

**Program for June 13, 2003, 7 P.M., Langroise Recital Hall.
Dennis Thurmond & Stewart Gordon, piano soloists**

Fantasy in d minor
Fantasy in a minor BWV 922
Fantasy in g minor

Johann Jacob Froberger (1616-1667)
Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-1788)

Dennis Thurmond

Preludes from Book II
La puerta del vino
Bruyères
La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune
General Lavine—Eccentric

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Preludes from Op. 32
(1873-1943)
g-sharp minor
G major
b minor
f minor

Sergei Rachmaninoff

Stewart Gordon

Computer-generated artificial intelligence images of: Chopin, Bartok, Prokofiev,
Messiaen, Scriabin

Dennis Thurmond

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Intermission
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Music based on songs from dramatic projects written by Stewart Gordon:

Seascape
Intense Encounter
4th of July
Louie
Love Takes a Little Time
Sing Me Somethin' Ricky-Tick
Other Worlds

Stewart Gordon

Improvisations on standards in the styles of great jazz pianists of the 20th century:
Art Tatum Thelonious Monk Chick Corea Herbie Hancock Bill Evans
Keith Jarrett Erroll Garner

Dennis Thurmond

Program Notes for Thurmond/Gordon concert:

The opening three selections all date from an era in which the performer was expected to improvise and embellish on the work of the composer. Johann Jacob Froberger wrote eight fantasies. He indicated no ornamentation in his music, expecting the performer to supply it. He is also a key figure in the development of the Baroque dance suite. The work by Johann Sebastian Bach is representative of a large number of miscellaneous pieces, the composition of which encompasses his entire career. These include preludes, dance movements, fugues, and fantasies. Carl Philipp Emanuel, Johann Sebastian's most famous son, adopted the "new" galant style, but imbued it with a personal expressive intensity, often using highly experimental devices, adding cadenzas, unexpected modulations, and incorporating frequent tempo changes.

Debussy's two volumes of preludes were published around 1910. All carry descriptive titles at the end of the composition. The first of the set performed tonight describes an open market place in the Spanish city of Seville. The second depicts a country landscape of open fields of heather. The third has an obscure title, having something to do with terraces, moonlight, and an area where royalty might hold audiences. Some believe it to be linked to a contemporary newspaper account of the coronation of King George V as King of India. General Lavine was a popular American vaudeville performer in Paris during Debussy's time. His act was based on comic predicaments, slapstick fights, and juggling.

Rachmaninoff admitted to using art works, poetry, literature, and fable as sources of inspiration for his piano works. He steadfastly refused to share these sources, however, stating that the music should stand on its own. His friend, pianist Benno Moiseiwitsch, guessed the source of the b minor prelude, a painting by the Swiss artist Boeklin entitled *The Return*. The composer was so surprised that he acknowledged the source.

Dennis Thurmond writes of the next group: The computer generated AI pieces were done while I was at MIT and had access to some fast computers and some experimental compositional software. I formulated data based on melodic, harmonic and rhythmic traits of many different composers and had the computer run compositional-model programs and generate short compositions.

As a composer Stewart Gordon has written mostly for the musical theater and media projects. In the early 1960's as a young naval officer, Gordon wrote the music for a historic pageant to celebrate the United States Navy's bicentennial. *Seascape* is a song from that score that extols the beauties of the ocean and of living a life upon the sea. *The Gilmore Incident* was an ill-fated film based on an incident in the World War II where the skipper of a submarine, in order to avert an enemy attack, ordered an emergency dive while still on the

bridge, thus saving the lives of his crew and sacrificing his own. The legendary Hollywood director John Ford, a reserve Rear Admiral, agreed to make the film, but ran afoul of Hollywood's labor unions after he used Navy SEALs as cameramen for all of the underwater action. Intense Encounter is music adapted for piano from that score. Stewart Gordon worked on two separate projects that were spin-offs from Mark Twain's writings. The musical Aunt Polly (book by the late Blake Leach) was produced off-Broadway in New York City. Its title refers to Tom Sawyer's aunt. The music adapted for piano comes from the second act opening, a 4th of July picnic in the small river town of St. Petersburg. Louie is the only music not written for a dramatic project, but rather for Stewart Gordon's pet bull terrier. The musical Lovehandles depicts a variety of love relationships. Love Takes a Little Time is sung by a young hustler as he tries to seduce an older woman of means. In Sweet Mississippi Huck and Tom find themselves in a St. Louis saloon at the end of Act I. Tom, who is now married to Becky, will have nothing to do with the saloon girls, but Huck is all for partying and does Sing Me Somethin' Ricky-Tick with them. Finally, Other Worlds is a song from Lovehandles in which a grieving widow longs to join her deceased husband on another plane.

Dennis Thurmond is not only a master of free improvisation, but also is able to create improvised works in historic styles from early periods of keyboard music, through Czerny (who wrote one of the important 19th century works on the art of improvisation), right down to the present age. Tonight he has selected seven of the 20th century giants of improvisation, each with a distinct style of his own. He will use a signature tune of each as a vehicle through which to recreate the magic that made each of these musicians world famous.

Dennis Thurmond biography:

Dennis Thurmond is Director of Electro-Acoustic Media and Associate Professor of Keyboard Studies at the Thornton School of Music. He was formerly the chairman of the music synthesis department and keyboard program at the Berklee College of Music and Teaching Fellow at MIT Center for Advanced Visual Studies. He is currently on the summer faculty at the Utrecht Conservatory in the Netherlands. Mr. Thurmond is a classical and jazz pianist and keyboard synthesist. He is also an elected member of the Acoustical Society of America. His keyboard performance and technical background has included playing synthesizer for the Boston Pops, keyboards for the New York Vocal Jazz Ensemble, being production arranger for the Gospel Review for Symphony Orchestra with Della Reese and Billy Preston, studio pianist for the television series Party of Five and ROM card designer for Kawai Japan. He is a composer and technical consultant for the Music Thru MIDI series and co-composer of the Jazz SophistiCat Series for Alfred Publishing Co. He is a student of Stewart Gordon and Adele Marcus. He has toured Asia, Europe and the US.

Stewart Gordon biography:

Stewart Gordon is Professor and Chair of Keyboard Studies at the Thornton School of Music of the University of Southern California. His academic career has included posts at Wilmington College in Ohio, the University of Maryland, where he served as Chair of the Music Department, and Queens College of the City University of New York, where he served as Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs.

Stewart Gordon is the author of *Etudes for Piano Teachers* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1995) and *A History of Keyboard Literature* (Schirmer Books, New York, 1996). He is also a co-author of *The Well-Tempered Keyboard Teacher* (Schirmer Books, New York 1991, 2000). He has made the videotapes *Memorization in Piano Performance* and *Performance Practice in Late 20th Century Piano Music* (Alfred Music Publishers, Van Nuys, California). As an editor he is currently engaged in a new edition of the 32 Piano Sonatas of Beethoven (Alfred) of which the first volume was released in 2002.

As a composer he writes primarily for musical theater and his shows have been produced in New York, Washington, Savannah, Hollywood, and Hawaii. As a pianist he has recorded the complete preludes of Rachmaninoff, as well as music by Schubert, Schumann, Beethoven, Debussy, and Freitas-Branco. Earlier in his career he toured as a performing pianist having played in cities in the United States, Canada, Europe, the Middle-East, and Asia.

He founded the (now) William Kapell International Piano Competition and acted as its director for 15 years. In New York City he founded the Cultural Heritage Competition and the Great Gospel Competition. In Savannah, Georgia, he founded the Savannah Onstage Music Festivals, as well as its American Traditions Competition, and acted as their artistic director for 14 years. He has served as an adjudicator for many competitions, including the Gina Bachauer, William Kapell, Canadian and National Competitions. Stewart Gordon holds degrees from the University of Kansas (BM and MM) and The University of Rochester (Eastman School) (DMA), as well as a diploma from the Staatliches Konservatorium des Saarlands. His teachers were Olga Samaroff, Walter Giesecking, Cecile Genhart, and Adele Marcus. He has been the recipient of many awards: Ramo Award for service to Music (2001), Maryland State Creative and Performing Arts Award (1982), Maryland State Music Teachers Award for Distinguished Service to Music (1979), and Danforth Teacher Study Grant (1960). He has been elected to several honorary organizations: Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Kappa Phi, Pi Kappa Lambda (music), and Scabbard and Blade (military). As a young man he served 4 years as a junior officer in the United States Navy.