

Fifth Annual Concert of Music by Bill Robinson

Carswell Concert Hall, Meredith College, Raleigh NC

Tuesday, February 18, 2014 7:30 PM

(recorded by VoChor)

An Introduction to Tonight's Festivities Bill Robinson (b. January 15, 1955)

Chamber Concerto for Piano Quintet (1984, summer 2003, spring 2013)

Thomas Warburton, piano; Eric Pritchard, Mary Kay Robinson, violins;
David Marschall, viola; Virginia Hudson, cello

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| I. First Movement | <i>Allegro</i> |
| II. Something Old, Something New | <i>Allegro vivaldi</i> |
| III. Ram Nam | <i>Largo</i> |
| IV. Rondo Recidivisto | <i>Rondo Recidivisto</i> |

Robinsongs for mezzo-soprano, oboe, and piano (April 30—September 11, 2012)

Rebecca Robinson, voice; Joseph Robinson, oboe; Mary Kay Robinson, piano

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| I. Some Hallucinations | <i>A perfectly sane tempo</i> |
| II. The Purist | <i>Allegro academia</i> |
| III. You Are Old, Father William | <i>Guano ma non troppo</i> |

Intermission

Art of the Violin for four violins (1975, 2004, 2013)

Eric Pritchard with his students Roman Lin, Jenny Li, and Harish Eswaran

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| I. Just for Fun | <i>Root'n toot'n</i> |
| II. Elegy for Izabela | <i>Adagio</i> |
| III. An Original Traditional Melody | <i>Allegro jigolo</i> |

Birthday Symphony, Chamber Edition for violin, clarinet in A, cello, and piano
(May 9—October 20, 2013)

Thomas Warburton, piano; Xi Yang, violin;
Fred Jacobowitz, clarinet; Bonnie Thron, cello

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| I. How Long? Not Long | <i>And they're off</i> |
| II. Gate gate paragata parasamgate bodhi swaha | <i>Adagio mahayana</i> |
| III. Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory of the Coming of the Lord | <i>Picco di montagna</i> |
| IV. August 28 | <i>Tempo I, II, III, IV</i> |

About *Chamber Concerto*: First edition composed April 18—July 18 2003, second movement added March 15—April 25 2013. Most of the composition in 2003 was done in Ann Arbor Michigan using the facilities of the Music School of the University of Michigan, while studying physics. The piano part in the first and some of the third movement comes from the *Great American Piano Concerto* of 1984 which has been withdrawn. Some ideas from the first concerto also are in the last movement of the Chamber Concerto. The second movement is a new arrangement of Vivaldi's *Concerto for Four Violins* via J. S. Bach's arrangement for four harpsichords.

The original versions of this concerto are for piano, string orchestra, and timpani, and also for piano quintet. In March 2007, a call came from Dorothy Kitchen to arrange the work for the forces of the Duke University String School, which add to the strings and timpani a flute, oboe, two clarinets, bassoon, and two horns. They performed the first movement in 2007. The first edition of the string orchestra version was premiered by the late Robert Ian Winstin and the Virginia Youth Orchestra in 2008.

About *Robinsongs*: In 2011 Joe and Mary Kay Robinson asked me to write a piece they could perform with their aspiring diva daughter Becky, with Mary Kay playing piano. I wrestled with ideas for lyrics for many months, but found this to be an exceptionally difficult assignment. Finally I came up with a setting of two poems by Lewis Carroll and one by Ogden Nash. It is a great privilege to give this little piece to such superb musicians, and I hope they find it enjoyable to play.

About *Art of the Violin*: In 1975 I wrote a recorder quartet for my father, Heber Robinson, who was an enthusiastic recorder player with a group at the local Unitarian-Universalist Church in Peabody, Massachusetts. However, the work was too contemporary for the other performers, and the piece was never played.

In hopes of finding other performance opportunities, I wrote a large number of arrangements for other instruments; *Art of the Violin*, *Art of the Flute*, *Art of the Double Reed*, and *Art of the Saxophone*. However none found a happy home.

In 2004 I decided that the piece must be at fault, and I rewrote the first and last movements from scratch, keeping nothing from the originals. I made new arrangements for four flutes and four violins as before, Performers continued to shy away; the middle movement was one of the most atonal I had ever written, slow and very short (only one minute) and titled "So You Think I'm Too Old-Fashioned". However even with this kind of title, and the fact that it represented the usual reaction to my music by my fellow composers, no one liked it.

Thus I was motivated by 38 years of rejection to throw out the troublesome middle movement and write a new one. On February 4, 2013, a fine local violinist, Izabela Spiewak, who had played on the memorial concert for my sister in 2010, died of leukemia. This new middle movement is an elegy in her memory.

About *Birthday Symphony, Chamber Edition*: In early 2010, I had a peculiar dream of a respectful conversation with Elvis Presley. He said I should write a symphony based on speeches by Martin Luther King Jr. Well—who can refuse the King of Rock and/or Roll? Especially since I share my birthday, January 15, with MLK, and classical radio stations frequently play a composer's music on his birthday.

The speeches of Martin Luther King are copyrighted, and the MLK Center is notoriously litigious. Thus this cannot be a choral work, nor can it have direct references to texts in the score. Instead I use the rhythms and inflections from speeches that are incorporated in themes. The first movement uses a few phrases from the "How long? Not long" speech of March 25, 1965 at the Alabama State Capitol. The second movement is based on the Buddhist mantra "Gate gate, paragate, parasamgate, bhodi swaha"; this can be roughly translated (as by Ram Dass) as "Beyond, beyond the beyond, beyond the beyond the beyond, hail the goer." The third movement returns to MLK and uses bits of the "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech given on April 3, 1968 in Memphis Tennessee. The fourth movement is the only one that uses a long passage rather literally; the final section of the Dream Speech given at the March on Washington on August 28, 1968. This movement was commenced on August 28, 2013, during the 50th anniversary celebration; the orchestral version was finished on January 15, 2014. If sometime in the future the legal situation clears, the last movement could be performed with a narrator; the correspondence of words to notes is made clear in a private unpublished edition.

Tonight's Musicians

Harish Eswaran is a junior at Duke University, majoring in biology and music. His principal teachers at Duke have been Eric Pritchard and Claudia Warburg. Harish has performed as a concerto soloist with the Bay Area Youth Symphony and Clear Lake High School Orchestra and is a first violinist with the Duke Symphony Orchestra. Harish hails from Houston, Texas and was a four year member of the Texas Music Educators Association All –State Orchestras. He intends to apply to medical school following graduation.

Virginia Ewing Hudson teaches cello and related subjects at Meredith College and has taught Music Appreciation at St. Augustine College. She co-directs youth programs for both the Chamber Orchestra of the Triangle and is director of Meredith's Live Oak Chamber Music Camp.

Hudson has appeared as soloist with The Chamber Orchestra of the Triangle, The Raleigh Civic Symphony and The Blue Lake Festival Orchestra. She has performed as a chamber musician with The Mallarme and Meredith Chamber Players and is a member of the Triangle Quartet. Hudson has served as principal cello for The Chamber Orchestra of the Triangle, The Opera Company of NC, The Greensboro Symphony, The Raleigh Symphony, The Raleigh Civic Symphony, The Blue Lake Festival Orchestra and The International Music Program. She has also performed with the NC Symphony. Hudson has studied cello with such luminaries as Robert Marsh, Lev Aronson, Paul Olefsky and Colin Carr and chamber music with Josef Gingold and Dan Welcher. She has been heard on radio broadcasts, PBS, and various record labels.

Fred Jacobowitz received his Bachelors and Masters degrees from the Juilliard School, where he studied with the late Leon Russianoff. He made his New York Debut at Carnegie Recital Hall (now Weill Hall) as winner of the Artists International Competition. He was a featured soloist on radio stations WBAI and WQXR in New York City, with the Goldman Band, and in recital throughout the Metropolitan New York area. As a chamber musician, he has participated in the Marlboro Music Festival and played in the Verrazano Winds Woodwind Quintet in Brooklyn, New York. Mr. Jacobowitz was Principal Clarinetist in the Annapolis (Maryland) Symphony Orchestra from 1989-2002. He is equally at home in the worlds of Classical, Jazz and Folk, having performed and recorded with his Kol Haruach Klezmer Band (www.kolharuach.com) and his duo, Ebony and Ivory (www.ebonyandivory.ca). Mr. Jacobowitz now resides in Raleigh, NC, where (when not performing out of town) he teaches and freelances, and he can often be heard playing concerts with his wife, North Carolina Symphony Principal 'Cellist Bonnie Thron. He runs his own business, Case Closed (www.case-closed.us), fixing musical instrument cases and is a sometime Little League Baseball Umpire.

Jenny (Jingwei) Li is a sophomore from Hershey, Pennsylvania pursuing a double major in global health and sociology. Last March, as the winner of the annual concerto competition, Jenny performed the first movement of the Sibelius Violin Concerto with the Duke Symphony Orchestra. In addition to her personal study of violin with Eric Pritchard, Jenny is currently a member of Duke Music Tutors, Arts and Health, and the Duke Symphony Orchestra. When she is not immersed in her musical activities, Jenny can usually be found studying or napping inside the Duke University libraries, musing over books on societal flaws, tutoring in the Duke Writing Studio, conducting cancer research, volunteering in the Duke hospital with young patients, planning medical missions to underserved communities, or teaching elementary school students about health.

Roman Lin is a violinist and pianist from Florence, SC who plans to major in Chemistry and Music. He had studied violin for 13 years with teachers Eric Pritchard and Sherry Woods. As a sophomore, Roman is a member of the Duke Symphony Orchestra, with which he performed the Rondo from Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 5 at a benefit concert last year in Beaufort, SC. He had also performed the Brahms Violin Concerto with the Tar River Orchestra. In his free time, Roman enjoys playing chamber music and reading about science.

David Marschall has been a member of the North Carolina Symphony since 1987 and was appointed Associate Principal Viola in 2007. Since 1990, he has spent his summers playing in the orchestra of the Santa Fe Opera. David is a member of the chamber ensemble Quercus, and he is a member of New Music Raleigh, an ensemble dedicated to the music of living composers. He performed on Bill Robinson's 2012 concert at Duke, and the 2013 concert at Meredith College.

David has also served as Principal Viola for the Baltimore Chamber Orchestra and the Columbus Pro Musica Chamber Orchestra. He was a member of the New Orleans Symphony, the Innsbruck (Austria) Symphony, the Des Moines Metro Opera, and the Colorado Philharmonic. A native of Columbus, Ohio, David studied first at Ohio State, and he received his Master's degree from the Peabody Conservatory, where he studied with Karen Tuttle. His viola was made in 2009 by Grubaugh and Seifert of California. David's wife, Amy, teaches German and English at Raleigh Charter High School, and they have two sons, Philip and Owen.

Eric Pritchard, violinist, has been a member of Ciampi Quartet since 1995 and was formerly the first violinist of the Alexander and Oxford Quartets. Mr. Pritchard has taught at Miami University, San Francisco State University, City University of New York and the North Carolina School of the Arts. He was winner of the National Federation of Music Clubs Award in Violin as well as the first-prize winner at the Portsmouth (England) International String Quartet Competition and the Coleman and Fischhoff national chamber music competitions. He has performed widely as a recitalist and as soloist with the Boston Pops and orchestras in Europe and South America. His major teachers were Eric Rosenblith, Josef Gingold, Ivan Galamian and Isadore Tinkleman and he holds degrees from Indiana University and the Juilliard School. He has performed many works by Bill Robinson since 2006.

Bill Robinson, composer, was born in Denton, Texas in 1955. He started piano lessons at age three and violin at nine. He moved to Massachusetts in 1961. Composition started in 1972 at Phillips Academy, Andover. After that came a year at Eastman School of Music, then many years at UNT in Denton Texas, earning a BM in composition in 1984. Bill came to North Carolina in 1987.

Bill came to Raleigh in 2001 to study physics at NCSU, and earned a BS in 2004, and a PhD in 2010. He has constructed a novel plasma confinement experiment and is now a lecturer on the physics faculty at NCSU. His compositions have started to be performed locally, but his delusions of grandeur have not yet been confirmed.

Bill has recorded twelve CDs, and has a website at billrobinsonmusic.com that has all his scores and recordings. In 2011 he wrote his *Autobillography*, which is available in print, downloadable at his website billrobinsonmusic.com, and also recorded as an audio book.

Joseph Robinson is one of the last oboists in America to study with the legendary Marcel Tabuteau, Joseph Robinson has been one of the outstanding orchestral musicians of his generation, serving as Principal Oboe of the New York Philharmonic for 27 years from June 1978 until September 2005. Known especially for his lyricism and phrasing, he has performed concerti, orchestral, and chamber works in concert halls around the world to international critical acclaim.

Mr. Robinson has had a distinguished teaching career, serving for more than 20 years as head of Oboe Studies at the Manhattan School of Music, where he helped establish the first Master of Orchestral Studies degree in America and from which he received the Presidential Medal for Meritorious Faculty Service in 2005. He has taught at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, the University of Maryland, Duke University and at Lynn University's Conservatory of Music in Boca Raton, Florida. His many students occupy important positions all over the world.

Today, Mr. Robinson resides in Blaine, Washington with his wife, violinist Mary Kay Robinson. They are parents of three remarkable daughters — executive Katie, doctor Jody and diva Becky.

Mary Kay Robinson, violinist, is a 1968 graduate of the Juilliard School, where she studied with Dorothy DeLay and Ivan Galamian. She studied chamber music with Felix Galimir, Donald

Weilerstein, Josef Gingold and members of the Guarneri String Quartet. She furthered her education with studies with Glenn Dicterow, Gregory Fulkerson and Gerald Beal. Her first job after graduation was as violin instructor at the University of Tennessee, in her hometown of Knoxville, where she filled in for her former teacher, William Starr, who was on sabbatical in Japan. She was a member of the University of Tennessee String Quartet and later held a similar position in the University of Maryland String Quartet.

She has toured with Solisti New York and spent many summers playing with the OK Mozart Festival, Grand Teton Music Festival, and Bellingham Festival of Music. In 2008 she taught at Duke University as well as maintaining a private studio. Also that year, she performed Bill Robinson's *Sonata for Solo Violin #4* at Brevard, NC. She performed on Bill Robinson's 2012 concert at Duke. Bill has composed two pieces for her to play with her husband oboist Joseph Robinson.

Rebecca Robinson, mezzo-soprano, is quickly making a name for herself as a rising talent in the opera world. An accomplished young singer, she is currently in her second year as a Master's student of Sanford Sylvan's at McGill University in Montreal. Ms. Robinson has studied under the tutelage of renowned artists including Jane Bunnell, Susanne Mentzer, Karen Beardsley Peters, and the late Beverly Bower.

Bonnie Thron; Principal cellist of the North Carolina Symphony, Bonnie has been a concerto soloist with many orchestras in North Carolina, New England, Maryland and Panama. She has been a soloist and frequent collaborator with the Brussels Chamber Orchestra during their summer North Carolina residencies. Bonnie plays with the Mallarme Chamber Players and was involved in their latest cd release "Songs for the Soul" which consists of music by African American composers. Formerly a member of the Peabody Trio and the Denver Symphony, she also performed with the Orpheus Chamber Ensemble and Speculum Musicae in NYC. She has been a frequent guest artist with the Apple Hill Chamber Players in her home state of New Hampshire and participates every August in the Sebago Long Lake Music Festival in Harrison, Maine. As well as degrees from the Juilliard School, Bonnie also has a BSN from the Johns Hopkins School of Nursing and worked for several years as a nurse in Baltimore.

Tom Warburton retired in May of 2005 after 36 years on the musicology faculty at the University of North Carolina. There he taught a variety of courses, both in music history and music theory; he also received two teaching awards. He has published on a variety of topics, several in recent years concerning music of the United States during the twentieth century. For three years he was organist at Trinity United Methodist Church in Durham and for seven years he served as Minister of Music at First Presbyterian Church, where he conducted the Adult and Handbell Choirs.

Xi Yang began his distinguished music career when he was a student at the Conservatory of Music in Beijing, China where he studied both violin and viola Performance. He had his first solo debut when he was 9 years old. By the age of 12 he made an average of 200 solo appearances a year in China. He won the National Violin Competition in Shanghai and made his solo debut with the Beijing Philharmonic Orchestra. He then, toured China with the Beijing Youth Symphony as a soloist and concertmaster.

Arriving in the United States, Mr. Yang won a National Strings Competition in Arkansas and has performed numerous solo recitals, chamber music concerts and gave master classes to young string players from many public schools and colleges. A graduate of Indiana University School of Music, he studied violin performance and chamber music ensemble, from baroque style to modern composers, under the guidance of James Buswell, Nelli Shkolnikova, Josef Gingold and Rostislav Dubinsky. Mr. Yang was the violinist and then Principal Violist for the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra, Florida Grand Opera and the Principal Viola with the Symphony of the Americas. He is now the assistant concertmaster and conductor with the Raleigh Symphony Orchestra and Principal Violist with the Carolina Philharmonic. A well established violinist and violist in North Carolina and beyond, he has recently performed solo concerts with some of the major Orchestras in China.

Some Hallucinations

He thought he saw an Elephant,
That practiced on a fife:
He looked again, and found it was
A letter from his wife.
"At length I realize," he said,
"The bitterness of life."

He thought he saw a Buffalo
Upon the chimneypiece:
He looked again, and found it was
His Sister's Husband's Niece.
"Unless you leave this house," he said,
"I'll send for the Police!"

He thought he saw a Rattlesnake
That questioned him in Greek:
He looked again, and found it was
The Middle of Next Week.
"The one thing I regret," he said,
"Is that it cannot speak!"

He thought he saw a Banker's Clerk
Descending from the 'bus:
He looked again, and found it was
A Hippopotamus.
"If this should stay to dine," he said,
"There won't be much for us!"

--Lewis Carroll

The Purist

I give you now Professor Twist,
A conscientious scientist,
Trustees exclaimed, "He never bungles!"
And sent him off to distant jungles.
Camped on a tropic riverside,
One day he missed his loving bride.
She had, the guide informed him later,
Been eaten by an alligator.

Professor Twist could not but smile.
"You mean," he said, "a crocodile."

--Ogden Nash

You Are Old, Father William

"You are old, father William," the young man said,
"And your hair has become very white;
And yet you incessantly stand on your head--
Do you think, at your age, it is right?"

"In my youth," father William replied to his son,
"I feared it might injure the brain;
But now that I'm perfectly sure I have none,
Why, I do it again and again."

"You are old," said the youth, "as I mentioned
before,
And have grown most uncommonly fat;
Yet you turned a back-somersault in at the door--
Pray what is the reason of that?"

"In my youth," said the sage, as he shook his grey
locks,
"I kept all my limbs very supple
By the use of this ointment--one shilling the box--
Allow me to sell you a couple?"

"You are old," said the youth, "and your jaws are to
weak
For anything tougher than suet;
Yet you finished the goose, with the bones and the
beak--
Pray, how did you manage to do it?"

"In my youth," said his father, "I took to the law,
And argued each case with my wife;
And the muscular strength, which it gave to my jaw,
Has lasted the rest of my life."

"You are old," said the youth, "one would hardly
suppose
That your eye was as steady as ever;
Yet you balanced an eel on the end of your nose--
What made you so awfully clever?"

"I have answered three questions and that is
enough,"
Said the father. "Don't give yourself airs!
Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff?
Be off, or I'll kick you down stairs!"

---Lewis Carroll