

Memorial Concert for Akanda

with Music by Bill Robinson

Nelson Music Room, East Duke Building, Duke University
Wednesday, February 10, 2010 8:00 PM

An Introduction to Akanda's Life Bill Robinson

Ananda Duet (June 3—July 7, 2009) for Violin and Violoncello
(premier performance)
Eric Pritchard, violin; Fred Raimi, cello

- 1) Overture *Moderato Akanda*
- 2) A Catchy Little Tune *Aerobic Allegro*

Gayatri Sonata (2005) for Violoncello and Piano *(concert hall premier)*
Bonnie Thron, cello; Nancy Whelan, piano

- 1) First Movement *IWHWIFATBS*
- 2) Gayatri Mantra *With Devotion*
- 3) Rondo Cappuccino *Git Them Toes to Tappin'*

Ananda Songs (2007) for Soprano, Violin, and Piano *(premier performance)*
Penelope Jensen, soprano; Eric Pritchard, violin; Randall Love, piano

- 1) A Sufi Song *With Shining Heart*
- 2) Who Am I? *Adagio ramana maharshi*
- 3) Hare Krishna Mahamantra *Chaconne sankirtana*

Quartet for a New Beginning (2006) for Violin, Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano
Aurora Musicalis (Izabela Spiewak, violin; Jimmy Gilmore, clarinet; Elizabeth Beilman, cello; John Noel, piano)

- 1) Rajas *Marcia kaliyuga*
- 2) Tamas *Alla marcia funebre*
- 3) Satvas *Preambling; Logarithmus*
- 4) Celebration (after the Dust Settles) *Marcia prestidigitalis*

Akanda was born Catherine Claire Robinson, 29 December, 1946, to Heber and Frances Robinson in Cleveland, Ohio. In 1953 the family moved to Denton, Texas until 1961 when they moved to Beverly, Massachusetts. She graduated from Beverly High School in 1964.

Shortly after that she started an acting career in Boston. In 1971 she starred in "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" at the Charles Playhouse there. The next year she moved to Denver and was active in theater there for many years.

In the late 1970s she stopped acting for four and a half years, and devoted her time to studying metaphysics at the Astro Consciousness Institute for Self Enlightenment and Peace in Denver, earning a Bachelor of Divinity degree.

In 1981 at the Steamboat Repertory Theatre, Steamboat Springs, she played in "Rainmaker" as Lizzie Curry. She also appeared in "Camelot".

In 1983 at the Germinal Stage in Denver, she played the title role in Ibsen's "Hedda Gabler".

Akanda moved to Estes Park and occasionally acted in local productions put on by the Fine Arts Guild. She sang with the Estes Park Chorale and the Oratorio Society. Akanda worked in various retail stores downtown most recently Awesome Shirtworks, Rock Wall-T's and Forget Me Not. For the most part she led a quiet life for the last twenty years. She never married and had no children. Akanda died peacefully in her sleep June 3, 2009 at age 62 after six months of difficulties with her heart and asthma. She is survived by her brother John Robinson, living in Massachusetts, and Bill Robinson, as well as her uncle and aunt, David and Lenore Vanderkooi in Nashville Tennessee.

Her laughter and free-spirited personality will be missed by all that knew her.

About "Ananda Duet"

Ananda-Eric Pritchard asked me to write a duet for violin and cello for performance in Spring 2010 with Fred Raimi, in a concert given by the Mallarme Chamber Players. The guidelines were that it should be in the tradition of such duets to be technically challenging, and to be between 10 and 15 minutes long.

So, I took time off the composition of the *Hanuman Chalisa* portion of my *Mantra Cantata* to write this little duet. After the first day of composition, in the evening I heard that my sister Akanda had died the night before in Colorado. After several days when I could get back to writing music, the mood of the music seemed certain to reflect the moment.

About the "Gayatri Sonata"

The Gayatri Mantra is a sacred chant in Hinduism: *Om Bhur bhuvah svahah Tat savitur varenyam Bhargo Devasya dheemahi Dheeyo yo nah prachodayaat*

Any translation is highly approximate, but it is something like; "Oh Divine Beings of all three worlds, we meditate on the glorious splendor of God. May He himself illumine our minds." The theme of the second movement goes to this mantra.

The tempo marking of the first movement, "IHWIFATBS", stands for "It won't hurt when I fall off this barstool". Notice that this lyric fits the theme...

This sonata is in memory of my mother, Frances Vanderkooi Robinson Westman, who died in February 2005. She played both the cello and the piano. I also had in mind during the composition two cellists: David Vanderkooi, my uncle, and Jonathan Kramer, of the music department at NCSU and Duke.

About *Ananda Songs for Soprano, Violin, and Piano*

I have long wanted to set Rumi and here's my chance, an excerpt changed around for my peculiar purposes. I wrote the poem *Who Am I* in three minutes at a gas station in West Virginia after listening to cassettes of Ram Dass talking about Ramana Maharshi. The *Hare Krishna Mahamantra* started off in 2002 for six string electric violin and voices in unison (vocal line entirely repetitive); then came a piano and voice version that was too hard for the piano and too simple to sing! Now I have the balance just right, at least I think so.

Lyrics to "A Sufi Song"

If the Beautiful One is not
inside you what is that Light
hidden beneath your cloak?
From a distance you tremble with fear.
Can't you see the mighty warrior
standing
ready in your heart? The flame in his
eyes has seared away every veil!
So why do you linger behind the curtain,
afraid of what you cannot see?
Open your eyes! The Beloved is
staring you right in the face.
If no guru has placed
his Light within your heart
what bliss can you find in this world?

--Rumi

Lyrics to "Who Am I?"

Who am I?
I am not the thought.
What thought?
The thought that I am not the thought is the thought that I am not.
Who am I?
I am not the mind.
What mind?
The mind that thinks the thought that I am not the mind
is the mind that I am not.
Who am I?
I am not the breath.
What breath?
The breath that feeds the mind that thinks the thought that I am not the breath
is the breath that I am not.
Who am I?
I am not the song.
What song?
The song that sings with breath that feeds the mind
that thinks the thought that I am not the song
is the song that I am not.
Who am I?

Lyrics to "Hare Krishna Mahamantra"

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare

About "Quartet for a New Beginning"

Eric Pritchard recommended that I write a quartet with the same instrumentation as Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*. My work is very different! The first three movements are titled after the three gunas of Hinduism. Rajas is restless activity, Tamas is darkness, and Satvas is spiritually elevated and full of light. The last movement is a celebration after the Earth is green again following the changes to come in the near future.

Tonight's Musicians

Elizabeth Beilman, native of Wichita Kansas, is Assistant Principal Cello at the North Carolina Symphony.

Jimmy Gilmore, native of Dallas Texas, is Principal Clarinetist of the North Carolina Symphony, and teaches at Duke University and Meredith College.

Penelope Jensen, soprano, is a native of Colorado and teaches at Duke and at the Oberlin Baroque Performance Institute.

John Noel, pianist, native of Henderson NC, studied at the NC School of the Arts, Oberlin Conservatory, Juilliard, the Schola Cantorum, and Rice University.

Randall Love, pianist, native of Colorado, teaches piano and fortepiano at Duke.

Eric Pritchard, native of Durham NH, teaches violin at Duke, is first violinist of the Ciompi Quartet, and has made this memorial concert possible.

Fred Raimi teaches cello at Duke, and is a member of the Ciompi Quartet.

Bill Robinson, native of Denton Texas, is in the 24th year of his mid-life crisis. This May he will graduate from NCSU with a doctorate in physics and will have to start being responsible for his actions. More details at billrobinsonmusic.com.

Izabela Spiewak, violinist, is a native of eastern Poland. She studied at the Warsaw Conservatory and the LA Philharmonic Institute. She is a member of the Raleigh Symphony Orchestra and has a very prominent violin teaching studio.

Bonnie Thron is Principal Cellist with the North Carolina Symphony and is a member of the Mallarme Chamber Players.

Nancy Whelan, pianist, received her Master of Music from Meredith College and plays professionally in the Raleigh area.