

The Rebecca Clarke Society

Newsletter -- Vol. 5 – Dec. 2006

The Rebecca Clarke Society is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization founded in 1999



Newly ORCHESTRATED Viola Sonata now Available for Performance!!

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It's a perplexing riddle: how can a piece of music written nearly 90 years ago be a new work? We (the RCS) commissioned the orchestration of Rebecca Clarke's Viola Sonata (1919) with the hope that this beloved music will now reach untapped audiences through its new guise as the Sonata for Viola and ORCHESTRA. Composer Ruth Lomon (whose own Concerto for Bassoon, and Trumpet Concerto "Odyssey" are critically acclaimed) has brilliantly applied the palette of orchestral colors to the piano part of the Viola Sonata.

The Sonata is by far Clarke's best-known work: there have been more than 15 recordings since 1979. The remarkable story of its origin has often been told, for instance in

Clarke's own program note, and in interviews, all included in *A Rebecca Clarke Reader*.

Clarke described the Viola Sonata and its notorious runner-up status in the chamber music competition as "my one little whiff of success." The Sonata was out of print and virtually forgotten when the rediscovery of Clarke and her music was launched in 1976 by radio producer Robert Sherman of WQXR (also described the *Clarke Reader*).

Clarke wrote no music for orchestra (with the exception of her Combined Carols for String Orchestra). Had the opportunities, training and encouragement been available to Clarke that were available to male composers, she most certainly would have written works for orchestra. The one time she was offered the chance to write for an orchestra, she did not accept it. It came at a time when her confidence as a composer was low, and she was working on becoming

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SAVE THE DATE! Premiere of Orchestrated Viola Sonata: Friday, June 8, 2007

The internationally renowned violist Peter Sulski will be the soloist in the first performance of the newly orchestrated Sonata for Viola by Rebecca Clarke, as part of the St. Paul's Music Festival in Worcester, MA. Sulski has performed the Sonata many times, most recently at (fittingly!) Clark University (Worcester, MA) where he teaches. The June 8 performance will be held at the Festival venue, St. Paul's Cathedral. Ian Watson, the Festival's (and cathedral's) Artistic Director will conduct the Worcester Collegium, a chamber orchestra that Sulski directs (when he is not serving as viola soloist).

Sulski has recorded fourteen compact discs and presently teaches at College of the Holy Cross and UMass Lowell as well as Clark. He is the Artistic Director of the Worcester Chamber Music Society, a member of Mistral (the touring group of the Andover Chamber Music Series) and QX, a

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Violist Peter Sulski will premiere the orchestrated Viola Sonata

Clarke's Recipes – First in a Series

Readers of our newsletters are aware of the difficulties surrounding Clarke's estate, and that copyright law has been invoked to prevent publication of scholarship about her as well as the performance and publication of her music. However, a quirk in U.S. copyright law excludes a certain category of writing: the recipe! "Listings of ingredients as in recipes, formulas, compounds or prescriptions are not subject to copyright protection." See

<http://www.copyright.gov/fls/fl122.html>

Clarke did leave a number of recipes, which her friends Veronica Jacobs and Diane Walsh have generously shared with me (Walsh is a prominent New York pianist, and Jacobs is a violist, whose composer father Walter Leigh wrote a work dedicated to Clarke). So with this Newsletter we begin the publication of Rebecca Clarke's recipes.

CORN PUDDING

Melt 2 tablespoons of butter in a fire-proof dish. Swish it round so as to grease the sides & bottom of the dish. Beat 2 eggs in a bowl; add 1 can cream-style corn & the melted butter. Salt & pepper. That's all. Bake in a moderate oven about 30 minutes, in the fireproof dish.

CORN PUDDING, recipe sent in a letter from Clarke to Diane Walsh, March 29, 1969

Melt 2 tablespoons butter in a fire-proof dish. Swish it round so as to grease the sides & bottom of the dish. Beat 2 eggs in a bowl; add 1 can cream-style corn & the melted butter. Salt & pepper. That's all. Bake in a moderate oven about 30 minutes in the fireproof dish. (Of course if you feel like it you can add a little chopped onion, cooked in the butter; or a little chopped pimento; or both. Good - but not necessary - the one I gave you the other evening didn't have either. But sometimes it's fun to try experiments.)]

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Boston-based string quartet. Sulski was a member of the London Symphony Orchestra for seven years, and in London taught at the Royal College and Trinity College of Music in London. He served as Head of Strings at the National Palestinian Conservatory and as principal violist of the Cyprus State Chamber Orchestra. While in Cyprus he was chamber music coordinator for the Fulbright Commission in Cyprus, working with Turkish and Greek Cypriots.

Ian Watson founded St. Paul's Music Festival in 2003, to bring high-quality music performances to Worcester, MA, in the beautiful setting of the Cathedral. Watson also directs the Arcadia Players baroque ensemble, and he has directed or been soloist with a range of British ensembles, including the *Academy of St. Martin in the Fields*, the *English Chamber Orchestra*, and the *English Baroque Soloists*. Watson has been featured in over 100 broadcasts and recordings. We look forward to the exciting première of Clarke's magnificent Sonata for Viola and Orchestra. More information will be available on the website <http://www.stpaulsmusicfestival.org/> as well as our website, <http://www.rebeccaclarke.org/>]

Sales Brisk!: A Rebecca Clarke Reader in paperback

The first book on Clarke has recovered from the obstacles it faced when first published in 2004: the recall of the book by its original publisher in response to threats of legal action by the manager of Clarke's estate (See our Newsletter from Fall 2004, <http://www.rebeccaclarke.org/pdf/fall2004newsletter.pdf>). In June 2005, the Rebecca Clarke Society issued a paperback reprint of the *Clarke Reader*, and we have been distributing it with great success. We have sold over 300 books to individuals and the *Reader* is now available in more than 120 libraries worldwide. In addition to being available on our website, Barnes & Noble sells it through the Internet, and we make the book available at concerts that feature Clarke's music.

So far three publications have reviewed the book, and more are expected. Prof. Deborah Hayes, writing in the *IAWM Journal* (International Alliance for Women Musicians), describes the *Reader* as a "superb collection of essays and interviews by and about the acclaimed composer and violist" ... "The book is rich in musical examples, photographs, and other illustrations. Curtis provides editorial introductions, and everything is thoroughly footnoted and indexed. A comprehensive bibliography and a discography of 24 recordings provide testimony to the attention Clarke's work has received since her death, most of during the past 15 years." "A *Rebecca Clarke Reader* presents a close view, from several angles, of a major musical figure, in particular an important and influential *woman* musician, whose modesty and self-deprecating view of her own work almost caused a large part of it to be lost forever."

And Rona Commins writes, "Now *you* must read this book. Though being a work of scholarship, it is also an engaging story of musical life in the early twentieth century through a woman's eyes. Through the work of editor Liane Curtis, Rebecca Clarke's creative output is finally being revealed. Through the work of *musicologist* Liane Curtis, we are learning that Rebecca Clarke research is 'reshaping our understanding of twentieth-century music history.'" (in *TRIANGLE*, the Journal of the Mu Phi Epsilon International Music Fraternity). These and other reviews are quoted on our webpage, where the book may be purchased: <http://www.rebeccaclarke.org/reader.html>]

Annie J. Randall, Board member of the Rebecca Clarke Society, and Associate Professor of Music at Bucknell University, has recently completed two works of cutting-edge scholarship: she edited *Music, Power, and Politics* (Routledge, 2004 <http://www.musicpowerpolitics.com/intro.html>), and was co-author (with Rosalind Gray Davis) of *Puccini and the Girl: History and Reception of The Girl of the Golden West* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2005).

Reviews of *Music, Power, and Politics* describe it as "a full frontal attack on the commonplace view of music as little more than innocent diversion or entertainment. The essays ... lead us to a heightened awareness of music's transformative power." The book "demonstrates the ... ways in which music has been used to enact specific political and social agendas. ... A remarkable collection."

The Puccini volume is praised as "a compelling mise-en-scène of Puccini's character and personal life during the composition of *La fanciulla*; of interest to a broad audience of Puccini scholars and fans alike."

Congratulations to Prof. Randall for this significant achievement! Her next project is a study of Dusty Springfield's music and 1960s popular culture, to be published by Oxford University Press.]



The only known photo of Clarke playing the viola. Undated, probably from the early 1920s.

Newly Orchestrated Sonata – continued from p. 1

established as a violist in London. Also, the invitation, to write for the summer Proms festival, was very late, coming on May 24, 1924. In her diary she notes that she does not want to be rushed. We cannot know the full story of this situation, but it seems likely she would have been serving a fill-in for a cancellation; the offer was far from ideal.

While Clarke did not have the range of opportunities available to male composers, she did write this remarkable Sonata, whose scope of emotions and ideas lends itself brilliantly to performance by orchestra. Clarke's Sonata will soon, we hope, become as beloved by orchestral audiences as it is now by lovers of chamber music.

The solo viola part has been precisely retained from that of the viola and piano edition. Violists who know the original version will readily be able to perform the solo with orchestra. The second movement, *Vivace*, is an exuberant scherzo that could be performed as a stand-alone piece for a pops orchestra or whenever a shorter work featuring viola is desired. The orchestration is for chamber orchestra: winds (2, 2, 2, 2, 2), timpani, percussion (in movts. 1 and 3), harp, Celeste (in movt. 2), strings, and solo viola.

Portions of the score are available as PDF documents on our website,

<http://www.rebeccaclarke.org/concerto.html>

Patricia McCarty (whose 1985 recording was another landmark in bringing Clarke and her music to light) is one of many violists enthusiastic about this new arrangement:

"Complementing but not overwhelming the viola line, the impressionistic colors and textures of Ruth Lomon's orchestration of the Rebecca Clarke Sonata offer listeners an opportunity to hear this work on a grand scale, making new friends for this work long beloved by viola players."]

About RUTH LOMON, the orchestrator

A prolific composer in a wide range of media and genres, **Ruth Lomon** is known for music that challenges the intellect as well as moving the heart; music that does not fail to address the nature of the human spirit.



Lomon has received commissions from the Massachusetts Council on the Arts, New Mexico Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, New England Arts, Dinosaur Annex, and ALEA III; awards from the Jory Foundation, American Music Center, Miriam Gideon Award for Composition, and the Hadassah International Research Center; fellowships from MacDowell/Norlin, Yaddo, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Helene Wurlitzer Foundation, and the Bunting Institute/Harvard. She was commissioned by the Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra to compose a trumpet concerto, *Odyssey*, for Charles Schlueter, principal trumpet of the Boston Symphony Orchestra; it was premiered in 1998. Currently she is Composer-in-Residence for the Boston Secession, a professional vocal arts ensemble.

She is presently completing her oratorio, *Testimony of Witnesses*, for vocal soloists, chorus and orchestra. The oratorio sets texts related to the Holocaust, and Lomon has received a grant from the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute to support the premiere performance of this work in 2007. Since 1998, Ms. Lomon has been Composer/Resident Scholar at the Women's Studies Research Center, Brandeis University. See www.ruthlomon.com and <http://www.brandeis.edu/centers/wsrc/>

Most recently, Lomon's "*regardisregard*" was premiered on Sept. 29, 2006 by the Boston Secession. The performance, at Harvard's Sanders Theatre, was a benefit for the Cambridge Housing Assistance Fund (CHAF). Lomon collaborated with Mary Oestereicher Hamill (also a Brandeis Scholar), who created an interactive multi-media art installation, elements of which were drawn from the words of and film shot by homeless people.]

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about membership and past
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