



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SCHOOL *of the* ARTS

John Mauceri, Chancellor

The School of Music
Michael Rothkopf, Interim Dean

Present

Jesse Blair, composer

With

Benjamin Garner, piano
Megan O'Malley, trombone
Megan Szymanski, flute
Stacy Ford, oboe
Rashad Hayward, clarinet
Juliana Mesa, bassoon

Watson Chamber Music Hall
Saturday, March 6th, 2010 at 7:30 p.m.

Program

Invention No. 1 (2007)

Etude No. 6 (2009)

Benjamin Garner, piano

(please hold your applause until both pieces are completed)

Attachment (2007)

Megan O'Malley, trombone

Tangent (2008)

The Rebotco Encounter (2007)

Megan Szymanski, flute

Stacy Ford, oboe

Rashad Hayward, clarinet

Juliana Mesa, bassoon

(please hold your applause until both pieces are completed)

Open Wounds (2008)

Horizons (2010)

Glimpsing the Extremes

Fine and Dandy

Contemplation

Peace

Benjamin Garner, piano

(please hold your applause until all four movements are completed)



JESSE BLAIR

Jesse Blair is a composer, guitarist, mechanical engineer, and a third year graduate student at UNCSA. His musical journey began with piano and guitar lessons from his parents, but he was mostly self-taught until recent years, focusing primarily on rock and electronic music. While obtaining his BS in Mechanical Engineering at NC State, he was the guitarist and primary songwriter for the rock band Stopping on Green. Jesse is currently a recording assistant for the School of Music, and continues to work as an aircraft hydraulics engineer during school breaks. His primary teacher is Michael Rothkopf, but he has also studied composition with Kenneth Frazelle and TV commercial scoring with Liz Myers.

Invention No. 1

One of my first and favorite classes at UNCSA was Kenneth Frazelle's counterpoint class. During the winter term we were required to write an invention in the style of J.S. Bach, and thus *Invention No. 1* was born.

Etude No. 6

While etudes are usually intended as studies for the performer, this etude was a study for the composer. Inspired by Chopin, *Etude No. 6* was written as an exploration in harmony.

Attachment

In many cases, the emotional pain we experience as humans comes from our attachments to the various things we encounter. When we experience something beautiful we want to keep it with us forever. However, things are constantly changing and when we are faced with loss, we often cry foul play. The more we petition and claim the world is unjust, the more pain we create for ourselves.

Attachment presents this condition through musical narration; it tells the story of love, loss, and learning to let go.

Tangent

While writing a piece for the PRISM saxophone quartet I went on a little bit of a *Tangent* exploring a new musical world. Prior to this point I had never written a piece so far removed from my traditional tonal upbringing. I found this experience both very exciting and at times very frustrating. I wasn't surprised when I realized the piece was a narration of what I was going through; it was about someone cautiously entering a strange new world.

The Rebotco Encounter

Starting off with three separate, distinct, and reluctant characters, *The Rebotco Encounter* goes through several transformations during the course of the piece, often brought on by the entrance of a fourth character that acts like a catalyst for change. The standoffish first section gradually begins to soften and has its interest piqued by the emergence of the second section, which is very lively and friendly. The first two sections confront each other and are developed in the third section.

Open Wounds

Open Wounds was written for a modern dance, which was performed at UNCSA during "M2 Stew" 2008. The music and dance were based on the play "No Exit" which takes place in hell and offers a disturbing look into the darker side of human nature. It exclaims that hell doesn't need a paid staff, just pick the right group of people, lock them in a room together and they will drive each other crazy.

Open Wounds was chosen for this recital because it was well suited for the surround sound of Watson Hall.

Horizons

The inspiration for this piece came from the Shakespeare quote: "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy." I thought about how this seems to apply to all things, good and bad, and that their extremes know no bounds. The mysteriousness of how these infinite dualities could coexist intrigued me.

The first movement, *Glimpsing the Extremes*, attempts to portray the awe that comes with experiencing the vastness of our world.

In the second movement, *Fine and Dandy*, the listener is reminded of how often life simply hums along, not exceptionally good or bad. However, there is still a hint of mystery in the background...

Contemplation, the third movement, seeks to resolve the cognitive dissonance created by the opposing experiences. While a concrete resolution is never gained, an acceptance of their coexistence is eventually reached.

The final movement illustrates the *Peace* that often follows acceptance. Rather than trying to solve the mystery, the mystery is embraced and appreciated.

THANK YOU

Thanks to everyone that made tonight possible.

To my performers: thank you so much for your hard work, dedication, and excellent musicianship.

Dr. Rothkopf deserves a HUGE thank you for all he has done for me over these four years. For accepting me into the school as a special student and getting me up to speed, for giving me excellent composition, technology, and career advice, and for repeatedly going beyond the call of duty - thank you, from the bottom of my heart.

I would also like to thank Dr. Lawrence Dillon and Kenneth Frazelle for their critiques of my music during the jury process. Mr. Frazelle's counterpoint and orchestration classes were also crucial to my musical development. I also greatly appreciate the many excellent seminars, guest artists, and composition opportunities. (continued on back)...

My gratitude also goes out to all the faculty and staff at UNCSA. When I first started at this school everything seemed too good to be true. After almost four years, I still feel the same way. Everyone from my classroom teachers, to my friends at the health center, to the administrative staff have all done a quality job and helped make my experience here a memorable one.

Special thanks to my family and friends for their ongoing support.

This recital is being given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Music degree.

Jesse Blair is a student of Dr. Michael Rothkopf.

www.jesseblairmusic.com