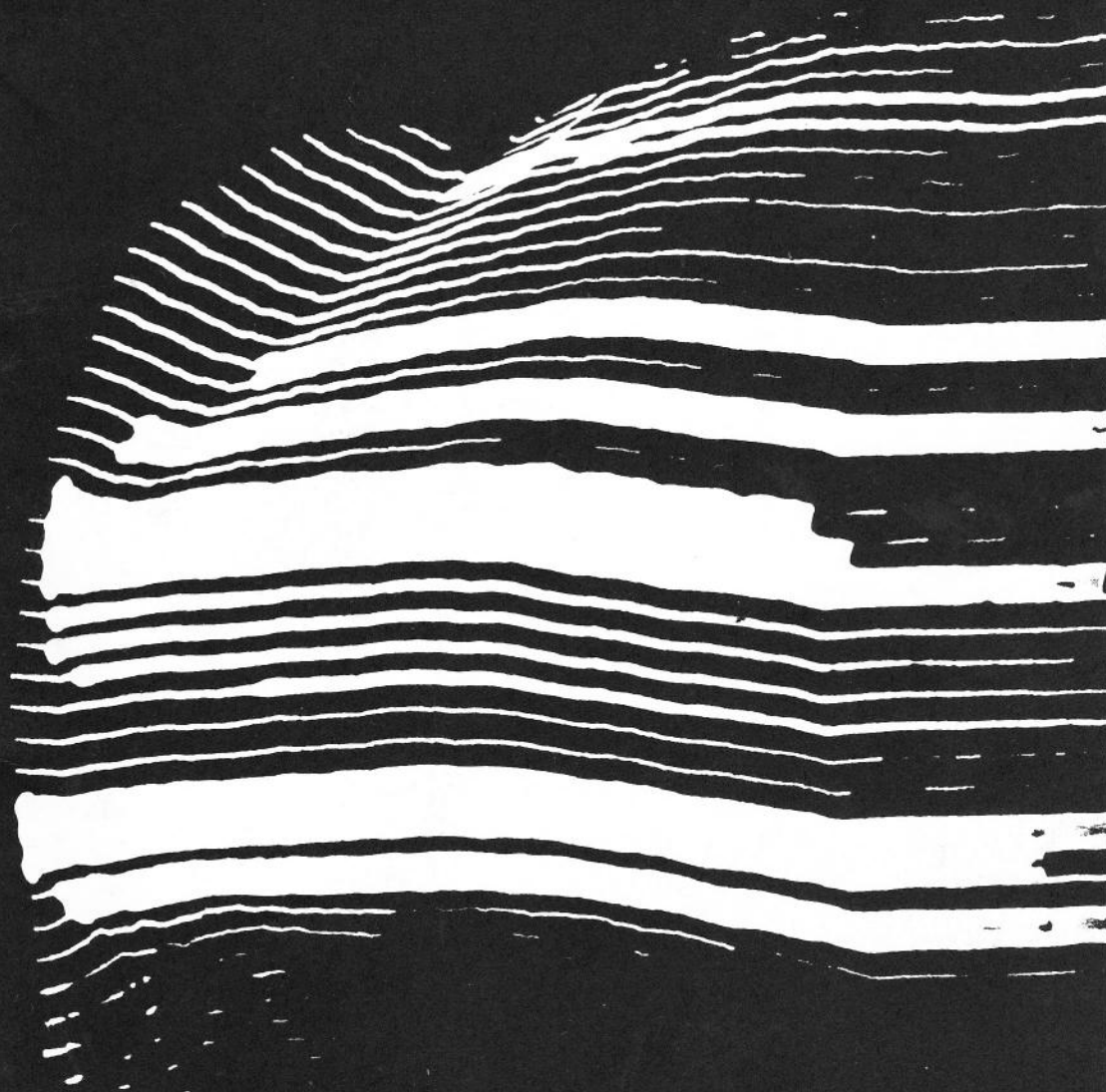


1966 FESTIVAL OF
CONTEMPORARY MUSIC
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
SCHOOL OF MUSIC



1966 FESTIVAL OF
CONTEMPORARY MUSIC
IN HONOR OF
ROSS LEE FINNEY
COMPOSER IN RESIDENCE
ON THE OCCASION OF
THE SIXTIETH
ANNIVERSARY OF
HIS BIRTH

NOVEMBER 2-9, ANN ARBOR

program five

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 8:30 P.M., HILL AUDITORIUM

- FINNEY** FANTASY FOR ORGAN (1957)
- SESSIONS** CHORALE PRELUDE (1938)
Marilyn Mason, organ
- SCHOENBERG** SERENADE, OP. 24 (1923)
MARSCH
MENUETT
VARIATIONEN
SONETT VON PETRARCA (für eine tiefe Männerstimme)
TANZSZENE
LIED (ohne Worte)
FINALE
John Mohler, clarinet
Laurence Teal, bass clarinet
Marion Semchyshen, mandolin
Peter Griffith, guitar
Gilbert Ross, violin
Francis Bundra, viola
Jerome Jelinek, cello
Norman Bradley, bass voice
Thomas Hilbish, conductor
- INTERMISSION
- WEBERN** ENTFLEHT AUF LEICHTEN KAEHNEN, OP. 2 (1908)
- SCHOENBERG** FRIEDE AUF ERDEN, OP. 13 (1907)
University of Michigan Chamber Choir
Thomas Hilbish, conductor
- FINNEY** THE NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE (1965)
FOR SOLO VOICES, CHORUS, AND CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
Waldie Anderson, Narrator
John Dietz, Chanticleer
Noel Rogers, Pertelote
Norman Bradley, Fox
William Hall, Folksong singer
University of Michigan Chamber Choir
and Orchestra
Thomas Hilbish, conductor

Seventy-fourth Concert, 1966-1967

Focal point of the 1966 FESTIVAL OF CONTEMPORARY MUSIC is the University of Michigan's Composer in Residence, **Ross Lee Finney**, who celebrates his sixtieth birthday this year. Because of the variety and profound impact of his music, his steady rise to a position of international recognition, the many contributions of his restless mind to the field of arts and letters, and because of his remarkable gifts as a teacher of composers and invaluable member of the University faculty, the School of Music is honored to be able to devote a major portion of the present Festival to the music of Ross Lee Finney.

Mr. Finney was born December 23, 1906, in Wells, Minnesota. Following his early training at Carleton College and the University of Minnesota, he studied in Paris with Nadia Boulanger and later with Alban Berg in Vienna. In 1928 he spent a year at Harvard University, then joined the faculty at Smith College. During the mid-30's he studied informally with Roger Sessions. At Smith he founded the Smith College Archives, the Valley Music Press, and conducted the Northampton Chamber Orchestra. His setting of poems by Archibald MacLeish won the Connecticut Valley Prize in 1935, and the *First String Quartet* received a Pulitzer award in 1937. His music was presented at one of the earliest Composers Forums by the WPA in New York. He spent 1937 in Europe on a Guggenheim Fellowship. The early piano works and his first orchestral music date from this period.

World War II separates the earlier compositions from the better-known ones of the mid-40's. Following service in the Office of Strategic Services, for which he received a Purple Heart and Certificate of Merit, Mr. Finney composed the *Christmastime Sonata*, the *Pilgrim Psalms*, and the *Fourth String Quartet*, the latter subsequently published by the Society for the Publication of American Music. Following a second Guggenheim Fellowship, Mr. Finney joined the University of Michigan faculty in 1948.

1950 is one of the most significant dates in the musical career of Ross Lee Finney, for it was the year of the composition of the *Sixth String Quartet*, the first twelve-tone work in his portfolio and the first one to make use of what he has come to call "complementarity." The pitch details of this piece were ordered on the basis of the twelve-tone technic, while the large form still adhered to tonal tradition. Although the serial methods employed in each work composed since 1950 have been somewhat different, as have the tonal schemes, the basic principles have remained constant and have given rise to a remarkably productive period.

During the past sixteen years Mr. Finney has received numerous commissions and performances, The Boston Symphony Award, a grant from

and membership in the National Institute of Arts and Letters, honorary membership in Phi Beta Kappa, and an honorary doctorate from Carleton College. He has travelled abroad several times as a special lecturer for the Department of State, and has served as consultant to the Fulbright Commission, the Ford Foundation, and the U.S. Commerce Department. In 1963, with a research grant from the Graduate School, he established the University of Michigan Electronic Music Studio. Festivals of his music have been presented at the 1965 Congregation of the Arts at Hopkins Center of Dartmouth University, in Hanover, New Hampshire, at the University of Kansas, and at the University of Southern California. His *Second Symphony* represented the United States at the 1963 Rostrum of International Composers at UNESCO headquarters in Paris. He has served as Composer in Residence at the American Academy in Rome and as traveling scholar for Phi Beta Kappa. His commissioned score for the Sesqui-centennial Celebration of the University of Michigan will be presented at the 1967 May Festival.

Donald Harris (b. 1931) composed his *String Quartet* in 1965 in response to the Samuel Wechsler Commission of the Berkshire Music Center. It was first performed at Tanglewood at the 1965 Summer Festival. The composer wished to create an intense, compact, virtuoso composition with a high degree of independence of the parts, in which thematic and harmonic considerations overshadowed rhythm and timbre. Two tempi are employed, alternating with each other in sections that become smaller as the piece progresses. Mr. Harris, a student of Ross Lee Finney at Michigan until a Fulbright Grant took him to France in 1955, has lived in Paris for eleven years, "not as an expatriate, but as an emissary of American Music." He is currently on a Guggenheim Fellowship, is music consultant to the U.S. Information Service in Paris, received the first Royaumont Award, and is presently preparing a biography of Alban Berg. The *Quartet*, respectfully dedicated to Ross Lee and Gretchen Finney, is similarly intended to honor the University and the Stanley Quartet.

Mr. Finney's First Piano Quintet was composed in Ann Arbor in 1953 and received its first performance by Marian Owen and the Stanley Quartet. The *Quintet* originally began as a string quartet. Two movements were copied before the composer decided to completely rework the piece as a quintet. In the new version the piano adds what Mr. Finney calls "reverberation" to the quartet's music. The *Quintet* is composed upon one series, but the series undergoes several permutations during the four movements. These permutations are arranged in such a way that their relationship to the original series is always apparent. The *Quintet* is recorded by Columbia in a performance by the Stanley Quartet with Beveridge Webster.

PROGRAM FIVE

The *Fantasy for Organ* of **Ross Lee Finney** was begun in Pasadena and completed in Ann Arbor in March of 1957. Composed for and dedicated to Marilyn Mason, it received its premier performance by her in New York that year at a meeting of the American Guild of Organists. Like the *Fantasy for Cello* and the *Fantasy in Two Movements for Violin* (written for Yehudi Menuhin), the *Organ Fantasy* is a virtuoso work, shorter than the other two, but markedly similar in use of the series and scalar figuration.

Roger Sessions (b. 1896), one of the most distinguished of American composers, entered Harvard at the age of fourteen, studied at Yale with Horatio Parker, and in 1917 joined the faculty at Smith College. After a period of study with Ernest Bloch, he lived abroad from 1925 until 1933, holding a Guggenheim Grant, the Prix de Rome, and a Carnegie Fellowship. A dominant figure in the International Society for Contemporary Music and the League of Composers, he has devoted many years to the training of composers and the performance of their music. Mr. Sessions recently retired from his post at Princeton University. The *Chorale*, composed in 1938, is his first composition for organ (there is a later set of three Chorale Preludes). It opens with a florid toccata and moves to a

full chordal passage. These two textures alternate throughout the piece and lead to a final fanfare. The *Chorale* is not based upon a known tune. Miss Mason has recorded the work for Esoteric.

In 1923, after several years of apparent sterility as a composer, **Arnold Schoenberg** (1874–1951) published the *Five Piano Pieces*, Op. 23, the last of which introduced the twelve-tone technic to the general public. A less well-known work, the *Serenade*, Op. 24, begun in 1921, was also completed in 1923. The *Serenade* combines tentative use of the twelve-tone method with rigidly classical forms and an instrumentation that lends the work a strangely plaintive quality. It is chamber music in essentially the same vein as *Pierrot Lunaire*, composed ten years earlier. Yet, with the completion of the two pivotal and quietly revolutionary pieces of 1923, Schoenberg moved on to new heights as a composer, using the new technic for the remainder of his life.

The early *capella* chorus by **Anton Webern** (1883–1945), *Entflieht auf leichten Kähnen* (Take Flight in Light Barks), Op. 2—a setting of a text by Stefan George—is a brief, tonal work based upon canonic principles. It opens and closes with a strict two-part canon, the voices being doubled in sixths and thirds; the middle section is a canon in four parts. This composition was produced while Webern was a student of **Arnold Schoenberg**, and some of its characteristic features are evident in the latter's polyphonic choral setting of C. F. Meyer's *Friede auf Erden* (Peace on Earth), written only shortly before.

The Nun's Priest's Tale, commissioned by the Hopkins Center for the Congregation of the Arts at Dartmouth in 1965, was begun at Oxford during the Summer of 1964 and completed in Ann Arbor later that year. The work took its present form because of **Mr. Finney's** well-known love of folk songs, his growing interest in opera, and the charm of the Chaucer text. The *Tale* might well be called a secular miracle play, complete with priest and chorus. The story of the fox and his wily attempts to catch Chanticleer are in one form or another a secure part of all folk cultures. Chaucer tells the story from the barnyard point of view, while the folk singer favors the fox. Mr. Finney has added to both of these and taken liberal cuts in each. The folk singer opens and closes the piece, providing a frame for the action. Periodically Chanticleer's wives (the female chorus) cluck worriedly, and the wise male chorus comments on the action in approved I-told-you-so fashion. The score calls for occasional squawks from oboe and bassoon reeds, glissandi, shrieks, and other appropriate barnyard-like sounds, while at one point all performers shout text together. Such a happy combination of humor, subtlety, and craftsmanship has rarely been seen in any age.