



DAVID BOWLIN, violin

## LUCIANO BERIO — HUANG RUO

OBERLIN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC ENSEMBLE

TIMOTHY WEISS, conductor

### LUCIANO BERIO (1925-2003)

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| 1) <i>Sequenza VIII per violino solo</i> (1976) ..... | 14:22 |
| 2) <i>Corale (su 'Sequenza VIII')</i> (1981) .....    | 17:49 |

### HUANG RUO (b. 1976)

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|--|-------|
| 3) <i>Four Fragments</i> (2006) .....                        | 11:46 |
| 4) <i>Violin Concerto No. 1, "Omnipresence"</i> (2004) ..... | 31:40 |

Total: 75:40

This recording of works by **Luciano Berio** and **Huang Ruo** affords a rare opportunity. It is the chance to hear music that stands alone as a solo paired with a companion version that is accompanied by an ensemble, each with almost identical musical material in the violin part.

Luciano Berio's *Sequenza VIII* for violin solo came first, in 1976. The subsequent accompanied version, *Corale* (1981), both reflects on and elucidates the original *Sequenza*. For Huang Ruo it was the reverse; his *Violin Concerto No. 1, "Omnipresence"* came first in 2004, followed by *Four Fragments* in 2006 as a thoughtful reconsideration of the concerto. It is clear that the presence or absence of musical partnership is central to each piece's message. The solo pieces are soliloquy or monologue—the musings of an individual. The concerto versions take on an epic quality, with the solo violin acting in the leading role, but supported or challenged with a far greater sense of narrative and context. *Corale* has many moments where solo lines emerge from the ensemble, at times outshining the solo violin part. In *"Omnipresence"* the orchestra roars forth, often overwhelming the solo violin part, even as it supports it. The solo violinist thus becomes a traveler, finding voice in different situations, either alone or in company. —David Bowlin



Tanya Rosen-Jones

Violinist **David Bowlin**'s performances of a broad range of repertoire have taken him across North America, Europe, and Asia, and won him critical acclaim from the *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, and others. Solo performances include dozens of premieres, including the world premiere of *Mahagoni*, a violin concerto written for him by Austrian composer Alexandra Hermentin, at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall with the Bulgarian Virtuosi.

As a chamber musician and ensemble leader, Bowlin performs extensively in both traditional and contemporary classical genres. He is a founding member of the highly acclaimed International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), a member of the Oberlin Trio, and a former member of the Naumburg Award-winning Da Capo Chamber Players, whose recording of music by Chinayr Ung was named one of NPR's 5 Best American Contemporary Classical Albums of 2010. Collaborations include performances with Richard Goode, Mitsuko Uchida, and members of the Guarneri, Juilliard, and Mendelssohn quartets. Recent concerts include tours with Musicians from Marlboro, performances with the Oberlin Trio in South Korea, and guest concertmaster appearances with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Recording credits include works of more than a dozen major composers for the Bridge, Arsis, New Focus, Naxos, and Mode record labels. He has performed live radio broadcasts on WQXR New York, Chicago Public Radio, Vermont Public Radio, and WCLV Cleveland, and has been heard on nationwide broadcasts of *Performance Today*.

Bowlin is a member of the violin faculty at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. He previously taught at the Juilliard School as assistant to Ronald Copes. He has taught on the faculties of many summer festivals, including the Kneisel Hall Chamber Music Festival, the Mannes Beethoven Institute, and the Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival.



Tanya Rosen-Jones

Conductor **Timothy Weiss** has gained critical acclaim for his performances and brave, adventurous programming throughout the United States and abroad. With a repertoire that is vast and fearless, ranging from masterworks to very recent compositions and an impressive number of premieres and commissions, Weiss' work has been recognized by the League of American Orchestras with an Adventurous Programming Award. During his 21-year tenure as music director of the Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble, Weiss has brought the group to a level of artistry and virtuosity in performance that rivals the finest professional new music groups.

Since 2005, Weiss has served as music director for the Newark Granville Symphony Orchestra, a professional ensemble in the Columbus, Ohio, area. He has also remained active as a guest conductor with the BBC Scottish Symphony in Glasgow, the Britten Sinfonia in London, the Melbourne Symphony in Australia, the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), and the Detroit Chamber Winds and Strings.

A committed educator, Weiss is professor of conducting at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, where he helped create and mentor the ensembles eighth blackbird and ICE. He holds degrees from the Royal Conservatory of Music in Brussels, Northwestern University, and the University of Michigan.



Kevin Reeves

Deemed by the *New York Times* “a hotbed of contemporary-classical players” and a “rural experimental haven,” the Oberlin Conservatory of Music cultivates innovation in its students. The conservatory’s critically acclaimed **Contemporary Music Ensemble (CME)**, under the direction of Timothy Weiss, performs music of all contemporary styles and genres: from minimalism to serialism, to electronic, cross genre, mixed media, and beyond.

CME has worked with and premiered works by many prominent composers including George Crumb, Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Helmut Lachenmann, David Lang, Joan Tower, and a long list of others. CME also regularly premieres the works of Oberlin faculty, student, and alumni composers.

Oberlin has long been an undergraduate mecca for training composers, chamber musicians, and ensembles. It has produced scores of powerhouse new music performers and ensembles that began their careers as members of CME, including the three-time Grammy Award-winning sextet eighth blackbird and the 2014 Musical America Ensemble of the Year International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE).

In addition to its concerts at Oberlin, CME is regularly presented on tour. In recent years, the group has performed at the Winter Garden, Miller Theatre, Merkin Concert Hall, Harvard University, Benaroya Hall, Palace of Fine Arts, and Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall, as well as in numerous partner concerts with the Cleveland Museum of Art. CME also has been featured on a number of commercial recordings, including John Luther Adams’ *In the White Silence* (New World Records), Lewis Nielson’s *Écritures: St. Francis Preaches to the Birds* (Centaur Records), and releases on Oberlin Music.

### ***Sequenza VIII per violino solo (1976)***

### ***Corale (su 'Sequenza VIII') for violin, two horns, and strings (1981)***

**Luciano Berio** (Oneglia, Italy, 1925-Rome, 2003)

A pioneer of electronic music and a member of the post-war Darmstadt avant garde, Luciano Berio was equally devoted to history, as shown by his numerous arrangements of music from the past. Making the distinction between modern and post-modern all but meaningless, Berio directed IRCAM's department of electroacoustics in Paris, taught at Juilliard and Harvard, and created a rich and extremely diverse oeuvre encompassing everything from musical theater to concertos, from a set of piano works inspired by the four elements to a transcription of Beatles songs.

Berio's extraordinary *Sequenza* series encompasses 14 works, each for a different unaccompanied instrument (including voice), composed over a period of more than 40 years. In these compositions, Berio stretched the very limits of each instrument's capabilities while developing an idiom in which elements of the post-war avant garde were infused with a new expressivity.

Over the years, Berio found that the complex soliloquies of the *Sequenza* series invited expansion in the form of the additional instrumental layers. Thus he created the *Chemins* series, ensemble works composed around individual *Sequenza* compositions. The same thing happens in *Corale*, which took *Sequenza VIII* for violin as its starting point; to the unchanged violin part, Berio added a string orchestra and two horns.

The violin *Sequenza* is perhaps best described in the words of violinist Carolin Widmann, who wrote the following introduction to the Universal Edition (UE) score: "The piece circles around the note A, which stands in a permanent conflict with its

neighbor B, but always in a brave, modified, varied and sequenced sense.

The note spins onwards through all states of existence over 11 large UE pages, before landing on a 10-second-long double-stopped A—B: ten seconds of A—B, which are eternity.

But, the dissonance and resistance have lost their monstrosity by then, and the A—B combination sounds almost like resolution and closure. The initially impenetrable fundamental problem transforms itself over 10 minutes of performance (and life) into its own resolution. Great art."

The extremely agitated violin part clearly dominates *Corale*, the expanded version. At the outset, the other instruments merely amplify the unchanging single pitches played by the violin. However, they gradually become more independent, even taking center stage for a brief moment where a pause was inserted into the violin part. In the final section, the rapid figures of the violin, involving sophisticated permutations of a given set of patterns, are set against rhythmically independent and only partially coordinated motifs in the other instruments. For a while, the violin's tempo marking is significantly slower than that of the orchestra; the soloist plays longer and more melodic lines and finally returns to the long-held single pitches of the beginning. —Peter Laki

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**Huang Ruo** (Hainan Island, China, b. 1976)

Awarded first prize by the Luxembourg International Composition Prize, Huang Ruo has been cited by the *New Yorker* as "one of the most intriguing of the new crop of Asian-American composers." His vibrant and inventive musical voice draws equal inspiration from Chinese ancient and folk music, as well as Western avant garde, rock, and jazz, creating a seamless, organic integration using a

compositional technique he calls “dimensionalism.” Huang’s writing spans from orchestra, chamber music, opera, theater, and modern dance to sound installation, multimedia, experimental improvisation, folk rock, and film. Ensembles that have premiered and performed his music include the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Polish National Radio Orchestra, Kiel Philharmonic Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Santa Fe Opera, Washington National Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Opera Hong Kong, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Asko Ensemble, Nieuw Ensemble, Quatuor Diotima, and Ethel Quartet, and under conductors such as Wolfgang Sawallisch, Marin Alsop, James Conlon, Dennis Russell Davies, Ed Spanjaard, Xian Zhang, and Ilan Volkov.

Huang was born in Hainan Island, China, in 1976, the year the Chinese Cultural Revolution ended. His father, a well-known composer in China, began teaching him composition and piano when he was six years old. Growing up in the 1980s and 1990s, when China was steadily opening its gates to the Western world, Huang received both traditional and Western education at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. He was admitted into its composition program, studying with Deng Erbo at age 12. As a result of the dramatic cultural and economic changes in China following the Cultural Revolution, his education expanded from Bach, Mozart, Stravinsky, and Lutoslawski to include the Beatles, rock and roll, heavy metal, and jazz. Huang absorbed all of these newly allowed Western influences without inhibiting factors.

After winning the Henry Mancini Award at the 1995 International Film and Music Festival in Switzerland, Huang moved to the United States to further his education. He holds a bachelor of music degree from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and master of music and doctor of musical arts degrees in composition from the Juilliard School. For more information, visit [www.huangruo.com](http://www.huangruo.com).

#### **Four Fragments for solo violin (2006)**

The Norwegian painter Edvard Munch once said, “I never paint what I see, but what I saw.” Although *Four Fragments* has no connection to or influence from Munch’s painting and style, it shares the same concept: *I compose what I heard, instead of what I hear*. The piece consists of four reflections from my memory, from my living and traveling through time and space. Those reflections are not about any specific event, stage, or emotion, and are not clearly divided into four separate movements. They should be performed in succession without pause. In this continuous journey, all four fragments are closely related, although each of them has its own form, character, and life. —Huang Ruo

#### **Violin Concerto No. 1, “Omnipresence” for violin and chamber orchestra (2004)**

When I began to gather thoughts about composing my first violin concerto, I had the following Chinese words in my mind: *wu suo bu zhi*, which means “it reaches everywhere.” It is a state of being, traveling, and searching. These words do not draw a definite answer or destiny; in fact, they are in a process of moving and living. No word in English can replace or translate this meaning. “*Omnipresence*” is the best English equivalent I can find to describe it. Different people coming from different backgrounds might interpret *wu suo bu zhi* variously—life, death, light, darkness, water, air, land, colors, sound, silence, rhythm, stillness, and so on. However, one constant remains: the various echoes in people’s minds when they are given this same word—or in this case, the same music. With this title in mind, I found my ground to construct a space of music, where sounds and motions can travel and transform into one another without any limitation or border of culture and style. This work is a journey—a journey without an exact name. “*Omnipresence*” is designed for solo violin and chamber orchestra. The entire piece has six sections, played in succession. —Huang Ruo

## Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble

### VIOLIN I

Eliot Heaton, *concertmaster*<sup>B</sup>

Marina Kifferstein, *concertmaster*<sup>H</sup>

Jeffrey Girton<sup>B</sup>

Lauren Manning<sup>H</sup>

Yuri Popowycz<sup>B</sup>

Sam Taggart<sup>H</sup>

Wyatt Underhill<sup>B</sup>

Alana Youssefian<sup>B</sup>

### VIOLIN II

Eliot Heaton, *principal*<sup>H</sup>

Myra Hinrichs, *principal*<sup>B</sup>

Hattie Ahn<sup>B</sup>

Francesca Fetten<sup>H</sup>

Myra Hinrichs<sup>H</sup>

Ayumi Ohishi<sup>B</sup>

William Overcash<sup>B</sup>

Ha-Eun Ryu<sup>B</sup>

Mari-Liis Uibo<sup>B</sup>

### VIOLA

Carrie Frey, *principal*<sup>H</sup>

Aaron Mossburg, *principal*<sup>B</sup>

Kyle Aungst<sup>H</sup>

Carrie Frey<sup>B</sup>

Fatima Gassama<sup>B</sup>

Camille Ripple<sup>B</sup>

Colin Wheatley<sup>H</sup>

### CELLO

Youn Kim, *principal*<sup>B</sup>

Dylan Messina, *principal*<sup>H</sup>

Alexa Ciciretti<sup>B</sup>

Helen Newby<sup>B</sup>

Zizai Ning<sup>H</sup>

Eric Tinkerhess<sup>B</sup>

David Wasilko<sup>H</sup>

### BASS

Will Robbins, *principal*<sup>H</sup>

Jeff Takaki, *principal*<sup>B</sup>

Andrea Beyer<sup>B</sup>

Clint O'Brien<sup>B</sup>

### FLUTE

Helen Park<sup>H</sup>

Amelia Dicks<sup>H</sup>

### OBOE

Daniel Rios<sup>H</sup>

### HORN

Matt McLaughlin<sup>B</sup>

Antonia Chandler<sup>B</sup>

Valerie Sly<sup>H</sup>

### TRUMPET

Jacob Flaschen<sup>H</sup>

### TROMBONE

Zach Guiles<sup>H</sup>

### TIMPANI

Zach Mathes<sup>H</sup>

### PERCUSSION

Justin Gunter<sup>H</sup>

Daniel King<sup>H</sup>

### HARP

Rebekah Efthimiou<sup>H</sup>

**OBERLIN MUSIC** is the official record label of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music.

It celebrates the artistic vision and superlative talent of Oberlin's faculty, students, and alumni—on campus and on tour. In 2010, the conservatory opened Clonick Hall, a superior recording facility dedicated to capturing studio sessions in the heart of the conservatory. Oberlin Music titles are available on CD and digital music channels worldwide. For more information, visit [www.oberlin.edu/oberlinmusic](http://www.oberlin.edu/oberlinmusic).

The **Oberlin Conservatory of Music**, founded in 1865 and situated amid the intellectual vitality of Oberlin College, is the oldest continuously operating conservatory in the United States. Recognized internationally as a professional music school of the highest caliber, it was awarded the 2009 National Medal of Arts, the country's highest honor given to artists and arts patrons.

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