

Carriage Barn

Bennington College

June 14, 1961
8:30 P. M.

presents

PATSY ROGERS & KAY HOLMES

in a concert of contemporary music

- 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

p. 2.

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.