March 26, 2006

Recital, Music Forum of El Paso

Dominic Dousa, *University of Texas at El Paso*

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A Musical Portrait of Winter in the Midwest

Dominic Dousa
composer/piano

with

Lesley Chen
Violin

March 26, 2006
El Paso Museum of Art
PROGRAM

A Winter Pastorale (2002)  Dominic Dousa
(b. 1973)

Five Winter Pieces (1998)
I. Non troppo lento
II. Capriccioso, con moto
III. Poco rubato – Con moto
IV. Allegro energico
V. Non troppo lento, poco rubato

Lesley Chen, violin
Dominic Dousa, piano

INTERMISSION

Winter in the Country (1999)
I. Rubato, molto moderato
II. Allegro energico
III. Poco andante
IV. Brillante
V. Evening Song. Con moto, tranquillo
VI. Allegretto con spirito
VII. The Day is Done. Rubato, moderato

Dominic Dousa, piano
PROGRAM NOTES

A Winter Pastorale
Composed January-March 2002; Muncie, IN
Performance Time: Approximately 9 minutes

Five Winter Pieces
Composed November 1997-January 1998; Rochester, MN / Ames, IA
Performance Time: Approximately 20 minutes

Winter in the northern U.S. earns its reputation as being cold and sometimes inhospitable. But with it come scenes that have a character like that of no other season. It can be a somber, reflective time, with its quiet, fallow landscapes and subtle shades of white and gray. At other times, the invigorating chill and bright sun reflecting off the snow-covered terrain create a unique brilliance. With the sun now lower in the sky, the colors of the surrounding environment take on a warm tone and radiance despite the sometimes frigid temperatures.

The sunny, folk-like opening melody of A Winter Pastorale evokes the brighter scenes of the season. Darker contrasting sections alternate with this tune, though each of these sections has its own moments of brilliance. On the whole, the Five Winter Pieces explore more subdued moods. The first piece is barren, sparse, and chilly, with a feeling of staring into a cold winter night. Even with its more rhythmically energetic feel, the second piece retains a darker tone. The third piece features a longer, more lyrical melody, though still its tone is muted. In the second and third pieces there are flashes of exhilaration and excitement that foreshadow the bubbly and exuberant fourth piece. The concluding piece opens with an austere, tired feeling. Slowly the mood becomes more animated, reaching a broadly whirling energetic tone before settling down to a rather stark, but peaceful close.
Winter in the Country
Composed December 1998-January 1999; Rochester, MN / Mt.
Pleasant, MI
Performance Time: Approximately 28 minutes

Though parts or all of several pieces in this suite were written independently as early as the winter of 1996-97, much of the suite was composed between Christmas of 1998 and the first week of the following new year. During this time, I spent my days hiking and driving through my beloved countryside, the river valleys and prairies of southeast Minnesota, and working on the pieces at night. The music reflects the various moods inspired by my experiences of the country in wintertime, as well as the sentiments I associate with the rural Midwest — a sense of simple beauty, nostalgia, goodness, reassurance, and optimism.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Dominic Douza, a native of Rochester, Minnesota, joined the faculty of the University of Texas at El Paso Department of Music in August of 2004. He holds degrees in music from Ball State University (D.A, 2003), Central Michigan University (M.M., 2000), and Harvard University (A.B. summa cum laude, 1995) and in statistics from Iowa State University (M.S., 1998). He also has studied composition in Prague (1995-96). His primary composition teachers include Jody Nagel, David Gillingham, Craig Weston and Milan Slavicky.

Before coming to UTEP, Dr. Douza held teaching positions at St. Mary's University in Winona, MN (aural skills, music appreciation) and Rochester (MN) Community and Technical College (business & economic statistics). As a graduate student, he also has taught music courses at Ball State University, Anderson (IN) University, and Central Michigan University, and statistics courses at Iowa State University.

Dr. Douza’s compositions have received performances in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Peru, China, the Czech Republic, and Finland. Events where his works have been presented include the 2000
World Saxophone Congress in Montreal, the 7th Annual Bach Festival in Trujillo, Peru (2000), and a concert series in Toluca, Mexico that was sponsored in part by the Mexican Institute of Culture (2001).

Two of Dousa's song cycles, *With a Song in My Heart* and *Six Songs on the Poetry of Langston Hughes*, have been recorded by baritone Gerald J. Blanchard (with Dousa at the piano) and released on the CD "With a Song in My Heart" by Blue Griffin Recording. This CD features art songs set to texts of African American poets.

In addition to his activities as teacher and composer, Dousa has remained active as an accompanist and chamber musician.

**Lesley Chen** was born and raised near Boston, Massachusetts, and enjoys a diverse musical career. She holds a Bachelor of Music degree and a Graduate Performance Diploma in violin performance from the Peabody Conservatory of Music, and a Master of Music degree in violin performance from the University of California at Santa Barbara. Her principal teachers include Yuval Yaron, Shirley Givens, Marylou Speaker-Churchill, Magdalena Richter, and Melba Sandberg. Also a composer, she has studied with Rodney Lister and Chen Yi.

For three years, Ms. Chen was a member of the Young Artists String Quartet at UC Santa Barbara. An active advocate of new music, she has collaborated with and premiered works by many contemporary composers, and has been a performer with the Peabody Camerata in Baltimore, as well as the Ensemble for Contemporary Music and the Current Sounds New Music Consortium in Santa Barbara. As an orchestral musician, she has held positions in the Santa Barbara Chamber Orchestra, the Santa Barbara Symphony, and the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra.

A new resident of El Paso, Chen currently teaches at the El Paso Conservatory of Music and performs with the El Paso Symphony, El Paso Opera, and the Las Cruces Symphony. She is also Administrative Director of the El Paso Symphony Youth Orchestras and Librarian for the El Paso Symphony.