



Composer's Wins Keep Coming

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by Pat Rogers

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Composer Bruce Wolosoff has two wins topping a music-filled year. A new full-length recording of his music, "Many Worlds," was released on Dec 12. The ballet, "White City: Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893" has just made some waves. The ballet is based on music written by Wolosoff.

"White City" was selected for the top spot as the Best Dance in 2011 by Chicago Sun-Times dance critic Hedy Weiss. The story, "*11 for '11: The year's best dance*" was published on Dec 22, 2011. The ballet premiered this year.



Scene from "White City"

"White City" is an original ballet featuring choreography by Ann Reinking, a Tony Award-winning choreographer, and Melissa Thodos for Thodos Dance Chicago.

The ballet is based on actual events. It tells the tale of a serial killer who used Chicago's 1893 World Fair (Columbian Exposition of 1893) to attract victims to his "Murder Castle."

The one-act ballet incorporates period costumes, video projections by filmmaker Chris Olsen and a libretto in the program, according to Chicago3media.com.

"White City" was set to Wolosoff's "Songs without Words." Music was performed live on stage by the Carpe Diem String Quartet, who had previously commissioned Wolosoff to write the music.



Scene from "White City"

"White City" premiered on Feb 19, 2011 at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie, IL. It was performed on March 4 at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance in Chicago.



Scene from "White City"

The music in "Songs with Words" marries classical music with blues, classic rock, rhythm and blues

or torch songs. The “songs” are radio-length (around three minutes) as if they were contenders in a musical fray, wanting to be noticed and selected for air time on popular radio stations.

Carpe Diem String Quartet asked Wolosoff to write music that combined classical and rock music. The musical mix was a first-time try for Wolosoff (he was already known for pairing jazz and classical in his work). “Songs without Words” premiered in Manhattan in 2008.

Wolosoff’s latest recording, “Many Worlds,” was released on Dec 12. The album features compositions by Wolosoff that can contain a unique mix of classical with jazz or blues. Music is performed by the composer-pianist.



“Many Worlds” by Bruce Wolosoff

“Many Worlds” is a live recording of a piano recital held on July 9, 2010 at the John Drew Theater at Guild Hall.

The program included music written by Wolosoff but had never been performed by the pianist.

“It was the realization of a lifelong dream of mine to perform my own compositions, combining my earlier life as a concert pianist with my more mature work as a composer,” Wolosoff said. “I even improvised on the record!”

The recording was inspired by the death of Wolosoff’s teacher and close friend Charlie Banacos, who had always loved my playing, he said.

“My last communication from him was his daughter calling me from the hospital and saying, ‘Dad told me to call Bruce and tell him to practice,’” Wolosoff said. “The record is dedicated to him. I am very proud of it, how strong a personal statement that it makes.”

The recital was originally meant for the audience in attendance and a recording for private use only. Wolosoff had been invited to play at Guild Hall by artistic director Josh Gladstone. The recital was recorded by Wolosoff’s friend, Cynthia Daniels, on her insistence. Daniels is a Grammy winning recording engineer with a studio in East Hampton. Prior to the concert, Wolosoff had not performed the piano in public for 19 years.

“We didn’t know at the time that we were making a record for public release,” Wolosoff said. “The evening turned out so beautifully that we decided to release the performances.”

“Many Worlds” is available at Amazon.com and CDBaby. Digital downloads (iTunes, etc.) are available.

This month’s triumphs aren’t Wolosoff’s only reasons to celebrate 2011. The world premiere of Wolosoff’s “Tantric Scherzo” was performed by The Eroica Trio on May 8, 2011 at The Rubin Museum of Art in Manhattan. The trio performed “Tantric Scherzo” again on July 17 at Guild Hall in East Hampton.

BASIC FACTS: Bruce Wolosoff's compositions have been performed internationally and recorded frequently. Details can be found at <http://brucewolossoff.com>.

In the Hamptons, Wolosoff is also known for his work with the Creative Orchestra based at the Hayground School in Bridgehampton. The Creative Orchestra invites elementary students to compose original music and then perform student compositions in a public concert. Traditional and non-traditional instruments are encouraged. The premise is that everyone is capable of composing music.

Carpe Diem String Quartet is led by violinist Charles Wetherbee. For an ensemble line-up and details, visit www.cdsq.org

Thodos Dance Chicago specializes in contemporary dance. www.thodosdancechicago.org/

Eroica Trio is an internationally acclaimed trio. They perform internationally and have eight recordings with several Grammy nominations to their credit. www.eroicatrio.com/

Chicago Sun-Times dance selections for 2011:
<http://www.suntimes.com/entertainment/weiss/9536652-421/11-for-11-the-years-best-dance.html>

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