock ensembles), to the extravagant, theatrical opera-cantata, *Final Alice*, and the lush, neo-romantic *Child Alice*. Del Tredici's music has been commissioned and performed by nearly every major American and European orchestral ensemble. Best-selling recordings were made of both *Final Alice* and *In Memory of a Summer Day* (Part I of *Child Alice*); the latter work won Del Tredici the Pulitzer Prize in 1980.

Recent years have seen Del Tredici turn from Carroll to American poetry as a fount of inspiration, yielding more than 50 songs in the past few years. The New York Philharmonic, under the direction of Kurt Masur, commissioned and performed *The Spider and the Fly* in May 1998, while the Eos Orchestra premiered Del Tredici's monodrama *Dracula* in March 1999. *Chana's Story* and *Miz Inez Sez* -- song cycles for soprano and piano -- were premiered in October 1998 and April 2000, respectively.

For Del Tredici, Victorian sensibility has yielded to urban contemporary realities -- tormented relationships, personal transformations, and the joys and sorrows of gay life. *Gay Life*, in fact, happens to be the title of his song cycle premiered in May 2001 by the San Francisco Symphony, conductor Michael Tilson Thomas and baritone William Sharp. (In its December 2001 issue, *Out Magazine* cited *Gay Life* in naming the composer one of its people of the year.) Performance artist John Kelly created an hour-long theatrical piece around eight of Del Tredici's songs. The latter work, *Brother*, was commissioned by both the NEA and the Rockefeller Foundation and also premiered in May 2001, in New York City. Del Tredici's most recent CD, released by Composers Recordings, Inc. (CRI), is a song collection entitled "Secret Music," which *New Yorker* critic Alex Ross, *Fanfare*'s Robert Carl and critic-at-large Jason Serinus all hailed as one of the best new-music albums of the year 2001. Commenting on Del Tredici's new vocal outpouring, San Francisco critic Marilyn Tucker was moved to write that it "must surely herald a bright new era for the neglected tradition of song composition."

Still more recently, Del Tredici has extended his scope to chamber music. In addition to *Grand Trio*, written for the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio, Del Tredici's *Wondrous the Merge*, commissioned by the Elements String Quartet, awaits its premiere, and a commission for the Da Ponte String Quartet is currently in progress.

In addition to the Pulitzer Prize, Del Tredici's many compositional honors include Guggenheim and Woodrow Wilson fellowships, the Brandeis and Friedheim Awards, grants from the NEA, and election to The American Academy of Arts and Letters. He currently sits on the Boards of Directors of Yaddo, the MacDowell Colony and the Aaron Copland Fund for Music and is Distinguished Professor of Music at the City College of New York.

A California native, Del Tredici began his musical career as (in his own words) "an old child prodigy." Born 1937, he began piano studies at the relatively late age of 12 and studied principally with Bernhard Abramowitsch and, later, Robert Helps. At 17, he made his recital debut ("one of the decade's most impressive debuts," wrote the San Francisco Chronicle), and major orchestral engagements quickly followed. He went on to receive his B.A. (and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa) at the University of California at Berkeley and earned an M.F.A. in 1964 from Princeton University. His composition teachers included composers Earl Kim, Seymour Shifrin and Roger Sessions. Del Tredici lives in New York City with his partner, Ray Warman.

David Del Tredici is published exclusively by Boosey & Hawkes.

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## MARC PELOQUIN

piano

Hailed for playing that is “first rate” and “fascinating,” in *The New York Times*, pianist *Marc Peloquin* is recognized for his highly imaginative and insightful music making, earning the admiration of musicians, critics and audiences alike. *The Washington Post* declared his performance of Frederic Rzewski’s *Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues* “spectacular” and further that “his transcription of Mahler’s *Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen* was lucid, sensitive and flexible of rhythm.”

Marc Peloquin’s inventive programs break the boundaries of the recital format, highlighting music from different periods and representing diverse styles, creatively connected by imagery and themes. These programs, with titles including *Water Music:H2O*, *Americana*, *From Italy: The Art of the Transcription* and *David Del Tredici: A Tribute*, showcase works by Schumann, Ives, Debussy and Rzewski as well as his own piano transcriptions of works by such composers as Mahler, Rorem, Puccini and Faure.

He has appeared in a wide range of venues from New York’s Merkin Concert Hall and Museum of Modern Art, to the Palacio de Belles Artes in Mexico City and the American Academy in Rome. Other performances include appearances at the Darmstadt International Festival, the John Cage “Rolywholyover” Festival at the Guggenheim Museum and the Cultural Center of Roubaix, France.

A refined and sensitive chamber musician, Mr. Peloquin has collaborated with cellist Madeline Shapiro, tenor Paul Sperry, violinists Theresa Salomon and Conrad Harris.

He is a member of the piano ensemble *Split Second* with pianist Roberto Hidalgo. They will be appearing October 5<sup>th</sup> at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. as part of a festival of Mexican culture sponsored by the Smithsonian Institute and the Mexican Cultural Institute. Their new CD *Junctions* has just been released on the Urtext label.

Upcoming for the 2006 – 07 and 2007 – 08 seasons is a collaboration with the esteemed composer/pianist David Del Tredici who stated: “Mr. Peloquin is a rare pianist. Passion and intelligence fuse in an exhilarating fashion.” In celebration of Mr. Del Tredici’s 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, the two artists have conceived a program of the composer’s works for piano featuring recent pieces and a new work, *S/M Ballade*, commissioned by Mr. Peloquin for the occasion, paired with earlier landmark compositions including *Scherzo*, for four hands, which the two pianists perform together.

Marc Peloquin’s CD of the solo piano by Otto Luening is available on the CRI label.

A native of Rhode Island and a resident of New York City, Marc Peloquin received his Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the Manhattan School of Music, with additional studies at Boston University, the New England Conservatory and Tanglewood. He is a visiting lecturer at the New School University and a teaching artist at the Bloomingdale School of Music, both in New York City.

For further information go to [marcpeloquin.com](http://marcpeloquin.com)