

Shelton "Shelly" Berg

The *All Music Guide* says "Shelly Berg is one of the finest pianists around in the early 21st century playing modern mainstream jazz." His 2005 CD, *Blackbird* (Concord) reached #1 in US jazz radio (Jazzweek) and garnered Record of the Year and Artist of the Year nominations. New recordings include a solo piano CD, *The Nearness of You* (Arbors) and a jazz trio CD, *Follow the Sun*, scheduled for release in Spring 2010 (Concord).

Shelly Berg maintains a busy worldwide schedule of jazz festival and club performances. He has performed, recorded and arranged for renown jazz vocalists Patti Austin, Nancy Wilson, Bobby McFerrin, Kurt Elling, Monica Mancini, Dionne Warwick, Tierney Sutton, Lorraine Feather and Carmen Bradford. He has performed and/or recorded with a "Who's Who" of jazz legends including Ray Brown, Louie Bellson, Eddie Daniels, Peter Erskine, Woody Herman, Arturo Sandoval, Tom Scott, Clark Terry and Bill Watrous, to name a few. Dave Brubeck raves, "Shelly Berg is a great jazz pianist who has a total command of his instrument." A finalist in the 1988 Great American Jazz Piano Competition, Shelly has recorded over 30 disks for the Yamaha *Disklavier* piano.

Shelly has also orchestrated for television and film, as well as for Chicago, Kiss, Carole King, Richard Marx, Joe Cocker, Elliott Smith, Lou Rawls, Steve Miller, and most recently for *Ray Sings, Basie Swings* (Ray Charles/Count Basie Orchestra) and Arturo Sandoval's *A Time for Love* (Concord). He has written for orchestras including the Royal Philharmonic and the American Symphony. His orchestrations are called "magnificent. . . incredible" by Johnny Mandel.

A Steinway piano artist, Shelly Berg is the Dean of the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami. He was previously the McCoy/Sample Professor of Jazz Studies at the USC Thornton School of Music, and a past president of the International Association for Jazz Education (IAJE). In 2003 he was honored as the "Educator of the Year" by the Los Angeles Jazz Society and in 2002 was the recipient of the IAJE Lawrence Berk Leadership Award. In 2000 the *Los Angeles Times* named him one of three "Educators for the Millennium." He has appeared as a performer and lecturer throughout the United States as well as in Canada, China, Mexico, Europe, Israel, Japan, Romania and Venezuela.

Shelly Berg has numerous compositions for jazz ensemble in publication, and his texts include the *Chop-Monster* improvisation series, *Rhythm Section Workshop for Jazz Directors*, *Essentials of Jazz Theory* (Alfred Publishing), and *Jazz Improvisation: The Goal-Note Method* (Kendor Music).

Gabriela Lena Frank

The composer selected to create a new work for the semi-final rounds of the 2013 competition was Gabriela Lena Frank.

Frank was born and raised in Berkeley, and still calls the city home. She is composer-in-residence with the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, and since 2009, the Creative Advisor to the Berkely Symphony Orchestra.

She studied composition and piano at Rice University - piano remains her principal instrument - and earned a doctorate in composition at the University of Michigan, where her teachers included William Bolcom. She was scarcely out of college before the commissions started coming, with ensembles such as the Kronos Quartet, the Seattle Symphony, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic playing her music.

At the Berkeley Symphony, has found a powerful ally in the orchestra's new music director, Joana Carneiro (who succeeded Kent Nagano in 2009). Carneiro and Frank had worked together when both were in residence at the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Frank says her goals are to raise Berkeley Symphony's national profile, enhance the organization's Web presence, and retool Under Construction, the Symphony's new-music reading series.

Mostly, though, she wants to promote the work of young composers. She serves on the board of the American Music Center, a national service organization for composers, says that young composers also need guidance on how to cultivate a working style. "I don't think we talk enough about the creative habit," she says. "How do you get your ideas? It's not so much the act of putting it down on paper, which can be terrifying for someone coming from zero. Composers need to be told that they can be imaginative. We don't talk about that, coming from the conservatory

Frank's music has been commissioned and performed by the Kronos Quartet, San Francisco Symphony, Houston Symphony, Chanticleer Ensemble, the Chiara String Quartet, the Brentano Quartet, Yo Yo Ma and the Silk Road Project, Carnegie Hall, the Emerson Quartet, the San Francisco Symphony, the Chicago Symphony, the Boston Symphony and those of Los Angeles, Atlanta and Baltimore.

2009 was an especially eventful year for Frank as she was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship as well as a Latin Grammy Award for best Contemporary Classical Music Composition for Inca Dances, written for guitarist Manuel Barrueco and the Cuarteto Latinoamericano. In 2010 Frank won a United States Artists Fellow award.

In 2011, Frank released a complete CD of her works, entitled "Hilos," on the Naxos label with the Nashville-based ALIAS Ensemble. It broke into the Billboard's top 100 Classical Recordings and was subsequently awarded a rare "10/10" rating by Classics Today. "Hilos" was nominated for a 2012 Grammy Award in the category of Best Small Ensemble Performance.

Robert Xavier Rodriguez

Robert Xavier Rodriguez was born in 1946 in San Antonio, Texas, where he received his earliest training in piano and harmony. He gained international recognition in 1971 when awarded the Prix de Composition Musicale Prince Pierre de Monaco. Other honors include the Prix Lili Boulanger, a Guggenheim Fellowship, four National Endowment for the Arts, grants, and the Goddard Lieberon Award from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters.

Rodriguez describes his approach in terms of Copland's compositional goal "to show how it feels to be alive today." "I am ...impatient with music that doesn't laugh, or at least smile, as much as it weeps, sulks, or gnashes its teeth....First comes the experience, the music follows." He has written in all genres - opera, orchestral, concerto, ballet, vocal, choral, chamber, solo and music for the theater - and often combines Medieval, renaissance and Baroque techniques with ethnic and contemporary materials.

His interest in crossing genres is illustrated by *The Dot and the Line* for narrator, chamber ensemble and projected images; by his percussion sextet and other compositions, such as his comic opera *La Curandera* or *Hot Buttered Rumba*.

Rodriguez has served as Composer-in-Residence of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the Dallas Symphony, the San Antonio Symphony, among others. He currently holds the endowed chair of University Professor of Music at The University of Texas at Dallas. He resides in Dallas, where he is Professor of Music and Director of the Musica Nova ensemble at the University of Texas, and is active as guest lecturer and conductor.

His music is published exclusively by G. Schirmer.

His composition for two pianos, "Bachanale", was commissioned by the Dranoff International Two Piano Foundation for the 7th International Two Piano Competition.

William Bolcom

National Medal of Arts, Pulitzer Prize, and Grammy Award-winner William Bolcom is an American composer of chamber, operatic, vocal, choral, cabaret, ragtime, and symphonic music.

Born in Seattle, Washington, in May, 1939, exhibited musical talent while still very young. He began composition studies at the age of 11 with George Frederick McKay and John Verall at the University of Washington while continuing piano lessons with Madame Berthe Poncy Jacobson. He later studied with Darius Milhaud at Mills College while working on his Master of Arts degree, with Leland Smith at Stanford University while working on his D.M.A., and with Olivier Messiaen and Milhaud at the Paris Conservatoire, where he received the 2^éme Prix de Composition.

He joined the faculty of the University of Michigan's School of Music in 1973, was named the Ross Lee Finney Distinguished University Professor of Composition in 1994, and retired in 2008 after 35 years. Bolcom won the Pulitzer Prize for music in 1988 for 12 New Etudes for Piano, and his setting of William Blake's Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience on the Naxos label won four Grammy Awards in 2005.

As a pianist, Bolcom has performed and recorded his own work frequently in collaboration with his wife and musical partner, mezzo-soprano Joan Morris.

His music spans the arc from string sonatas and quartets, symphonies, operas, stage and film scores and an extensive catalog of chamber and vocal works.

"What will survive is what nourishes us emotionally and spiritually, probably to the detriment of what is merely interesting. Art is what is irresistible, the writer William Saroyan once said to me, and I have yet to find a better definition of it."

His work "Recuerdos" was commissioned for the 3rd International Two Piano Competition.