LARK QUARTET

A Farewell Celebration

JOHN HARBISON

KENJI BUNCH

ANNA WEESNER

ANDREW WAGGONER

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A FAREWELL CELEBRATION

JOHN HARBISON

(b. 1938)

String Quartet No. 6 (18:52)

1) I. Lontano (4:33)

2) II. Canto sospeso (6:16)

3) III. Soggetti cavati (2:40)

4) IV. Conclusioni provvisorie (5:23)

KENJI BUNCH

(b. 1973)

5) **Megalopolis** (11:50)

with Yousif Sheronick, percussion

ANNA WEESNER

(b. 1965)

The Eight Lost Songs of Orlando Underground (24:23)

6) I. Early Days (2:29)

7) II. Music in five pulses (how you broke my heart) (3:28)

8) III. Parenthetical blues (timing is everything) (1:19)

9) IV. A few questions for Arnold (2:32)

10) V. Parenthetical folk song (1:29)

11) VI. Music in five pulses (how we used to dance) (2:42)

12) VII. Lament (3:16)

13) VIII. Oh, to live in a world symphonic (7:15)

with Romie de Guise-Langlois, clarinet

ANDREW WAGGONER

(b. 1960)

14) **Ce morceau de tissu** for 2 quartets* (16:16)

Deborah Buck, v1 • Basia Danilow, v2

Kathryn Lockwood, vla • Caroline Stinson, vc

****with the original Lark Quartet***

Kay Stern, v1 • Robin Mayforth, v2

Anna Kruger, vla • Laura Sewell, vc

LARK QUARTET

Deborah Buck, violin • Basia Danilow, violin

Kathryn Lockwood, viola • Caroline Stinson, cello

John Harbison

String Quartet No. 6 (2016)

1. **Lontano**: At first, from a distance, then closer but still not joining, the first violinist stays physically, psychologically and temperamentally distant from the string trio, which plays in a relaxed, rural style.

2. **Canto sospeso**: A long melody is shared, explored, then suspended, eventually displaced and nearly abandoned completely. It reappears as a memory at the very end.

3. **Soggetti cavati**: Framing this brief episode, two sets of initials representing two American patriarchs. Distant point of orientation—the found object and the forthright plan.

4. **Conclusioni provvisorie**: Again the solo violin and the string trio, here in an encounter, at odds, but eventually revealing their common source in some very early vocal pieces which share the same words.

—Program Note by John Harbison

Kenji Bunch

Megalopolis (2017)

In an interview in the mid 1980's, writer Peter Culshaw asked Nigerian superstar Fela Kuti to name his favorite musician, expecting to hear the name of American funk innovator James Brown. Without hesitation, Kuti responded with "Handel," having studied classical music at Trinity College in London decades earlier. As surprised as I was to read this, I was quickly rather ashamed of my surprise. How Eurocentric to assume this brilliant musician would be unaware of, or untouched by, another significant musical genre, however disparate.

This experience led me to think about our Western tendency to sometimes view cultural influence with one-way glass. A Megalopolis is defined as a chain of large urban areas or cities that adjoin one another. In this work, the term suggests the musical fabric that increasingly connects our global landscape, through urbanization and technology. Combining the archetypal Western ensemble of the string quartet with percussion instruments associated with Afrobeat and Highlife music from Nigeria, Megalopolis pays homage to the rhythmic energy, jagged, improvisational melodies, call and response refrains, and hypnotically static harmony of Fela Kuti's work.

Megalopolis was written for the Lark Quartet with Yousif Sheronick, percussion. It was commissioned by the Lark Quartet and the University of Iowa Quartet Residency Program. The duration is approximately 12 minutes.

—Program Note by Kenji Bunch

Anna Weesner

Eight Lost Songs of Orlando Underground (2018)

Orlando Underground is the thinly veiled pseudonym of a blues guitarist (and eponymous member of the well-known band) who harbored a longstanding interest in notated composition. Orlando always wondered what life might have been like if he hadn't joined the band, and hadn't stayed in the band all those years, instead nurturing his other musical interests. (Would things have turned out differently with Jess? This question plagued him particularly.) Orlando never told anyone about how in college he'd discovered and fallen in wild love with classical music. Those afternoons lying on the floor with a cup of black tea and Mahler. He was fascinated by the sensation of order in certain pieces of music, the feeling that microscopic patterns in his own skin came to the surface by way of organized sound. He liked the idea of retrograde, that a thing moving backwards might be both recognizable and new. There was much more to backwards than Paul on Sgt. Pepper, if you allowed for abstraction in meaning, and some composers seemed to understand this. He held a fondness for certain numbers; five, especially, was downright mythical. The five-syllable phrase how you broke my heart had followed Orlando for a seeming decade after Jess left, a relentless, five-pulse mantra that finally—in some kind of involuntary comedy—found new refrains, other words for the pulses; why won't she come back becoming where'd I put my keys, or, please turn out the light. Jess had teased him mercilessly for carrying around and reading Arnold Schoenberg's Style and Idea, but she never told the guys in the band. Jess is the one who found the Eight Lost Songs in a desk drawer after Orlando died.

Note on instrumentation: Jess believes that Orlando Underground chose to write for clarinet quintet in part because of Maya Ochoa, a rather beautiful clarinetist who lived on the fifth floor of his building in Brooklyn whom he saw often in the elevator and to whom he never spoke.

—Program Note by Anna Weesner

Andrew Waggoner

Ce morceau de tissu for Two Quartets (2016)

"Tout débat sur la démocratie passe par elle, et par ce ridicule petit morceau de tissu, souvent en mousseline fine, que les intégristes revendiquent de nos jours comme étant l'essence même de l'identité musulmane".

"Every debate on democracy centers on the question of women, and on that small, ridiculous piece of fabric, often in very fine muslin, which fundamentalists today claim to be the very essence of Muslim identity".

—Fatima Mernissi, *Le harem politique*

I was thrilled to be asked to write a piece for the Lark 30th anniversary, and especially excited in that I got to write for a Lark dream-team consisting of the group's past and present members. The title comes from *Le harem politique*, a visionary work by the great Moroccan feminist and sociologist Fatima Mernissi. Toward the work's conclusion she writes "Every debate on democracy centers on

the question of women and that small, ridiculous piece of cloth that fundamentalists today claim to be the very essence of Muslim identity." Mernissi writes as both a feminist and a devout Muslim, one whose readings of history and scripture lead her to reject the stereotyped view of Muslim women perpetrated by the West and by fundamentalist Islam. The piece takes up this image and the larger, more global struggles of which it is just one example, in the form of a large set of variations on the opening dramatic gesture.

The octet is treated really as two quartets, two groups of women whose materials are related but distinct, pursuing two parallel, at times intersecting, paths. Sometimes the two comment on each other antiphonally, while at others they explore the same ideas but from very different emotional perspectives. Eventually they collide in a violent, uprooting climax, after which they come together, for the first time in the piece, around a shared theme that pulls them upwards and unites them in a common purpose. I like this shape because it suggests to me the power of Mernissi's self-conception as a liberated Muslim woman, and because it yields an inherently musical arc, one that travels through various levels of discussion, disruption and conflict, to a conclusion defined by textural, harmonic and emotional unity.

Commissioned by the Lark Quartet for their 30th anniversary, with generous funding provided by The Mai Family Foundation and The Thelma Hunter Fund of the American Composers Forum.

—Program Note by Andrew Waggoner

COMPOSERS

John Harbison is one of America's most distinguished artistic figures, with honors including a MacArthur Fellowship and a Pulitzer Prize. He has composed music for most of America's premiere musical institutions, including the Metropolitan Opera, and the major symphonies and chamber music organizations. He has been composer-in-residence with the Pittsburgh and Los Angeles orchestras, the American Academy in Rome, and festivals including Tanglewood, Aspen, and Songfest. His compositions include three operas, six symphonies, twelve concerti, a ballet, six string quartets, song cycles, chamber works, a large body of sacred music, and an expanding list of jazz compositions. Harbison is Institute Professor at MIT.

Kenji Bunch infuses his music with folk and roots influences. "Clearly modern but deeply respectful of tradition and instantly enjoyable" (*The Washington Post*), his music has inspired a new genre classification: "Call it neo-American: casual on the outside, complex underneath, immediate and accessible to first-time listeners... Bunch's music is shiningly original." (*The Oregonian*). Bunch's discography includes recordings on Sony/BMG, EMI Classics, Koch, RCA, and Naxos labels. Having earned degrees in both viola performance and composition from the Juilliard School, Bunch was a founding member of the Flux Quartet and Ne(x)tworks. Residing in Portland, Oregon, he serves as Artistic Director of Fear No Music.

Anna Weesner grew up as a flutist, playing as a teenager in the New Hampshire Youth Orchestra and the New England Conservatory Youth Chamber Orchestra. The daughter of a fiction-writer father and music-teacher mother, composition was a natural discovery along the way. She studied at Yale (B.A.) and Cornell (D.M.A.).

Weesner's recent output includes *My Mother in Love*, a cycle of ten songs, recently recorded by Cygnus Ensemble and Tony Arnold. Winner of the 2018 Virgil Thomson Award in Vocal Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, she is also the recipient of a 2009 Guggenheim Fellowship. She is the Weiss Professor in Music at the University of Pennsylvania. She lives in Philadelphia and is the mother of two sons.

Andrew Waggoner was born in New Orleans. Called "the gifted practitioner of a complex but dramatic and vividly colored style" by the *New Yorker*, he has worked with the Academy of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields; the Los Angeles Philharmonic; the Saint Louis and Winnipeg Symphonies; the Lark, JACK, and Villiers Quartets; Seattle Modern Orchestra; Tanglewood; Ekmeles; Ensemble Nordlys, of Denmark; and Ensemble Accroche Note, of France. He has received awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and the Roger Sessions Prize from the Bogliasco Foundation. He teaches Composition at Duke University. His music is available through Subito Music, and can also be found at andrewwaggoner.com.

LARK QUARTET

Described by *Strad Magazine* as "Particularly impressive for her surpassing degree of imagination and vibrant sound," violinist **Deborah Buck** has been a member and first violinist of the Lark Quartet for sixteen years. As soloist and chamber player, she has recorded many of America's most celebrated composers for Albany, Decca/Argo, Arabesque, Bridge, ERI, Endeavor, and Koch labels. She was the tenured concertmaster of the Brooklyn Philharmonic from 2008-2013, and has

been the Acting Concertmaster of the Stamford Symphony since 2017. Ms. Buck is Assistant Professor of Violin and Head of Chamber Music at Purchase College, Conservatory of Music, and Co-Executive Director of the Kinhaven Music School in Weston, Vermont. She performs on a violin by Vincenzo Postiglione graciously loaned by the family of Ray and Marcia Corwin.

Violinist **Basia Danilow**'s playing has been described as, "star quality...Ms. Danilow is clearly an accomplished virtuoso whose playing has snap, crackle and pop" (*New York Concert Review*). Basia is concertmaster of the Princeton Symphony Orchestra often appearing as soloist, a member of the Orchestra of St. Luke's and an Associate member of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. Radio and television broadcasts include WQXR, APM's (NPR's) "Performance Today", Vermont Public Radio and PBS. She regularly appears at numerous festivals such as Caramoor, Lincoln Center Festival, Central Vermont Chamber Music Festival and Windham and has recorded for Sony, Atlantic, RCA Victor Red Seal and Bridge Records.

Kathryn Lockwood was a founding member of the Pacifica Quartet and has been the violist in the Lark Quartet for the past sixteen years. She currently performs in duoJalal with percussionist and husband Yousif Sheronick, and teaches at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst and at the John Cali School of Music at Montclair State University. Kathryn is the Artistic Director for the "Four Seasons of Music" and the Music@MoMA, and has recorded for Cedille, Bribie, Innova, Arabesque, and Bridge. Kathryn plays on an unknown Italian viola from the 18th Century Brescian School and performs during the summer for the Broyhill Chamber Ensemble in NC, Elm City ChamberFest in CT and at the Telluride ChamberFest in CO.

Canadian cellist **Caroline Stinson** performs widely as a soloist and chamber musician, and regularly appears as soloist with the Stamford Symphony in CT, where she is also principal cellist. Ms. Stinson has premiered dozens of works for solo cello, concerti and chamber music, and has worked closely with Pierre Boulez, John Corigliano, John Harbison, Shulamit Ran, Steven Stucky, and Joan Tower. More than a dozen recordings include her solo CD, *Lines*, on Albany. Ms. Stinson studied with Alan Harris, Maria Kliegel, Joel Krosnick and Tanya Prochazka, and taught at Juilliard from 2008-2018. She is a member of the Ciompi Quartet and Associate Professor at Duke University. She is co-Artistic Director of Weekend Chamber Music in NY.

GUEST ARTISTS

Romie de Guise-Langlois (clarinet) has appeared as soloist with the Houston Symphony, the Yale Philharmonia, Festival Mozaic, Music@Menlo and Banff Center for the Arts. She has toured with Musicians from Marlboro and has performed as principal clarinetist for the Orpheus, the Saint-Paul, and the Knights Chamber Orchestras, the Orchestra of St. Luke's, as well as the New Haven and Stamford Symphony Orchestras. Ms. de Guise-Langlois earned degrees from McGill and Yale Universities. She is assistant professor of clarinet at UMass Amherst.

Kay Stern (violin) has been concertmaster of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra since 1994. She has also been concertmaster at the Orchestra of St. Luke's, Concordia at Lincoln Center, Cabrillo Music Festival, Cleveland Chamber Symphony, and Youngstown Symphony Orchestra. Passionate about teaching, Stern is a Professor of Violin at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and is Violin

Professor at San Francisco State Conservatory of Music. As the former first violinist and founding member of the Lark String Quartet, she performed and gave master classes throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia.

Robin Mayforth (violin) is currently concertmaster of Symphony Silicon Valley and has served as concertmaster for the San Jose Symphony, Ballet San Jose, Arizona Musicfest, Music in the Mountains Festival Orchestra, Colorado Music Festival, Utah Festival Opera and the San Diego Opera. Robin was the founding second violinist of the Lark Quartet from 1986 until 1993. Her highlight of her years with Lark Quartet was winning the Gold Medal in the 1991 Shostakovich International String Quartet Competition. Ms. Mayforth, received her BM and MM Degrees from the Juilliard School where she studied with Dorothy, DeLay, Hyo Kang and Paul Kantor.

Anna Kruger (viola), is Associate Principal Viola for the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra, Principal Viola for the New Century Chamber Orchestra, and viola professor at CSUS Sacramento. As founding violist of the Lark Quartet from 1985-1998, she toured extensively throughout the United States and Europe, Asia, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Canada, and Russia. During these years the Lark won the Naumburg Chamber Music Award, and received a gold medal in the Shostakovich International String Quartet Competition. Anna received her Bachelors degree from Indiana University and completed her Masters degree at the Manhattan School of Music as a student of Karen Tuttle.

Laura Sewell (cello) was the founding cellist of the Lark Quartet. She has appeared on “Saint Paul Sunday” and “A Prairie Home Companion”, has performed with both

the Minnesota and St. Paul Chamber Orchestras, was a member of the esteemed Artaria String Quartet for nine years. She is currently a member of the Minneapolis-based Isles Ensemble. Ms. Sewell received her Bachelor's degree from the Juilliard School where she was a student of Leonard Rose, and her Master's degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music where she studied with Alan Harris. She also had the unique opportunity, at the age of 17, to study with the legendary cellist, Jacqueline du Pré.

Yousif Sheronick (percussion) has performed around the globe to critical acclaim, genre hopping with leading artists in the classical, world, jazz and rock music arenas. *The New York Times* hails Yousif for his "dazzling improvisations" and his "wizardry on a range of humble frame drums". His influences are far reaching as he grew up playing rock and roll drum set, studied classical percussion through a Masters degree at Yale University and went on to study music from Brazil, India, Africa and the Middle East. His many musical influences are highlighted in duoJalal, his venture with violist and wife Kathryn Lockwood.

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Engineering & editing assistant: Jeanne Velonis
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