

New Music Concerts

Robert Aitken, artistic director
35th season | 287th event

Sunday September 18, 2005 – The Pentland Project

7:15 Illuminating Introduction | 8:00 Concert

Jane Mallett Theatre (St. Lawrence Centre, 27 Front St. East)

Box Office 416 366-7723 (1-800-708-6754) | www.stlc.com

Guest Artists: **Judith Forst**, mezzo-soprano;

Heidi Krutzen, harp, **Jane Hayes**, piano

Turning Point Ensemble (Vancouver); **Owen Underhill**, artistic director

Barbara Pentland (Canada 1912 - 2000):

***Commenta** (1981) for solo harp

***Eventa** (1978)

flute, clarinet, trombone, 2 percussion, harp, violin, cello
(NMC commission)

***Five Preludes** for piano (1938)

***Quintet for Piano and Strings** (1983)

***Disasters of the Sun** (1976)

mezzo, flute, clarinet, horn, 2 perc., piano violin, viola, cello, tape

* Canadian work

Thoughts on Barbara Pentland and the 2005 Pentland tour

by Owen Underhill

The September 2005 tour of the music of Vancouver composer Barbara Pentland (1912-2000) is part of a larger Turning Point Ensemble Pentland project which began with a concert in the fall of 2004 and will include a recording of her music to be released on the Centrediscs label in 2006.

A reassessment of the music of Barbara Pentland is timely, as she holds a distinctive place in the history of Canadian music. Underperformed in her lifetime with the possible exception of her piano repertoire, her music has fallen even further into obscurity since her death with several of her more significant works waiting decades for second and third performances. Some factors that may have contributed to this lack of attention are her 'isolation' from the more established central Canadian centres (having lived in Vancouver the last 50 years of her life), the performance challenges and the uncompromising character of some of the music, her feisty and spirited personality which sometimes clashed with the music and academic establishments, and the general malaise and disinterest in 'historical' Canadian music that falls in between the worlds of new music and a smattering of pre-1980 'audience friendly' Canadian repertoire that still gets performed,

The tour program the Turning Point Ensemble is presenting should not be considered a retrospective as it concentrates on the late period of her composition between 1976 and 1983. This period of work exhibits a lyrical and intense compositional voice, colourful orchestrations, an intuitive organic sense of development, and a contemporary language that includes special instrumental techniques and aleatory zones (areas of controlled improvisation). Earlier tendencies of her work are still present including programmatic references, a Webern-influenced economy of means, and a lean 'neoclassic' sense of line. Perhaps listening to the music will show that the preconception of her work as unremittingly cool and rigid is incorrect. At any rate, it is only through first-hand experience with a composer's work that a true impression can be formed, and in the case of music now twenty-two to sixty-seven years old, it is interesting to experience the compositions in the light of time that has passed.

I first met Barbara Pentland in 1982 after moving to Vancouver. At the age of seventy, she was overflowing with vitality, and in the midst of a lively and productive decade of composition. The occasion of our meeting was the second performance of *Disasters of the Sun*, which I conducted for the Vancouver New Music Society. Like the premiere in

1977, the performance featured the late Phyllis Mailing as soloist. Although Pentland had a reputation for being a tough taskmaster, I found her easy to work with. It is true that she was intensely concerned that all of the details of her score (tempi, dynamics, micro-fluctuations of pitch and timbre) were accurately represented in performance. At the same time,

I found her sympathetic and affirming to the interpretative nuances of performance that would bring her music alive.

I programmed and conducted a number of other performances of Pentland's music in the years I was working with Vancouver New Music. A highlight was an all-Pentland concert which we produced in 1987 as a 75th birthday tribute. The day of the concert was proclaimed Barbara Pentland day in the City of Vancouver by the then-Mayor, the current premier of British Columbia, Gordon Campbell. Barbara and her husband were picked up in a white Rolls-Royce limousine and escorted to the Vancouver Playhouse Theatre. The concert included two premieres and featured a number of the performers who had championed her music including the pianist Robert Rogers, the Purcell String Quartet, soprano Margarita Noye, and the Toronto harpist Erica Goodman. The last time I remember Barbara coming to attend one of her performances was a Canadian Music Centre 35th Anniversary concert Vancouver New Music organized in 1994. There were twenty British Columbia composers represented, and Pentland seemed to enjoy the sense of occasion and participated in the group pictures after the concert. Unfortunately, she was already suffering from Alzheimer's and was to spend the last five years of her life away from the public eye as her condition worsened and her memory failed.

I have encountered several individuals over the years that found Barbara Pentland to be a prickly and difficult person. These have ranged from past students to those in various positions who felt her wrath over musical matters. Others like Robert Rogers who studied with her in the fifties at UBC found her to be "a wonderful and demanding teacher." Certainly, Barbara was a fighter for those things which she believed in, and in my years at Vancouver New Music, I received more than one angry letter from her over such issues as the high volume at an electroacoustic music concert. I responded to her passionate letters as best I could, but like her close friends, I did experience her warmth and personable side as well. A number of times I went to Pentland's modern Point Grey home to discuss upcoming performances. Visiting her there was to enter a much more relaxed and hospitable world than one might expect given her fierce reputation. I was surprised, the first time I went, to see her vintage Morris Minor automobile parked in the driveway. Upon entering the home, her fascinating husband, the industrial psychologist John (Hally) Huberman, would regale you with all manner of stories such as growing up with the Hungarian composer Ernő Dohnányi as his stepfather. Then Barbara would usher you into her composer's studio complete with grand piano, her original scores and recordings of her performances. Barbara was a fine pianist and she often had Bach keyboard music open on the piano. She always seemed appreciative of those who took interest in her music, and would answer honestly and informatively all questions about her music. With the 'business' part out of the way, Barbara and John would invite you into the back yard to sit and watch the stellar jays who they fed regularly. They were both avid gardeners and loved to show you the plants and flowers.

As the generation of pioneering Canadian composers of the post-war years passes, it is critical that we keep their music and contributions alive. The Turning Point Ensemble hopes that the 2005 tour will generate a renewed interest in Barbara Pentland's music.

Owen Underhill

Co-Artistic Director, Turning Point Ensemble

Barbara Pentland — Biography

Barbara Pentland (1912-2000) was born in Winnipeg. Her single-minded vision and strength of character surfaced early. Frail in health, she developed an early interest in piano and composition. She pursued her passion of becoming a composer against her parents' wishes until finally they relented, and she began formal composition studies in Paris in 1929. Returning to Winnipeg in 1930, Pentland spent the next six years primarily active as a pianist. Wishing to further develop her composition skills, Pentland won a fellowship to study composition at the Juilliard Graduate School, where she studied from 1936 to 1939. In New York, she studied with Bernard Wagenaar and experienced the music of Bartok, Stravinsky and Hindemith first-hand. Later in the summers of 1941 and 1942, she studied with Aaron Copland at the Berkshire Music Center. From 1939 to 1942, Pentland was active in many aspects of Winnipeg cultural life, composing radio plays for CBC, music for ballet, orchestra and choir, and several works for solo piano.

Wishing to be at the centre of the Canadian compositional scene, Pentland moved to Toronto in 1942 where she established herself as a composer on the more radical end of the spectrum. During her Toronto period, which lasted until

1949, she taught composition and theory at the Toronto Conservatory and premieres of her music were a regular component of the lively contemporary music milieu in the heady years following war's end. Her compositions also received some exposure in Winnipeg, the United States and Europe.

In 1949, Pentland relocated once again, this time all the way across country to Vancouver where she accepted a position at the newly formed Department of Music at the University of British Columbia. She was to remain in Vancouver for the remainder of her life. Her teaching at the University of British Columbia came to an end in 1963 when she resigned over a dispute regarding grading. Pentland maintained a productive and evolving compositional career well in her eighth decade, with many of her works being commissioned and performed by leading Canadian new music groups, chamber ensembles and soloists.

The output of Barbara Pentland represents a fascinating journey that is at the same time idiosyncratic and responsive to the leading compositional trends of the mid to late twentieth century. From her early tonal programmatic compositions, the influence of Hindemith, Stravinsky and Copland pushed her to a lean, more horizontal neoclassicism in her work of the late thirties and forties. Her interaction with the Schoenberg pupil Dika Newlin at the MacDowell Colony in 1947 and 1948 caused her to write her first serial (twelve-tone) work in 1948, the Octet for Winds. In 1955, Pentland attended the Darmstadt International summer school, a hotbed for the new avant-garde directions of contemporary music. There, she discovered the music of Anton Webern. This was the most important influence on Pentland in mid-career. She herself jokingly divided her work into P.D. (pre-Darmstadt) and P.D. (post Darmstadt). Pentland was never dogmatic in her use of serialism. As she herself said: "I rarely used it (twelve-tone serial technique) very strictly because I'm fairly intuitive in composing and I couldn't put a straitjacket on things that wanted to emerge on their own so to speak. I allowed it a free rein, I used it as a kind of governing principle, and I have very rarely written works that could be called in any way in strict serial technique." From the Symphony in Ten Parts (1957), which most clearly demonstrates the Webern influence, she continued to evolve a more rugged individual language.

Uncompromising directness, lucid clarity, and intensified expression are some characteristics we find in Pentland's late music. Several of the works written from 1970 forward also show her concerns and anxieties regarding the violence and haphazard carelessness of the contemporary world. Subject matter addressed in this work includes the Vietnam War (News), feminism (Disasters of the Sun) and the destruction of the environment (Tellus). Recent interest in the music of Barbara Pentland has included the 2003 production of a Centrediscs three CD recording as part of the Canadian composer Portrait series. Included on this CD is the Pentland documentary produced and prepared by CBC's Eitan Cornfield. It is an informative and interesting source for those who wish to learn more about Pentland and her music.

Five Preludes for Piano (1938)

The Five Preludes were written while Pentland was studying with Bernard Wagenaar at the Juilliard Graduate School. Lively incidental piano pieces in the 19th century tradition, they show Pentland beginning to assimilate dissonance, and Hindemith-like angular rhythms into her previous Franck-influenced style.

— Owen Underhill

Eventa (1978)

Eventa was commissioned by New Music Concerts, Toronto. The score is headed with a quotation from Cicero: "Causae eventorum magis me movent quam ipsa eventa" ("The cause of events always interest me more than the events themselves.") During the period of composition, the last half of 1978, various events caused by man's inhumanity to man – and other creatures – made some dramatic impact on the work, leavened now and then by humour, escape from grim reality. It might also be entitled: "A day in the life of the world." The instruments cause their own events by their participation as individuals and groups.

The three categories of instruments each contain one member who is less closely related and so behaves accordingly: the trombone among the winds, the marimba in the percussion and the harp with the strings. Formally, it is one movement in

two main parts, with three general tempi, increasing speed to the centre, then reversing the pace to the end. There are four aleatory zones with certain freedoms, but the tonal direction is always controlled.

— Barbara Pentland

Quintet for Piano and Strings (1983)

The Quintet was commissioned for the Purcell String Quartet and completed early in 1983. The four sections are played without a break. The first part opens slowly as it introduces the thematic ideas and then changes tempo as it unfolds. Its close leads into a scherzo-like movement. The third part is slow, with its theme presented first in harmonics on all the instruments. The final section sums up various facets of the previous parts and fades out with a quiet dissolution of elements. In parts 1, 2 and 4, three aleatory zones occur, where the performers have certain freedoms with given material. There is no confrontation between piano and strings with one or the other dominating, but co-operation, each instrument contributing to the fabric as an individual.

— Barbara Pentland

Commenta (1981)

Commenta was written towards the end of 1980 into '81, my first work for solo harp. It was inspired by the fine playing of Erica Goodman in two previous ensemble works featuring harp, with technical help from Donna Hossack (in Vancouver), former harpist with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Structurally the piece can be divided into three main sections, evolving from the bard-like opening and proceeding through contrasting aspects of the theme to a climax. In the second section a rather giocoso fugal elaboration is interrupted by more sober episodes, which lead to a suggestion of tolling bells fading in the distance. The final section recalls some earlier commentary and reaches an aleatory zone where the player has certain freedoms with given tones. A variant of the opening brings the work to a close.

— Barbara Pentland

Disasters of the Sun (1976)

The periodic collaborations with Dorothy Livesay (1909-1996) inspired some of Barbara Pentland's strongest work. Pentland and Livesay were both trailblazers with a radical artistic temperament. Born in Winnipeg only three years apart, they would separately find their way to the non-conformist west coast. The two first met on a ship around 1930, returning from France where both young women had been studying. It wasn't until some twenty years later that they met again in Vancouver, eventually deciding to collaborate on a chamber opera. *The Lake*, completed in 1952, was based on an incident in the life of 19th century Okanagan pioneer Susan Allison. It would be another twenty years before they were to work together again. Livesay had heard a premiere of Pentland's *Mutations* for cello and piano, and sent Pentland a copy of a cycle of her poems called *Disasters of the Sun*. Pentland was struck by the dramatic portrayal of a lifetime of conflict between sun and moon, male and female. She decided to set the work to music, and the Vancouver New Music Society commission was premiered in 1976 with Phyllis Mailing as vocal soloist.

Disasters of the Sun is written for solo mezzo-soprano and an ensemble of nine players. The incisive language of the poetry is sharply etched in the musical setting. By turns angular and harsh, tender and sinuous, or precise and rhythmic, the music captures the various life stages and scenes of conflict presented in the text. The singer, functioning almost like a storyteller, drives the action forward with drama and intensity. The ensemble writing is extraordinarily detailed and colourful, bringing to life Livesay's rich imagery. The seven poems in the cycle are separated by instrumental interludes. In a number of sections of the piece, Pentland writes what she calls aleatory zones, where the musicians improvise within controlled structures. In addition, there is limited use of a recording of the soloist which, serving as a kind of recall, is layered over the live performance.

— Owen Underhill

Turning Point Ensemble

The Turning Point Ensemble (TPE) was formed by its musician members in 2002 with the goal of presenting rarely

heard concert music for a large-sized chamber ensemble. With a mission to broaden the appreciation and understanding of music composed during the past hundred years, the Turning Point Ensemble has quickly earned a stellar reputation for outstanding programming and musicianship. The ensemble's debut concert on Vancouver's Music in the Morning series, as well as their 2004 performance during CBC's Dutch Music Week were broadcast nationally on CBC Radio Two and Radio Canada. The Turning Point Ensemble received international acclaim for their efforts in performing Hanns Eisler's *Vierzehn Arten den Regen zu beschreiben* (Fourteen Ways to Describe Rain) in synchronization with Joris Ivens' 1929 film *Regen* (Rain). Due to recent scholarship, TPE's March 2004 Vancouver performance was the first ever successful synchronization of the music and the film in live performance. Working closely with contemporary Canadian and International composers, TPE has premiered compositions by Rudolf Komorous, Owen Underhill, and Gordon Chin, and are currently working with Vancouver based composers Bradshaw Pack, Jocelyn Morlock, and John Korsrud in developing several new works. The ensemble will be in residence for the second consecutive year in the Sonic Boom Festival, working with emerging British Columbia composers and premiering their work as part of Vancouver Pro Musica's annual festival of new composition. The Turning Point Ensemble's debut CD on the Artifact label, *Strange Sphere* (the music of Rudolf Komorous) includes the title composition, written for the Turning Point Ensemble under the direction of Owen Underhill, as well as *The Seven Sides of Maxine's Silver Die* performed by Eve Egoyan and the New Music Concerts Ensemble under the direction of Robert Aitken. TPE's second recording project is an all-Barbara Pentland disc with special guest Judith Forst, currently in preparation for release in 2006.

Owen Underhill, conductor and Co-Artistic Director

Owen Underhill lives in Vancouver where he is active as a composer and conductor, and faculty member in the School for the Contemporary Arts at Simon Fraser University. Underhill has made conducting appearances with the Turning Point Ensemble, CBC Radio Orchestra, Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, the Victoria Symphony, the Vancouver Symphony, the National Arts Centre Orchestra, and the Vancouver New Music Ensemble. His discography includes recordings with the CBC Radio Orchestra, Turning Point Ensemble and Vancouver New Music Ensemble. Among his most recent compositions are *Canzone di Petra* (2004) for flute and harp commissioned by Heidi Krutzen & Lorna McGhee, and *Laments and Dances* (2003) commissioned by ARRAYMUSIC of Toronto. Underhill served as Artistic Director of Vancouver New Music from 1987 to 2000. He is currently, with Jeremy Berkman, Co-Artistic Director of the Turning Point Ensemble. His music exists on a number of compact disc recordings including *Celestial Machine: Music of Owen Underhill*.

Judith Forst, O.B.C, O.C. mezzo-soprano

Canadian mezzo-soprano Judith Forst has sung with most major opera companies throughout North America, including 30 roles in 17 seasons with New York's Metropolitan Opera. Recent European engagements have included performances in the Czech Republic and the Netherlands. Her upcoming engagements include performances with the Pittsburgh, Dallas, San Diego, Santa Fe, and Metropolitan Opera companies. Ms. Forst has not only performed the standard repertoire in many of finest opera houses in the world, but continues to be involved in the creation of new works. She mentors and supports young singers and composers, and devotes countless hours to projects here in Canada. Ms. Forst was the first performing artist alumna to receive an honorary Doctorate of Letters from U.B.C., and has also received an honorary Doctorate of Music from the University of Victoria. In 1992, Ms Forst was inducted into the Order of Canada, and in 2001 into the Order of British Columbia.

Jane Hayes, piano

Equally at home as a soloist, accompanist, and chamber musician, Jane Hayes' affinity for collaborating with other musicians has given her a repertoire covering all instruments from strings through low brass and an extensive vocal repertoire. Her studies took her across Canada, the United States, and Europe. Ms. Hayes moved to BC in 1993 to assume a full-time position at Kwantlen University College in Langley, and she has maintained a busy career as a performer, adjudicator, and clinician since then. She can be heard frequently on CBC radio and has recordings available on the Fanfare, EMI, CBC-Musica Viva, and CBC SM5000 labels among others. Ms. Hayes is a founding member of the Turning Point Ensemble.

Heidi Krutzen, harp

Principal Harpist of the Vancouver Opera Orchestra, Heidi Krutzen is in demand as a soloist and chamber musician in the USA and Canada. Frequently featured at festivals such as Seattle Chamber Music Festival, Vancouver Chamber Music Festival, Strings in the Mountains, Colorado and Festival Vancouver, Heidi performed this summer at the Bach Dynamite and Dancing Festival in Wisconsin, and the Bellingham Festival in Washington. In addition, she was a faculty member for this summer's National Youth Orchestra training program. Together with flutist Lorna McGhee, the Krutzen/McGhee duo has toured throughout North America, with performances recorded by both the CBC and National Public Radio. Their first duo CD *Taheke – 20th Century Masterpieces for flute and harp* was released this past year on the Skylark label. Heidi spent part of this past spring in South Africa, building houses for two Zulu families with Habitat for Humanity, and helping with music studies at the African Children's Choir Music for Life Centre. Ms. Krutzen is a founding member of the Turning Point Ensemble.

New Music Concerts

Robert Aitken, artistic director
35th season | 288th event

Sunday October 16, 2005 – The Music of Jörg Widmann

7:15 Illuminating Introduction | 8:00 Concert
The Music Gallery at Saint George the Martyr
Guest Clarinetist and Composer: **Jörg Widmann**
Accordes string quartet
David Hetherington, cello; **David Swan**, piano

Jörg Widmann (Germany 1973)

Fünf Bruchstücke*

Widmann Nachtstück*

Alban Berg Vier Stücke for clarinet und piano op. 5

Widmann Jagdquartett*

Widmann Fieberphantasie*

* Canadian premiere

Jörg Widmann

Jörg Widmann was born in Munich on 19 June 1973. He studied clarinet at the Hochschule für Musik in Munich with Gerd Strake and at the Juilliard School of Music in New York with Charles Neidich. As a performer he won first prizes at the Carl-Maria-von-Weber-Wettbewerb in Munich and at the Wettbewerb deutscher Musikhochschulen in Berlin. In 1996 he received the Kulturförderpreis der Landeshauptstadt München, in 1997 the Bayerischer Staatspreis für junge Künstler and in 2001 the Louis Spohr Medaille der Stadt Seesen. In summer 2001 Jörg Widmann was appointed professor of clarinet at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg as a successor of Dieter Klöcker.

Widmann performed with famous international and national orchestras. At the "musica viva" in 1999 he gave the world premiere of "Musik für Klarinette und Orchester 'Über die Linie II'" by Wolfgang Rihm, which was written especially for him.

He is one of the founders of the Ensemble TrioLog, which aims to promote the music of the 20th and 21st century.

Since 1993 he has held master classes at the Royal Academy of Music in London and he has lectured a.o. at the conservatory in Odessa and at the Academy of Music in Lisbon.

At the age of eleven, Widmann received his first lessons in composition with Kay Westermann and continued with Hans Werner Henze, Wilfried Hiller and Wolfgang Rihm. In 1999 he received the Belmont-Preis für zeitgenössische Musik of the Forberg-Schneider-Stiftung for his achievements in composition. In 2002 Jörg Widmann received on 16 June the Schneider-Schott-Musikpreis und on 15 August the Paul-Hindemith-Preis. In 2003 Jörg Widmann received one of the renowned prizes by the Ernst von Siemens Stiftung and the honorary award of the Munich Opern-Festspiele.

JÖRG WIDMANN Fünf Bruchstücke (1997)

In the Fünf Bruchstücke ("Five Fragments") for clarinet and piano noise is just as important as sound. The expressive force of this music, reminiscent of the Romantic tradition of fantasy or character pieces, emerges through the insertion of precisely calculated noise and sound elements and their blending. With fine shading and flowing passages that demand minute differentiations in extreme registers on the part of the performer, Widmann forms a current of sound that is entirely subordinated to gestural moment and traced out along the flow of human breath. Rhythmic elements play a role in this only to the extent that they serve a purpose as timbre or gestural expression. In this sense it is very significant that the originating sound space is more than the sum of composed sounds; Widmann deliberately uses melodic forms and specific performance indications to capture moods that can go beyond the music to trigger widely varied associations.

JÖRG WIDMANN Nachtstück (1998)

The atmospheric music of Nachtstück ("Night Piece") for clarinet, cello and piano (1998) — the title may recall the Romantic tradition in general or Robert Schumann's corresponding piano compositions — emerges from a constant attention to the modulation of its sound. Its effects include sounds produced in different ways that nevertheless sound similar; sound materializing from the void by which the clarinet and cello slip into the sound layers of the piano; or the carefully worked out muting of the piano strings to create special damper effects. In addition, skillfully woven ostinato pitch configurations are impressed into the work's progression. The beginning is based on a kind of superimposition of two ostinato lines in the clarinet and the cello that returns at the end — though there it is overpowered by a piano line played fortissimo, until the abrupt break of the piano and a general pause concludes a final "inaudibly introduced" closing sound.

ALBAN BERG Vier Stücke Op. 5 (1913)

Alban Berg's Four Pieces for Clarinet and Piano are dedicated to his mentor Arnold Schoenberg. These pieces, along with the Altenberg Lieder Op. 4, are the solitary examples of Berg's essays in the concentrated, aphoristic style first proposed in Schoenberg's Six Little Piano Pieces of 1911. Berg presented his score to him during a June 1913 visit to Berlin to attend the first rehearsals of Schoenberg's ground-breaking expressionist monodrama *Pierrot Lunaire*. Sadly, this inspiring time with his radical master was marred by his cruel parting words. As recounted by Berg's first biographer Willi Reich, "Schoenberg pointed out to him in no uncertain terms various weaknesses that he had found in the current work of his one-time pupil". Berg's loyal submission brought forth his imposing Op. 6 Three Pieces for Orchestra. It was left to his classmate Anton Webern to cultivate the musical microcosm and to express, as their teacher put it, "a novel in a single sigh". T.W. Adorno wrote of the Op. 5 pieces, "everything is development... there are none of the tonal references usually incorporated by Berg. Formally they are unstructured and expand on the [non-repetitive nature] of the last Op. 2 song. Even sequences are no longer tolerated".

— *Daniel Foley*

JÖRG WIDMANN *Jagdquartett* (2003)

The Hunt Quartet, which Jörg Widmann wrote as his third string quartet in 2003, following the Choral Quartet, also begins with a visible gesture. After a short signal cry from the performers, the piece starts by quoting Robert Schumann's Papillons Op. 2, and for its full duration retains this gesture, these starting sounds. The degrees of recognizability do change continuously, to be sure, in the furious, racing organism of the score. The contours change into forms on another level, yet now and then the beginning material returns clearly to the fore, initiated anew by a cry from the performers, and is then digested or mutated as a rhythmic study into a field of harmonic experimentation. On rare occasions, there are moments of pauses as though the musicians were testing the atmosphere, as though they were sensing the weather, so as ultimately to continue playing the quartet across the fields and forests of notes. A hunt after joyful performance, a chase, the whip cracking, after the thing to be shot, the sound, its performer, perhaps the composer himself? — A last shout, *morendo*, *dal niente*... — The victim is not the audience, at any rate.

— *Stefan Fricke*

Translated by Ben Letzler

JÖRG WIDMANN *Fieberphantasie* (1999)

In his *Fieberphantasie* ("Fever Fantasy"), Widmann revels in coaxing a highly unusual spectrum of sounds from the comparatively conventional combination of string quartet with piano and clarinet or bass clarinet. These sounds are created through numerous playing techniques, which are as clearly elucidated as the ground-rules of classical instrumental technique. For long stretches, the work is a "realization score," with instructions for the players, but without specified pitches for the notes. The work demands sophisticated listening, which it encourages with its complex texture woven from various combinations. An ascending pizzicato motive opens the movement, and is repeated almost soundlessly; a pallid sonic plane emerges from the motive, with the note C hovering above. Another note is distinguished by its flageolet sound and coarsened by tremolos. Propelled by intermittent vibrato, the notes F and E are separated from the texture and come to fulfill a structural function over the course of the movement. The piano's constant rhythmic figures harden into sweeping virtuoso gestures both sonically and physically, yet at the end of the movement, these will reveal their origin.

Up to this point, motivic development continually intensifies, stopping for a moment before resuming the dash toward something new. The clarinet plays a sudden, distinctive scale passage, which eventually plummets three octaves from the highest tessitura into the lowest before fading to a barely audible tremolo. Musical figures rush by, reduced to colorless noises. And then notes arise again from the flow, coalescing into something recognizable, a quotation from Robert Schumann's First Violin Sonata. Here, Widmann's compositional methods open up new perspectives for interpretation: are they terrifying images from some Schumannesque inner world, spirits slumbering beneath the sonic surface of his music, coming to life in the *Fieberphantasie*? Perhaps Jörg Widmann's *Fieberphantasie* plays a game with the hidden essence of all music, having, in the end, basically reduced the "inner order" that governs the works of Schoenberg and Webern to sound and motion.

— *Johanna Andrea Wolter*

Translated by John Mangum

PERFORMER BIOGRAPHIES

Accordes String Quartet

Accordes evolved out of a string quintet that was formed in 1975 to perform a composition by John Beckwith, commissioned by the Toronto Symphony Women's Committee. Frequently heard on CBC radio, they have performed on the Roy Thomson Hall Chamber Music Series and constitute the core string players of the New Music Concerts Ensemble. Always searching for new repertoire, Accordes

has commissioned works, as well as regularly premiering new compositions on the New Music Concerts series. This concentration on contemporary music has allowed them to give the Canadian, and sometimes world premieres, of works by such composers as Elliott Carter, Ben Johnson, Peter Paul Koprowski, Brian Cherney, Peter Michael Hamel, Ann Southam and Hope Lee. They have recorded extensively for the Canadian Music Centre label, Centrediscs, including discs devoted to the music of Harry Freedman (*Spirit Song*), Harry Somers (*Somers String Quartets*) and Alexina Louie (*Dénouement*). Their recoding of NMC co-founder Norma Beecroft's *Amplified String Quartet with Tape* was nominated for a Juno award in 2004.

David Hetherington, cello

A member of the Toronto Symphony since 1970, David Hetherington is currently the orchestra's Acting Principal Cellist. As a chamber musician, he has toured Canada, the United States and Europe and is a founding member of the Amici Chamber Ensemble, which presents an annual concert series at Glenn Gould Studio and has made six recordings for Summit Records and Naxos. His own string quartet, *Accordes*, performs regularly for New Music Concerts and was recently nominated for a Juno Award for its recording of Harry Somers' *String Quartets* on Centrediscs, for which Hetherington also made the premiere recording of Talivaldis Kenins' prize-winning cello sonata. Earlier this season David Hetherington performed a solo recital at the Elora Festival and was featured in Saint-Saëns' *A minor concerto* with the Niagara Symphony.

David Swan, piano

A native of Saskatoon, David Swan gained national exposure at the age of sixteen as winner of the first Eckhardt-Gramatté Competition for the Performance of Canadian Music. After completing doctoral studies at the University of Indiana, he settled in Toronto, where he has freelanced continuously since 1986. His varied activities include ensemble and solo performances, accompaniment, recording and teaching, and he retains a special interest in 20th century repertoire. He has served for many years as organist of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Toronto, and appears regularly with New Music Concerts.

New Music Concerts

Robert Aitken, artistic director

35th season | 289th event

Saturday November 12, 2005 – A Scelsi Centenary

7:15 Illuminating Introduction | 8:00 Concert

Co-presented with the Music Gallery at Saint George the Martyr

Guest Artist: **Louise Bessette**, solo piano (Montreal)

Sean Pepperall (Canada 1961) – ***Cosmographie** (1996)

Giacinto Scelsi (Italy 1905-1988) – **Sonata No. 4** (1941)

Silvio Palmieri (Canada 1957) – ***Prelude VIII: Il giorno della mia morte** (1998)

Serge Arcuri (Canada 1954) – ***Fragments** (1997)

Giacinto Scelsi – **Suite No. 9 “Ttai”** (1953)

Giacinto Scelsi – **Un Adieu** (1987)

* Canadian work | ** World Premiere

LOUISE BESSETTE

An exhilarating yet elegant concert pianist, Louise Bessette stands out as one of the pre-eminent performers of twentieth century music. Her combination of eclectic repertory and impeccable delivery has earned Louise Bessette several of the most prestigious honours awarded for the interpretation of contemporary music, including, most notably, the First Prize at the Concours International de Musique Contemporaine in Saint-Germain-en-Laye (France, 1986), and both the First Prize and the Special Prize for Piano at the International Gaudeamus Competition for Contemporary Music (Rotterdam, 1989). The Conseil Québécois de la Musique awarded her the Prix Opus 1996–1997 in the category “conductor or soloist of the year” for her recital devoted to the *Vingt Regards sur l’Enfant-Jésus* by Olivier Messiaen

Born in Montréal, Louise Bessette began studying piano at the age of five. Admitted to the Montréal Conservatory in 1971, she studied with Georges Savaria and Raoul Sosa. She won no fewer than five first prizes during her student years. After perfecting her skills with Eugene List in New York over a two-year period, she set her sights on Paris, where, from 1982 on, her masters were Yvonne Loriod, Claude Helffer, Jay Gottlieb and Dominique Merlet.

Contact with these luminaries was to prove as decisive for her aesthetic choices as for the development of her unique talents. A recognized world specialist on works for piano by Olivier Messiaen, Louise Bessette has given numerous performances of *Vingt Regards sur l’Enfant-Jésus* that have met with unreserved praise by music critics. Whether in recital or as a soloist with orchestras or chamber formations, Louise Bessette makes regular guest appearances in concert halls throughout all of Europe, North and Central America. A devotee of original works regardless of their provenance, she has contributed to the advancement and dissemination of new music by her noted participation in international music festivals and by the premiere performances she offers of works specially written for her by, for example, the Canadians Serge Provost, André Villeneuve and Serge Arcuri, and French composers Bruno Ducol, Jacques Lejeune and Claude Ballif.

Louise Bessette has more than a dozen records to her credit, six of which were solo; here as elsewhere, she has made a personal hallmark of setting off original music with her energetic playing style. She founded in 2003 her own label Sept Jardins, which has released her most recent CD *Tango Diablo!*. In addition, on chamber music recordings, she has joined forces with such outstanding artists as Marc-André Hamelin, the Quatuor Alcan (Québec) and the London-based Arditti Quartet. She has earned numerous distinctions, including Woman of the Year, Arts Category, at the 1989 Montréal Salon de la Femme, and the 1991 Flandre-Québec Award in recognition of her contribution to contemporary music. In October 2001, she was received as a Member of the Order of Canada, and appointed, in June 2005, Officier of the Ordre national du Québec. Since fall 1996, she has been Professor of piano at the Montréal Conservatory of Music.

Sean Pepperall

Sean Pepperall was born in Montreal in 1961 of both French and English Canadian origins. After a period in science classes that might have lead him to medical school, he discovered at 19 the music of Richard Wagner. This had and still has a resounding impact on his life. Between 1985 and 1988 he studied music theory at the University of Montreal with Massimo Rossi and contemporary analysis with Serge Garant and André Prévost. In 1988, he started his Composition studies at the Montreal Conservatory of Music with Gilles Tremblay and Yves Daoust. He graduated in 1993 with a unanimous First Prize in composition. His music is best characterized by simplicity of structure that arises from a very classical but yet personal way of treating musical intervals and by clarity of dialogue which is best summoned by his genuine interest in melody. Very fond of operas and music that has a singing tone, his main influences, to name a few are Wagner, Debussy, Varèse, Berg and Messiaen. He is now a private music teacher, father of two and enjoys playing the piano. Of no specific mainstream contemporary aesthetics and by nature of independent mind, one could say he's a lonely rider. He is presently composing his *Athora Symphony*, a work for soprano and orchestra.

Cosmographie

The title combines the words *cosmos* and "graphie" with the latter originating from the Greek *graphein*, i.e. writing or describing something. Quite often in our collective minds and imagination, the word *cosmos* triggers another word and concept which is one we call inner space. This gigantic emptiness between stars, this absence of life, matter and light may bring forth to us a picture of a deserted and remote area. A spooky place where everything seems to go so slow, where time has stopped and where a doomsday silence covers you up. It is both all and nothing, the presence and the absence of, the being and the void. So with these few images in mind, I went, as far away as possible from all the noise "down here", looking for textures, sonorities and impressions. I must say that during the composition of this work, came to me the relentless image of a luxurious celestial garden. Why? I do not know. *Cosmographie* is a monody with harmonies that are often the result of melodic sounds being added up. Harmony here has the function of supporting and colouring the melody. The musical form of this piece is that of a classical rondo with the refrain being stated from the top. Its characteristics are a descending perfect 4th (A-E), followed by a descending chromatic melisma that concludes to an upward and expressive major 7th skip (B-A#). The chords and melodies of this music are built around these four sounds along with what they carry within and between them.

— *Sean Pepperall*

Silvio Palmieri

Silvio Palmieri received his musical studies at the Conservatoire de musique du Québec in Montréal where he studied composition and analyses with Gilles Tremblay; counterpoint and orchestration with Clermont Pépin, electroacoustics with Micheline Coulombe-Saint-Marcoux and Yves Daoust, choral conducting with Marcel Laurencelle and voice with Jeanine Lachance. He took part in, among others, Pierre Boulez's séminaire in Paris, Arraymusic of Toronto's Composer's Workshop and the Ensemble contemporain de Montréal's Ateliers-concert... His works have been performed by the Ensemble contemporain de Montréal with conductor Véronique Lacroix; the pianist Louise Bessette, Les événements du neuf conducted by Lorraine Vaillancourt; the SMCQ Ensemble; Arraymusic of Toronto; the Ondes Martenot Ensemble of Montréal; ondes Martenot performer Estelle Lemire, the soprano Natalie Choquette, the Claudel Quartet, pianists André Ristic and Marc Courroux, trombonist Alain Trudel, the Alizé flute ensemble, violinist Silvia Mandolini, soprano Chantal Lambert, Atelier lyrique de l'opéra de Montréal and the Bulgarian pianist Angela Tosheva in Montréal, Toronto, Paris, Rome and Milan.

His repertoire includes the opera Elia nominated for the prestigious Prix de la fondation prince Pierre de Monaco (ECM commission in collaboration with l'Atelier lyrique de l'Opéra de Montréal); Versetto for the Ensemble baroque de Montréal; Versetti for soprano, piano and percussion; two important cycles, the first, Duchamp, unfinished, and the second, Pasolini. He has written many preludes for piano including Prélude V Mistero, Prélude VI Alba, Prélude X paraphrase pasolinienne. His Poesiole Notturme I-II-III for soprano and chamber orchestra (Radio-Canada commission) is based on three sonnets by Pier Paolo Pasolini. All these works are part of an important cycle devoted to the poetic and multi-formal world of the great Italian poet, playwright and film maker Pasolini. He has also composed the soundtrack for the videos Les années Jules-Félix by Josette Bélanger, Anémic-Cinéma by Marcel Duchamp; and electroacoustic works such as Dada Musik (a large electroacoustic fresco for the CBC radio show Le Navire / Night, produced in collaboration with Marc Hyland) and Liberté en Cage for the ECM's event Cage en Liberté which won the Prix Opus for the musical event of the year; Al sole for string quartet (commissioned by the Molinari quartet) and Légendes for narrator and orchestra (the Nouvel ensemble moderne and Festival de Lanaudière commission) and Versetti, a short musical theater for soprano, clarinet, piano, percussions and dancers for José Navas, director of the Flack dance company.

Prelude VIII: Il giorno della mia morte

I must say trying to write such a short text on my own work is something of a chore... But here are the main threads that run through my work. The relationship between poetry and music has always fascinated me, a garden most fertile and the principal force at play in my creative path. After analyzing a series of poems by Pier Paolo Pasolini, I wrote a twelve-movement cycle for a variety of instrumentations, including six preludes for piano, a madrigal for the keyboard, so to speak, as well as a diary, where "intimate correlations" become sources of coherence. I've grown a deep interest in the field of rhythm, relating to the overall distribution of pitches and blocks of sounds, and I also work on degrees of density, on harmonies and colors, dominant focal threads, the concept of duration, as in the "duration that is experienced in real-time, versus psychological duration", and the basic repetitions of a motive, a musical gesture, a rhythmic cell or an idea. Like Duchamp and Pasolini, I enjoy exploring various avenues of creativity. At this point, I am working on my first string quartet. It's midnight on an autumn night, and a full moon shines above, free of any painterly pretension... Today was magnificent, intertwined with mundane revelations and fruitful shining moments of intellectual and physical stimulus. I recall something Debussy wrote exactly a hundred years ago in the November 15, 1901, edition of la Revue blanche, an article which aptly conveys my state of mind, and entitled "Of a few superstitions and an opera": Perhaps the time when I most loved music was that time when I didn't hear about it. I was struck by its absolute beauty rather than by tiny, overheated and constrained symphonic or lyrical fragments.

That is my credo: to invent and to experiment is fine, but one should never lose concern for the work's finality, because, as Marcel Duchamp said: Carelessness is the only thing that cannot be interpreted as art...

— *Silvio Palmieri*

Serge Arcuri

Born in Québec in 1954, Serge Arcuri completed composition and analysis studies at the Montréal Conservatory in 1981 with Gilles Tremblay. Later he studied electroacoustic music with Yves Daoust and Marcelle Deschênes at the Conservatory and the University of Montréal. He won CAPAC's Sir Ernest MacMillan Prize in 1981 and received honorable mention in two categories in the CBC Competition for Young Composers. He has also been awarded several grants from the Canada Council and the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec. He has received commissions from a variety of organizations, including La Société de musique contemporaine du Québec (SMCQ), CBC Radio, Vancouver New Music, Musica Camerata Montréal, Le Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, L'Ensemble contemporain de Montréal (ECM), L'Orchestre Baroque de Montréal, L'Ensemble Arion, Le Quatuor Molinari and soloists Lawrence Cherney, Robert Cram, Joseph Petric, Brigitte Poulin, Silvia Mandolini, Catherine Perrin and Louise Bessette. He served as president of l'Association pour la création et la recherche électroacoustique du Québec (ACREQ) and as production director of le Printemps électroacoustique de Montréal from 1985 to 1988. He also likes to write music for film, television, theatre and his friends.

Fragments

Pieces of matter, object, time. They may be significant, incongruous, or irrelevant but still remain. Sketches of past sounds. The bells of Saint-Jean-Baptiste church, near Rachel Street where we lived. Bells no longer sounding, E flat a bit low, G higher and crisp, and F, natural and comforting. This work I do not fully understand but recognise as a certain kind of resonance. It was commissioned by La Société de musique contemporaine du Québec, thanks to a grant from the Canada Council.

*Leur écho nous parvient par le filtre du temps
Carillons diluviens vers un profond beffroi.
Des chorals d'harmoniques au solitaire bourdon
Le rythme des battants se décale.
La mémoire qui distille des fragments éclatés
Souvenirs intangibles de la voix d'un clocher.
La mesure des jours qui rassemble les pièces
d'un passé qui s'est décomposé.
De ces sons qu'on avait oubliés.*

— Serge Arcuri

Giacinto Scelsi

Scelsi's extraordinary life encompassed many aspects of the intellectual, spiritual, social and musical life of the 20th century. He was born into southern Italian aristocracy, inheriting the title Count D'Alaya Valva, and as a young man travelled extensively, moving within Europe's most elevated social circles. His English wife, Dorothy (whose nickname 'Ty' figures in the titles of two of Scelsi's works) was a distant relative of the British royal family; their wedding reception was held at Buckingham Palace. His music attracted a number of prestigious performances, particularly in Paris where Pierre Monteux conducted the première of Rotative in 1930. During World War II he lived in Switzerland; after the war his wife returned to England, never to contact him again. He spent the latter part of his life in Rome, where his apartment overlooked the Forum.

Much of the detail of Scelsi's life is shrouded in mystery, something he himself did much to encourage. It seems, however, that after some initial successes as a composer, he suffered a devastating mental breakdown between the composition of *La nascita del verbo* (1947–8) and the *Suite no.8 'Bot-ba'* (1952). Scelsi's early compositional career had been a progression through some of the principal aesthetic tendencies of 20th-century music – futurism, neo-classicism, dodecaphony, surrealism – preoccupations fed variously by periods of private study with Respighi and pupils of Scriabin and Schoenberg, and by his friendships with Henri Michaux, Pierre Jean Jouve, Paul Eluard and Salvador Dalí. The later works reveal a new preoccupation with an obsessive reiteration of individual sounds, a legacy of the lengthy period of rehabilitation from his illness. Scelsi described how he would spend days repeatedly playing single notes on the piano, developing a new, intensely focussed mode of listening. The multi-movement form of many subsequent pieces can also be heard as an extension of this reiterative exploration – sequences of movements are intended not to provide contrast but to offer a repeated re-examination of the same sound object.

Although Scelsi's music continued to attract occasional performances in the 1950s and 60s, his career was eclipsed by the emerging Italian composers of the post-war period, and his compositional concerns, as far as they were known, were regarded as of marginal interest. It was not until the 1970s that the significance of his work began to be recognized by a new generation. Younger composers, including the American Alvin Curran, the Prix de Rome guests Grisey and Murail, and the Romanian exile Radulescu, discovered in Scelsi's work aspects of the musical world which interested them, struck particularly by the concentration on gradual timbral transformations.

At the beginning of the 1960s many avant-garde composers had begun to explore the inner life of sounds, writing music which focussed on small fluctuations within sustained sonic bands. What distinguished Scelsi's work from Ligeti or Cerha's scores of the period was the profound subjectivity of Scelsi's engagement with his material, an engagement in which abstraction seemed to play no part. In his most wholly characteristic works pitch, timbre, register and dynamics are heard as the inherent expressive potentialities of each sound, rather than as separate parameters to be controlled more or less independently. The *Quattro pezzi (su una nota sola)* (1959), for example, use microtonal pitch inflection, timbral transformation and rhythmic reiterations to animate the 'note' on which each movement is based, stretching its identity far beyond that of a mere frequency.

Subsequent works explore this plasticity of sound yet further, drawing a handful of musical strands out of an initial tone and allowing them to diverge. Usually such divergence covers an interval of no more than a third, but it makes possible a beguilingly unpredictable harmonic architecture in works of the mid-1960s such as *Ohoi* (1966) and the *Fourth String Quartet* (1964), arguably Scelsi's finest music. Inevitably, given his microscopic examination of instrumental sound, intervals derived from the harmonic series predominate. His intuitively composed work can therefore be heard to anticipate later, more systematic developments: not only the 'spectral' music of the *Itinéraire* group but also the exploration of the pitch-timbre continuum in computer music.

As word about this extraordinary, neglected music spread, performances and then recordings began to multiply. The critic Harry Halbreich was a persuasive advocate; promoters such as Adrian Jack at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, Wolfgang Becker at WDR and Ernstalbrecht Stiebler at Hessische Rundfunk organized portrait concerts of Scelsi's work. The Arditti Quartet took up the string quartets, Marianne Schroeder and Yvar Mikhashoff the piano music, and conductors such as Jürg Wyttenbach the orchestral works. This period of rediscovery culminated in the mid-1980s with belated first performances of many of Scelsi's largest scores, and triumphantly acclaimed presentations of Scelsi's work during the 1986 Holland Festival and the 1987 ISCM World Music Days in Cologne.

The spiritual world of Scelsi's mature works is rooted in an exotic mix of pantheism and theosophy, derived from Gurdjieff, Blavatsky and Sri Aurobindo, but also stimulated by Scelsi's own visits to India and Nepal. Scelsi saw his work as straddling the aesthetic worlds of

East and West, using the instrumental resources of the West in music whose meditative focus on individual tones has obvious links to both the monastic traditions of Tibetan Buddhism and the ison principle of Byzantine Orthodox worship. Elsewhere, particularly in the works of the late 1950s, there are elements of arabesque reminiscent of the folk music of the eastern Mediterranean. Scelsi claimed that 'Rome is the boundary between East and West. South of Rome the East begins, and north of Rome the West begins. This borderline runs exactly over the Forum Romanum. It runs right here, through my drawing-room'. His titles offer further evidence: *Aiôn* (1961) is subtitled 'Four Episodes in a day of Brahma', *Anahit* (1965) is 'A Lyric Poem dedicated to Venus', *Pwyll* (1954) is a Welsh druidic term, while the title of *Konx om-pax* (1969) brings together the ancient Assyrian, Sanskrit and Latin words for 'peace'.

Scelsi's approach to composition was itself hybrid: for him music was not a communicative medium but something immanent, revealed through the creative process. His reluctance to describe his working methods as 'composing' stemmed from the belief that music passed through him; it was not something 'put together' by him. Indeed the working method of his mature years was unusual, depending primarily on the selective transcription of improvisations made in a quasi-meditative state. He would perform these improvisations generally at the keyboard, either the piano or, in later years, the Ondiola, a three octave electronic instrument with a rotary attachment for producing microtonal inflections. Scelsi would also invite performing musicians who showed a particular affinity for his work to improvise for him, painstakingly refining their instrumental resources for the sound-world he wanted, so that works such as the *Canti del capricorno* (1962–72) or the *cello Trilogy* (1956–65) became intimately associated with their first interpreters, the singer Michiko Hirayama and the cellist Frances-Marie Uitti.

Each improvisation was recorded (the process of cataloguing the tapes was begun after Scelsi's death) and the most successful improvisations were then transcribed and realized as instrumental scores. Exceptionally, some improvisations were used more than once: the *Fifth String Quartet* (1984) and the amplified piano work *Aitsi* (1974) are both transcriptions of the same tape. The actual writing of the scores was undertaken by an assistant, working under Scelsi's direction. After Scelsi's death his most frequent collaborator, Vieri Tosatti, revealed the extent of his involvement in the making of Scelsi's scores, claiming that he had worked with Scelsi since 1947 and had written out all his major works since then. The discovery that Scelsi was not the sole author of his scores has troubled some critics who, associating it with his lack of a conventional compositional apprenticeship, have accused him of dilettantism, even of a sort of artistic fraud. Scelsi's collaborative approach was, however, consistent with his compositional philosophy, as was his reluctance to make public appearances at performances of his work, and his refusal to be photographed. By the time of his death his music had achieved an eminence which its composer resolutely rejected for himself.

— Christopher Fox, 'Giacinto Scelsi', Grove Music Online ed. L. Macy

Giacinto Scelsi – Sonata No. 4

The Fourth Sonata of 1941 was written at the end of Scelsi's first creative period and premiered by Yvar Mikhashoff on July 1, 1986 at the Almeida Festival in London. Like the Second Sonata, this piece consists of three sections, two fast outer movements, *Con moto* and *Con impeto estremo, violento*, surrounding a contrasting *Lento* movement. The first movement features chromatic contrapuntal textures, jagged rhythms and frequent change of metre. It starts smoothly with two- and three-part textures in the low register and gradually becomes more complex and intense due to forte and fortissimo dissonant and sometimes cluster-like chords, while moving toward higher registers at the same time. At the conclusion it sinks back to bass pitch and energy subsides in a *Tranquillo-Lento* section. The second movement is reminiscent of a song without words. Mikhashoff incidentally considered it a "Beautiful and dark elegy, one of the composer's most deeply felt creations."

Herein Scelsi picks up principles employed in his Second Sonata, namely the focus on, and reiteration of, single pitches. Underpinned by sustained, mostly dissonant harmonies, the very linear melody unfolds in tone repetitions gradually shifting to neighbouring pitches. In the course of the piece registers change and the melody appears in the lowest or middle voice. Although the last part of the movement is intense, the texture becomes sparser. Chords are omitted until the very end, where they occur once again. The last movement is vigorous and relentlessly intense, demanding dynamics between forte and fortissimo. And similar to the first, this movement ends in a soft, dry and thinned out Tranquillo section where repeated eighth note cords and intervals, often separated by eighth note rests, trickle out.

Giacinto Scelsi – Suite No. 9 “Ttai” (Peace)

Scelsi characterized this work as “a succession of episodes alternately Time (or more precisely Time in Motion) and Man, as symbolised by cathedrals or monasteries, with the sacred sound of Om.”

Emphasising the suite’s calm, meditative and mysterious character, Scelsi wondered if this piece should be played at conventional concerts at all and advised in its preface: “This suite should be listened to and played with the greatest inner calm. Nervous people stay away!” In fact, this suite with its formally simply structured movements dispenses with traditional thematic organization and dramatic expression (some directions for playing read: *calme, senza espressione* or *uguale, inespessivo*). Instead, it features musical material of low contrast, repetitive elements, stationary tones and chords, and blurred sounds due to the frequent use of both pedals. The music manifests both constant flow and inertia, and since Scelsi rarely uses bar-lines, it seems to unfold in an almost unrestrained manner. The first, third, fifth, seventh and ninth movements share an almost never interrupted eighth-note pulse and various ostinato patterns. The second, sixth and eighth movements, on the other hand, present stationary sounds, unisons, often enriched by fast rhythmically diversified ornaments such as trills, dotted rhythmic cells or melodic fragments in a high register.

Harmonically, the “Ttai”-Suite embraces a variety of techniques. In the first movement, for instance, chromatic notes circle around the focal point b-flat paralleled by a line in dissonant intervals; the second movement displays clusters and the fourth pentatonic textures. Tonality, minor and major chords often tinted with adjunct notes, is used throughout this suite as well. Thanks to its manifold, subtle and engrossing sonorities based on a very few musical elements, Scelsi’s “Ttai”-Suite, composed in 1953, has gained the attention of an increasing number of performers and listeners. Yet, like the Second and Fourth Sonatas, it received its premiere more than two decades after its origin in 1976 in Rome. The pianist was Frederic Rzewski.

— Text and translation by Sabine FeiBt

from: Giacinto Scelsi, *The Piano Works I*. Louise Bessette, Mode Records

Giacinto Scelsi – Un Adieu

Scelsi’s last published work is derived from an improvisation recorded in 1978. It was transcribed and edited shortly before his death in collaboration with pianist Marianne Schroeder, who gave the first performance of this gentle and meditative work in 1988.

New Music Concerts

Robert Aitken, artistic director

35th season | 290th event

Sunday January 8, 2006 – *Grettir, An Icelandic Saga*

Two Performances at 2:30 and 8:00 pm

Illuminating Introduction at 7:15

Betty Oliphant Theatre (National Ballet School) 404 Jarvis St.

Guest Artists: **Cast of the Bayreuth Youth Festival**

Gudmundur Emilsson, artistic director

Thorkell Sigurbjörnsson (Iceland 1938) – **Grettir***** (2004)

a chamber opera for 5 singers and 6 instruments

libretto by **Bödvar Gudmundsson**

based on the Icelandic “Saga of Grettir”

Tickets: \$25 (regular); \$15 (seniors); \$5 (students)

Contact New Music Concerts for tickets and further information:

416 961-9594 | nmc@interlog.com

*** Canadian premiere

New Music Concerts thanks Roger D. Moore for his generous support; Gail Einarson-McCleery, Honorary Consul of Iceland in Toronto, for all her efforts in making the Toronto performance of *Grettir* possible; and Viking Tree Services for providing a White Ash log for the set.

PRECIS

Produced for the Young Artists Festival in Bayreuth in August 2004, the opera **Grettir** is based on the medieval Icelandic *Saga of Grettir the Strong*; poet-warrior and outlaw. The backbone of the story takes place in Iceland around 1000 AD and brings the audience to the outlaw’s remarkable places of refuge. Iceland’s natural wonders are constantly in the background, visually and aurally and literally through recent sound recordings - soundscapes. Volcanoes, glaciers, mysterious caves, lava fields, hot-springs and waterfalls and the high winds of the North-Atlantic all play an important dramatic role. Grettir and his family were international figures. Their Epic begins in Norway, moves to Iceland - from where America was discovered in 1000 AD - and brought to a dramatic climax in Istanbul, Turkey. The work thus encompasses the entire world as known by the Vikings of old and is a timeless, universal drama; a work fully comparable to those of Dante and Shakespeare. Thorkell Sigurbjörnsson is one of Iceland’s most important composers. A number of Sigurbjörnsson’s works have been composed for Robert Aitken and New Music Concerts first performed his music during a European tour back in 1976, giving the premiere of *Solstice* at the Nordic Music Days Festival in Reykjavik.

GRETTIR - GENESIS AND SYNOPSIS

By Thorkell Sigurbjörnsson

I was a child with measles, when I first read the *Saga of Grettir*, the story of the greatest and most famous outlaw in Iceland. It was not easy reading at that time. There were also those incomprehensible verses, supposedly by Grettir, full of obscure interlocutions [kennings]. But, my father was also sick, so he had time to help me understand them. In my childish way, I felt an immediate sympathy with Grettir. Like him, I wasn't allowed to be with other children, I was sick in bed. I could easily pretend trying to fight off enemies, both awake and asleep! I could easily associate my itching measles spots with evil witchcraft from ancient times!

As a teenager I read the "Saga of Grettir" with more objectivity, but also with sympathy. One had begun to understand a little about the psyche, the inevitable hubris of a classical hero.

His mother protects him through the atrocities he committed as a child. Instead of serious punishments, reprimands, or good motherly advice, she gives him a sword.

An opera about Grettir seemed to me to be out of the question! One could not imagine Grettir singing his own praises!

Fifteen years ago, when I was reading the "Saga of Grettir", I realized that one could retell it simply in the words and tones of his half-brother, Dromund. Thus an idea for a ballad-opera was born.

Fortunately, the poet Bödvar Gudmundsson, who previously collaborated with me, agreed to write the text using the appendix to the "Saga of Grettir" as the starting point.

It all starts in Constantinople: Dromund, Grettir's half-brother, has searched all across Europe for the murderer of his brother, Grettir. According to Nordic laws at that time, it was Dromund's rightful duty to avenge him. He has never seen the killer Ongul, although he and Dromund heard Ongul boasting about having killed the strongest and most inaccessible outlaw in Iceland. Dromund jumps up, and chops off Ongul's head in mid-sentence. Immediately thrown into jail, Dromund is left to rot for eternity with another prisoner. But he will forever sing his brother's praises and entertain his fellow prisoner.

Here is where the ballad opera in three acts begins: in a filthy Constantinople dungeon, with Dromund singing his hopes of escape. Spes, a rich woman, and her maid pass by the prison. Spes hears Dromund's beautiful voice, and she is enchanted. She buys the prisoners' freedom on the condition that Dromund will sing for her, for ever and ever.

Act Two sees Dromund furtively visiting Spes, entertaining her and her maid Elja with fantastic stories of Grettir. The old prisoner has by now transformed into Spes' jealous husband, Sigurd. Although he suspects that his wife is unfaithful, he can never catch her with Dromund. Spes threatens to seek a divorce from Sigurd, if he continues to accuse her of infidelity.

The beginning of Act Three reveals Spes in her garden, where Dromund secretly visits her, and continues to entertain her with more fantastic stories of Grettir. Sigurd, however, almost catches the pair together, but Dromund manages to escape. Infuriated with Sigurd, Spes runs out to seek a divorce. On the way to the Bishop in Hagia Sophia, Spes encounters a mud puddle. Spes asks a tramp (Dromund in disguise) to carry her across. This he does, but stumbles and almost falls, touching Spes' thigh. She accuses the tramp of behaving indecently, but the Bishop appears and calms her. A moment later she can swear with good conscience that she has never been unfaithful to her husband. Nobody else has ever come close to her, except that tramp who touched her thigh. Everybody, including the Bishop, could see that it had been an accident. After hearing of her plight with Sigurd, Spes is granted a divorce. Dromund reveals himself and immediately proposes to her and Spes accepts his hand in marriage. Elja has also some quiet thoughts to herself: "Now Sigurd is also free. Hadn't he always shown his liking for me?" The Bishop thinks that this is all happening too quickly: "But who am I to put a sour note into good harmony?" he mutters.

CREATIVE TEAM

Thorkell Sigurbjörnsson, composer

Thorkell Sigurbjörnsson was born in Reykjavik. He began his music studies with violin and piano at the Reykjavik School of Music, with further studies in the United States. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree at Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota, followed by a Master's Degree from the University of Illinois, with additional summer courses in Nice, Darmstadt, and at the Tanglewood Festival. Since 1962 Sigurbjörnsson has taught at the Reykjavik College of Music, and, in recent years, at the Icelandic Academy of the Arts as well. In addition to being a pianist and an organizer of musical events, Sigurbjörnsson served for over thirty years as a moderator of New Music with the Iceland National Radio. As one of the most important composers of contemporary music in Northern Europe, Sigurbjörnsson worked tirelessly to promote new music and has influenced a new generation of composers and artists. His oeuvre ranges from simple children's pieces to large orchestral works which have been performed all over the world. Sigurbjörnsson is a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music and a Doctor of Fine Arts from Hamline University.

Bödvar Gudmundsson, librettist

Bödvar Gudmundsson studied Icelandic history, literature, and linguistics at the University of Iceland and The Christian Albrechts University in Kiel, Germany. He received his Candidatus Magisterii degree from The University of Iceland in 1969. Winner of 1996 Icelandic Literary Award for the "Tree of Life", Bödvar is a well-established Icelandic poet, playwright, and novelist. He has published 6 volumes of poetry; 2 collections of short stories, 3 novels, and has had 10 of his plays presented on stage. He has also translated novels, plays and poetry from German, English, Swedish, and Danish, among them works of Cole Porter, Bertold Brecht, Heinrich Böll, and H. C. Andersen. Most recently, Bödvar has mainly been working on a collection of letters from Icelandic emigrants in Canada and the U. S. A. His recently published books include "The Icelandic America Letters" and "Where the Winds Dwell".

Gudmundur Emilsson, conductor

Dr. Gudmundur Emilsson was born in 1951. He received his early musical education at the Reykjavik College of Music and graduated with honors in 1971. He continued studies in the United States, receiving a Bachelor's Degree with high distinction in 1975, and in 1981, a Masters' degree from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. In 1983 he was awarded a Doctor of Musical Arts degree, specializing in orchestral conducting, from Indiana University.

In 1982 Emilsson founded the Icelandic Chamber Orchestra, which specialized in 20th Century music, especially of the Nordic countries. The orchestra premiered many new works and toured at home and abroad. He served as Director of the Icelandic Chamber Orchestra from 1982-92. Since 1982 Emilsson has conducted opera performances at the National Theatre of Iceland and in continental Europe. In 1997 Emilsson conducted the first western opera ever premiered in Beijing: "Moonlight Island", by Nordic Prize winner, Atli Heimir Sveinsson. In 1989 he was appointed Head of Music at the Icelandic National Broadcasting Service. In this capacity for eight years, he was responsible for all studio and concert recordings of foreign and native artists, choirs and ensembles, live international concert broadcasts, and recordings of the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra and other orchestras, and artists. From 1999-2001 Emilsson served as Cultural Director of the Grindavik - Blue Lagoon area, Iceland's renowned tourist region. Since 1976 Emilsson has acted as a private advisor to His Excellency Dr. Olafur Ragnar Grimsson, President of Iceland, and conducted presidential concerts in Latvia, Poland, and the United States.

Dr. Sveinn Einarsson, director

Dr. Sveinn Einarsson was born in Reykjavik in 1934. He received his education at the Universities of Stockholm and Sorbonne, Paris where he studied Comparative Literature, Philosophy, and Theatre Research, with further studies in Oxford, Copenhagen, and Reykjavik. He was awarded his doctorate in 1964. During the 1960's Einarsson served as Artistic Director of the Reykjavik Theatre Company and Principal of its Theatre School. He was Artistic Director and General Manager of The National Theatre of Iceland from 1972 until 1983. In addition to being counselor for the Ministry of Culture 1983-1989, Einarsson worked as Director of Program Production, Icelandic State Television 1989-

1993, and as Artistic Director of the Reykjavik Arts Festival 1998-2000. Since 2001, Einarsson has served as a member of the Executive Board of UNESCO and Director (ad hoc) of the Icelandic Culture House. He has served on the governing boards of the International Theatre Institute 1979-81, Nordic Theatre Union 1978-82, The Swedish-Icelandic Fund for Cultural Collaboration from 1994 to the present. Einarsson has been President of the Icelandic National Commission for UNESCO since 1994.

As a stage director, Einarsson has directed over 85 productions of works by Aiskylos, Sophocles, Molière, Ibsen, Strindberg, Beckett, Gombrowicz, Tardieu, Mrozek, Schéhádé, Ghelderode, Buero Vallejo, and Icelandic playwrights, Johann Sigurjonsson, Mattias Jochumsson, David Stefansson, and his own plays in Iceland, the Nordic Countries, and England. In addition to first performances of plays by Jokull Jacobsson, Halldor Laxness, Oddur Bjornsson, Jonas Arnason, Árni Ibsen, and Kjartan Ragnarsson, Einarsson has directed operas by Verdi, Puccini, Mozart, Atli Heimir Sveinsson and L. Udbye. His productions have been at festivals in Caracas, Toronto, Seoul (Theatre of Nations) London, Bonn, Tallin, Copenhagen, Oslo, Helsinki, Aarhus, Trondheim, and Torhavn. Einarsson is the author of eight plays for the stage. Several of his books have become standard works of theatre studies. He has written of his experiences as theatre manager with “My Nine Years Down There” 1984, and “My Eleven Years up There” (2000). Einarsson’s most recent projects include productions with the Bandamenn Theatre Group of “The Amlodi Saga” (1996) and “Edda.Ris” (2001). In 1997 he produced and staged the first performances of the oldest Norwegian opera to celebrate the 1000th anniversary of the founding of Trondheim. Working with the distinguished designer, Elin Edda Arnadottir, Einarsson staged Racine’s “Phaedra” (1999) and Shakespeare’s “Hamlet”, which was awarded as the finest theatre production in Iceland in 2002. Since 2003 Einarsson has dedicated much of his time to working with UNESCO and preparing the festival “De glace et feu”, a celebration of Icelandic culture in Paris in the autumn, 2004.

SINGERS

Regína Unnur Ólafsdóttir, soprano was born 1982 in Reykjavík. She studied piano from age 8 at The New School of Music and later at The School of the Musicians’ Union, where Svana Víkingisdóttir was her teacher. Regína has sung in many choirs: Gradualekór Langholtskirkju, Kór Langholtskirkju, and was one of the founding members of Graduale Nobili under the leadership of Jón Stefánsson, choir director.

Regína started her studies at The Reykjavík Academy of Vocal Arts in 1998. Her teachers there were Ólöf Kolbrún Hardardóttir and Kolbrún Sæmundsdóttir. Regína graduated in the spring of 2003. Regína sang the part of Zweite Knabe in the production of The Icelandic Opera of the Magic Flute by Mozart in the fall of 2001. In the fall of 2003 Regína went to The United States of America on a Rotary scholarship and studied at The University of Georgia. Her main teacher there was Dr. Stephanie Tingler and her accompanist was Paolo André Gualdi. She also attended lessons with Dr. Gregory Broughton and Stephanie Pierce. Regína returned to The Reykjavík Academy of Vocal Arts in 2004 and finished her ABRSM diploma in the spring of 2005. Her teachers were Ólöf Kolbrún Hardardóttir and Kristinn Örn Kristinnsson. While attending The Reykjavík Academy of Vocal Arts Regína sang the roles of the Countessa in *Le Nozze di Figaro* by Mozart, The Princess in *l’Enfant et les Sortilèges* by Ravel and Mimí in *La Bohème* by Puccini. Regína has participated in masterclasses with Mark Wildman (2004), Kristinn Sigmundsson and Jónas Ingimundarson (2005) and Robin Stapleton (2005). At the moment Regína is studying in Copenhagen in Denmark with Kirsten Buhl Moeller, professor at Det Kongelige Musik Konservatorium and Ulrich Stærk.

Dóra Steinunn Ármannsdóttir, was born on December the 14th 1983. She took piano lessons from Bjarni Jónatansson at The New Music School. Eight years old she became a member of the Choirschool of Langholtskirkja, founded and conducted by Jón Stefánsson. From there she went on to the Graduale Choir of Langholtskirkja and then the Graduale Nobili until the age of eighteen. Dóra Steinunn studied classical singing at The Reykjavík Academy of Singing and Vocal Arts, graduating in 2004. Her teachers there were Ólöf Kolbrún Hardardóttir and Kolbrún Sæmundsdóttir. Dóra Steinunn graduated from Menntaskólinn vid Sund (High-School/College) in 2003. She attended Master Classes with Kristinn Sigmundsson and Jónas Ingimundarson in 2002 and 2003. Finally she attended Robin Stapleton’s Master-Class in 2003 where she was also given the opportunity to sing for Dame Kiri Te Kanawa. Dóra Steinunn sang with the Choir of The Reykjavík Academy in the performance of *Aida*. She sang the leading role in *Stúlkan í vitanum* The Girl in the Lighthouse) by Thorkell Sigurbjörnsson, autumn 2000, and the third boy in *The Magic Flute* by W. A. Mozart at The

Icelandic Opera, in the autumn of 2001. She also sang with The Summer Opera in Reykjavík 2002 and 2003. She sang both the role of the First Witch and also in the choir in Dido and Aeneas by Henry Purcell. Dóra Steinunn sang Amore in The Coronation of Poppea by Monteverdi. Moreover she performed as a soloist on the 50th anniversary of The Reykjavik Academy in March 2004. Dóra Steinunn sang in the choir of the Icelandic Opera in Sweeney Todd by Sondheim in 2004 and Tosca by Puccini in 2005. She sang with The Icelandic Opera Choir in Mendelssohn's Elijah at Carnegie Hall in November 2004. Finally she performs in the trio, Næturrottningar (Queens of the Night). At the present, she continues her studies in Vienna.

Bragi Bergthorsson was born in Reykjavík in 1981, He did his undergraduate studies at the Reykjavík College of Music with Thorunn Gudmundsdóttir. Later he finished his M.Mus degree of the Postgraduate Vocal Training course at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London under the guidance of Adrian Thompson. He is currently studying with Rudolf Piernay on the Opera Course at Guildhall. Bragi's operatic experiences include Zsupan from Der Zigeunerbaron (Strauss), Kilian from Der Freischütz (Weber) and Fracasso from La Finta Semplice (Mozart). He has sung the role of Dromundur before in Bayreuth, Germany the summer of 2004.

Hugi Jónsson was born in Reykjavík in 1979. Hugi started his music education at the age of nine. In 2001 he began studying at the Reykjavik Academy of Singing and Vocal Arts with Bergthór Pálsson until 2003. Since then, Hugi continues studies with Alina Dubik at The New Music School. He has performed in student productions such as Le Nozze di Figaro as Almaviva.

David Ingi Ragnarsson was born in 1983. In 1993-94 he sang in the St. Lukes Church Choir while living in Chicago. He is currently studying at The Reykjavik Academy of Singing and Vocal Arts with Sigurdur Bragason. He has also studied with Snæbjörg Snæbjarnardóttir. He sang with the Reykjavik Chamber Choir from 2001-05, often as a soloist.

INSTRUMENTALISTS

Antonia Havesi was born in Hungary. She began piano studies at the age of 10, and graduated in 1988 from the Fr.Liszt Academy in Budapest with a Master's Degree in choral conducting, teaching of singing and theory. In 1990 she studied the organ with Prof.Otto Bruckner at the Music Academy in Graz, Austria. She has participated in many courses, and been active as an organist and accompanist all over Europe. She has participated in Master Classes with Dalton Baldwin, Lorraine Nubar, and Olivera Miljakovic, and attended courses at the Academie Internationale d'Été de Nice. Antonia moved to Iceland in 1992. In 1998 she published "Twenty five Organ Pieces", and won first prize in a competition for a hymn, celebrating the 1000th anniversary of Christianity in Iceland. She is an organist of the Church of Hafnarfjörður, the Artistic Director of the Noon Concerts series, sponsored by the Cultural Office of the city of Hafnarfjörður, and perhaps the most active repetiteur (including The Icelandic Opera) in Iceland today.

Gudny Th. Gudmundsdóttir, violin. Gudny currently studies at the Iceland Academy of the Arts, where her teacher is Sigrun Edvaldsdóttir. In 2001-2004 she studied under the guidance of prof. Ildiko Moog in Freiburg, Germany. She has attended several masterclasses among others with Earl Carlyss, James Dunham, Jan Talich, Kati Sebestyen and Almita Vamos.

Gudrún Rutsdóttir has played the trombone from the age of 10. Her main teachers have been Sveinn Birgisson, trumpet player, Lárus Sveinsson, trumpet player, Oddur Björnsson, 1st trombone in the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra and Sigurdur Thorbergsson, 2nd trombone in the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra. She has participated in master classes with Nitzan Haroz, Ben van Dijk, Thomas Dahlkvist, John Kotka, and others. Gudrún has just finished B. Mus. degree from Icelandic Academy of the Arts where her main teacher was Sigurdur Thorbergsson. She is currently studying in Sweden.

Sigrún Erla Egilsdóttir was born 1971 and started playing cello when she was eight years of age. Her first teacher was Pétur Thorvaldsson. After finishing a BA-degree in Psychology at the University of Iceland, she returned to the cello. Her teachers have been Lovísa Fjeldsted, Sigurgeir Agnarsson, Shauna Rolston and Roland Vamos. Sigrún Erla Egilsdóttir completed a B. Mus. degree from the Iceland Academy of the Arts, spring 2004.

Clarinetist **Sigurjón Berghór Dadson** was born in 1984. He studied with Kjartan Óskarsson at the Reykjavík College of Music where he graduated in the spring of 2005. He now studies at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm with Hermann Stefánsson.

Oddur Thorri Vidarsson began music studies at the Reykjavik School of Music, studying music theory, classical guitar, and eventually electric bass guitar. His teachers were Petur Jonasson for five years, and then Pall Eyolfsson. He played in the school band and also the band of Sigursvein's Music School. He played in the band, Jacob Hagedorn-Olsen. Advanced music studies continued at the Musician's Union School, where Vidarsson studied classical music theory, jazz harmony, and electric bass. Johann Asmundsson, bass player in Mezzoforte, was his teacher in 2004-2005. Johann continues music studies.

PRODUCTION TEAM

Elin Edda Arnadottir, Stage and Costume Design, studied fine arts in Reykjavik, and theatre design at the Wimbledon School of Arts in London. In addition to being a trained dancer, Arnadottir has designed major shows for the Icelandic Dance Company. She has worked for the Iceland National Theatre and The City Theatre for many years, and designed "Three Sisters" by Chekhov and "The Tempest", by Shakespeare for the Swedish State Theatre in Stockholm. Arnadottir received the Iceland Theatre Award for designing costumes for "Chicago" at the City Theatre in 2004. Arnadottir has worked with Sveinn Einarsson on several occasions, including Racine's "Phaedra", Ibsen's "Ghosts", and the prize winning production of Shakespeare's "Hamlet".

Olafur Haukur Matthiasson, stage technician, is the Stage Manager of the Small Stage of the Icelandic National Theatre. He has worked for the National Theatre for twenty years.

Kristin Hauksdottir, Production Manager, graduated from Mountview Theatre School in 1981. Since then, she has been stage manager at the National Theatre, and has managed numerous productions, the most recent being, "The Flying Dutchman", "Singing in the Rain", "The Full Monty", and "Edith Piaf". In 1996, she served as Production Stage Manager for Iceland's first performance of Richard Wagner's "Ring" under the direction of Wolfgang Wagner.

Bjorn Bergstein Gudmundsson, Lighting Design, has been a lighting designer for The National Theatre of Iceland for two decades. He has designed lighting for many productions including, "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf", "Cyrano De Bergerac", "The Flying Dutchman", and "The Celebration", for which he received the Iceland Theatre Award in 2003.

Bjarni Bragi was born in 1965 in Hafnarfjörður, Iceland. Since 1990 he has worked full time as a sound engineer in various fields of audio. At first, he worked mainly in live-sound for rock and pop bands in Iceland. Asynchronously he worked in the theater, in the field of designing sound and mixing numerous musicals and plays. In 1996 Bjarni Bragi undertook the task to design and build a Mastering-suite in a major recording studio in Reykjavík. Since then, along with recording and live mixing, he has been the head of that department, and mastered and edited hundreds of album releases. His work covers all music styles, from pop and jazz to classical and contemporary music and everything in between.

New Music Concerts

Robert Aitken, artistic director

35th season | 291st event

Sunday February 26, 2006 – New at New Music

7:15 Illuminating Introduction | 8:00 Concert

Glenn Gould Studio

Guest Artist: **James Avery**, piano

Robert Aitken, solo flute and direction

New Music Concerts Ensemble

Charles Wuorinen (USA 1938) **Duo Sonata***** (2004)

for flute and piano

Bruno Maderna (Italy 1920–1973) **Honeyreves** (1961)

for flute and piano

André Ristic (Canada 1972) – ***Concertino D.A. o.a.U.D. P.b.i.o.T.**** (2005)

(Discrete Approximation of an Underwater Dream, Preceded by its own Theory)

for amplified flute and ensemble

Denis Dion (Canada 1957) - ***Donnant - donnant**** (2005)

for solo piano and ensemble

Juliet Kiri Palmer (New Zealand / Canada 1967) - ***drift, drop****

for piano, flute and two ensembles (2005)

* Canadian work | ** World premiere | *** Canadian Premiere

Juliet Kiri Palmer (New Zealand/Canada 1967)

drift, drop (2006) for piano, flute and two ensembles

Moving from New Zealand to New York in 1990 to work with composer-performer Meredith Monk, Juliet Palmer completed her PhD at Princeton University in 1999. Her teachers and mentors include Louis Andriessen, Jack Body, Michael Gordon, Brian Ferneyhough, Paul Lansky, Annea Lockwood, Steve Mackey and Julia Wolfe. Palmer works as a freelance composer based in Toronto.

Palmer's music has been described as "a genre-bending, groove-laden universe of humour and iconoclasm". Working in diverse media, her output ranges from chamber music to multimedia installations, dance, music theatre, opera and symphonic works.

Palmer's music has been featured at the Angelica Festival (Italy), the Bang On A Can Festival (NYC), Royaumont's Voix Nouvelles and Décadance's Electrolune (France), SoundCulture (Japan), the Huddersfield and Bath Festivals (UK), Ars Electronica (Austria), Tot En Met XXII (Amsterdam), Water Sources 2 and Open Ears (Canada), the New Zealand Festival and Australia's Adelaide Festival. Performers of her music include Trio Fibonacci, the Gryphon Trio, singer Patricia O'Callaghan, pianist Eve Egoyan, New Music Concerts, Arraymusic, Continuum, the Canadian Chamber Ensemble, Tapestry New Opera Works, l'Orchestre Métropolitain du Grand Montréal and the Windsor Symphony (Canada); Les Percussions de Strasbourg (France); Fontanamix (Italy); Piano Circus (UK); California EAR Unit, Marimolin and the Bang on a Can All-Stars (USA); Veni Ensemble (Slovakia); Ensemble för Ny Musik (Sweden); and 175 East, the New Zealand String Quartet and the Auckland Philharmonia (NZ). Palmer has collaborated with

choreographers Douglas Wright (New Zealand); and Karen Kaeja, Yvonne Ng and Bill James (Canada). Upcoming projects include an atomic clown opera for Tapestry New Opera Works (with writer Julie Salverson) and a solo percussion work for Morris Palter. Palmer is a member of the interdisciplinary collective *urbanvessel* whose first site-specific project SLIP will be performed in September at Toronto's Harrison Street Baths. Juliet Palmer is guest curator for Continuum Contemporary Music's 2005–2007 seasons and serves on the board of the Canadian Music Centre.

Commissioned by New Music Concerts through the Ontario Arts Council, drift, drop grew out of the folksong "Down by Sally's Garden" as sung by Leo Spenser in Lakefield, Ontario in 1957. I don't think I've ever been to Lakefield, and I certainly wasn't there in 1957, but I have a small distintegrating volume of Canadian folksongs on the top of my piano which features Spenser's interpretation. A lot of rambling and roving takes place in this song, and I kept finding myself singing it as I rode my bike through Toronto's laneways. This song, which long ago drifted over from Ireland, guided me through the labyrinth of composing.

Drift — to float along, to deviate; something driven.

Drop — to fall, to collapse; a precipitous shift.

— Juliet Kiri Palmer

Denis Dion (Canada 1957)

Donnant – donnant (2005) for piano and ensemble

Born in Quebec, Denis Dion completed a Master's degree in composition at Laval University in 1983 and a doctorate at the University of Southern California (Los Angeles) in 1987. Recipient of several distinctions in Canada, the United States and Europe, he has written on commission many works for Canadian and foreign orchestras as well as film soundtracks. He has composed both instrumental and electroacoustic works.

Denis Dion taught at the Faculty of Music of Laval University and at the Conservatoire de musique du Québec from 1992 to 1999, and he has served as commentator for radio music programs on Radio-Canada's cultural network. Since 2000, he has been devoting all of his time to creation and composition. In 1999–2000, he worked on a creative project as composer-in-residence with the Quebec medieval music ensemble, Anonymus. The following year, thanks to a grant from the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, he began another residency, this time with the Orchestre symphonique de Trois-Rivières (2002–2004).

Denis Dion won the 2000–2001 Prix Opus in the "Composition of the year" category for his work *à la mère*, for orchestra and electronics. In 2005, he received the prize again for *De mains osées toiles*, a work for instrumental ensemble, CD and video, as well as the Opus Compositeur de l'année (Composer of the Year Prize) for 2003–04.

Donnant-donnant is much like an aural picture. It begins with a simple line. Slowly, as shapes start to appear, the line morphs into curves. The music becomes a story, with a touch of fantasy. Over all, I wanted to follow the line's path, preserving its simple, smooth shape to highlight its transparency in a fluid gesture. The piano is the principal character and acts as porteur d'eau, or water carrier, offering here and there new musical lines or reprising what other instruments have left behind. As the title evokes, donnant is to give, to offer, to suggest...

The shape continues to evolve. Like a continuous thread, it reveals itself through various rhythms and textures. The elements follow on, forming at times horizontal lines (or melody) and vertical lines (rhythm). Music is indeed built on this axis; it sways between these two indissociable elements to tease our senses with sound. Our perception will be much like a discussion; this is why I hope my little story will somehow “hang in the air”, and continue to linger in this hall, in space and, who knows, in your own memory.

Donnant – donnant was commissioned by New Music Concerts with financial assistance from le Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec.

— Denis Dion

Translation by Francine Labelle

Charles Wuorinen (USA 1938)

Duo Sonata (2004) for flute and piano (first movement)

Charles Wuorinen (b. 1938, New York) is one of the world’s leading composers. His many honors include a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship and the Pulitzer Prize (the youngest composer to receive the award). His compositions encompass every form and medium, including works for orchestra, chamber ensemble, soloists, ballet, and stage. Recent works include Theologoumenon for James Levine and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Fourth Piano Concerto for Peter Serkin, James Levine and the Boston Symphony, Flying to Kahani, commissioned by Carnegie Hall for Peter Serkin and the Orchestra of St. Luke’s, and his opera, Haroun and the Sea of Stories, based on the novel of Salman Rushdie.

Both as composer and performer (conductor and pianist) Wuorinen has worked with some of the finest performers of the current time and his works reflect the great virtuosity of his collaborators. Wuorinen is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Duo Sonata for flute and piano was written between 17 November 2003 and 1 July 2004. The work is approximately 16 minutes and is dedicated to Robert Aitken and James Avery. Duo Sonata was commissioned in part by the Barlow Endowment for Music Composition at Brigham Young University.

Bruno Maderna (Italy 1920–1973)

Honeyreves (1961) for flute and piano

Bruno Maderna (Venice 1920 – Darmstadt 1973) studied composition with Gian Francesco Malipiero and conducting with Hermann Scherchen. During the Second World War he was a member of the Partisan Resistance and was imprisoned in a concentration camp. After the war years, he taught composition at the Conservatory of Venice from 1947 to 1950. He was invited to Darmstadt in 1951 to direct the Internationales Kranichsteiner Kammer-Ensemble; here he met, among others, Boulez, Messiaen, Stockhausen, Cage, Pousseur and conducted the most important performers of new music, notably the superb flutist Severino Gazzelloni (1919–1992), for whom he composed several works. The title Honeyreves is a playful acrostic on his compatriot’s name (Severyenoh).

André Ristic (Canada 1972)

Concertino D.A. o.a.U.D. P.b.i.o.T. * (2005)

(* Discrete Approximation of an Underwater Dream, Preceded by its own Theory)

André Ristic was born in Quebec City. He studied in Quebec City, Montreal, New York and Paris. He has been active as a pianist, in particular as a member of the Trio Fibonacci. He has won the Jules-Léger Prize for new chamber music as well as a Prix OPUS as composer of the year. His music has been recorded on the SNE, ATMA and NISAPA labels. André Ristic also studied basic sciences at the Université du Québec à Montréal (applied mathematics) and is interested in acoustics and the musical applications of logic and geometry. His compositions are developed around paradoxes, combining complexity, popular music, systematism and interpretive freedom.

In the last stages of sleep, the brain assembles with haste a large collection of images that will form what we “remember” of a dream. Even if we have a vivid memory of them just after waking up, dreams are very volatile and we quickly forget most of the details and end up with extremely flaky explanations of the events that supposedly took place. Dreams are very illusive: they have their own timeline and make us believe they last for hours; they make us “hear” things, and even make us believe we have a certain control over them. We wake up with strange paradoxal feelings about them.

The Concertino uses techniques of representation and approximation in an attempt to materialize in sounds the unstable state of mind of one trying to recall the details of a dream — a very short one (the first bar of the piece, lasting 3-4 seconds). This moment is analysed with obsession, detail by detail, until it is almost forgotten and eventually reconstructed; the reversibility of this process leads to a certain enthusiasm towards the end of the piece, perhaps a description of the pleasure of “solving a problem”.

The piece has roughly three sections, the central one introducing a lot of silences in the rather talkative clusters of musical objects heard since the beginning of the composition. The last minutes of the Concertino cut the material into discrete parts in order to reconstruct the initial idea: a series of dives into and out of a liquid acoustic environment.

Commissioned by New Music Concerts with the financial assistance of the Canada Council for the Arts, Concertino is dedicated to NMC artistic director Robert Aitken and general manager David Olds.

— André Ristic

After completing his studies in flute with Nicolas Fiore in Toronto (1955–59), **Robert Aitken** was appointed principal flute of the Vancouver Symphony. He later served as second flute player for the CBC Radio Orchestra (1960–64) and co-principal with the Toronto Symphony (1965–70). Aitken studied with Marcel Moyse intermittently over a period of nine years in Vermont and Europe, and considers Moyse’s teachings as having had the most profound influence on his development as a musician. He also worked with Jean-Pierre Rampal (Paris, Nice), Severino Gazzeloni (Rome), André Jaunet (Zurich), and Hubert Barwähser (Amsterdam). Aitken received prizes from the Concours international de flûte de Paris (1971) as well as the Concours international de flûte pour la musique contemporaine in Royan, France (1972). He has given masterclasses in a number of countries, including Cuba, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Mexico, Norway, Poland, Sweden, and the USA. Aitken has more than 40 recordings to his credit and such notables as John Cage, George Crumb, Elliott Carter, Toru Takemitsu, Gilles Tremblay and Bruce Mather have dedicated works to him. Among his many awards as both a composer and flutist are the Canada Music Citation, the Canadian Music Council Medal, the Jean A. Chalmers National Music Award, the Order of Canada, and the William Harold Moon Award. In addition, he holds the title of Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres from the government of France and was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the National Flute Association (USA) in 2003. In 2004 he retired as Professor of Flute

at the Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg, a post he had held for sixteen years. In 1971 he founded New Music Concerts in Toronto with Norma Beecrott and 35 years later continues to serve as NMC's Artistic Director.

Pianist **James Avery** studied piano and conducting with Roy Hamlin Johnson and Robert Baustian at the University of Kansas, and with Walter Robert and Tibor Kozma at Indiana University. As a Fulbright scholar he continued his studies in piano with Carl Seemann at the Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg, Germany. A prizewinner in the International Gaudeamus Competition for Interpreters of Contemporary Music in Holland, Avery has performed as pianist and conductor in major festivals for new music throughout Europe, in the festival for chamber music in Lockenhaus (Austria), and with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. In 1979 he was visiting artist at the American Academy in Rome. He has taught on the piano faculty of The University of Iowa (1967–1980), at the Hochschule für Musik, Freiburg (1980–2004), and at the Eastman School of Music (1986–1988, concurrently with his position at Freiburg). From 1989 to 1992 he was pianist and conductor with ensemble recherche, and since 1992 has served as artistic director of ensemble SurPlus, an ensemble for new music based in Freiburg.

New Music Concerts

Robert Aitken, artistic director

35th season | 292nd event

Sunday April 30, 2006 - Baltic Currents

7:15 Illuminating Introduction | 8:00 Concert

Glenn Gould Studio

Guest Curator: **Raminta Serksnyte**

Fujiko Imajishi, violin; **Patricia Green**, mezzo-soprano;
New Music Concerts Ensemble; **Robert Aitken**, artistic director

Raminta Serksnyte (Lithuania 1975) - **Vortex***** (2004)

for solo violin and fifteen instruments

Mikalojus Konstantinas Ciurlionis (Lithuania 1875-1911) –

Preludes for solo piano

Algirdas Martinaitis (Lithuania 1950) – “**Birds of Eden**”*** (1981)

for electric cello and tape

Helena Tulve (Estonia 1972) – **lumineux/opaque***** (2002)

for violin, cello, piano, percussion

Andris Dzenitis (Latvia 1978) – **Seven Madrigals by e.e.cummings***** (2004)

for mezzo-soprano and six instruments

Raminta Serksnyte – **Almond Blossom** ** (2006 - NMC commission)

for chamber ensemble

** World premiere | *** Canadian premiere

Raminta Serksnyte (b.1975) studied piano (under Prof. Rymante Serksnyte), music theory and composition at the J. Naujalis Gymnasium of Music in Kaunas in 1982–1994. In 1994–2000 she studied composition at the Lithuanian Academy of Music under Prof. Osvaldas Balakauskas. In 1997 Serksnyte attended the New Music Courses in Rostock (Germany), in 1998 the International Summer Courses for New Music in Darmstadt (Germany), in 2001 and 2004 the Young Composers' Meeting in Apeldoorn (The Netherlands), in 2002 the International Courses for Composers in Stockholm (Sweden) and Dundaga (Latvia), in 2004 and 2005 the Nordic Composers' Workshop in Stavanger (Norway), and in 2005 the Acanthes Composition Workshop in Metz (France). At these festivals she was able to work with Louis Andriessen, Magnus Lindberg, György Kurtág, Helmut Lachenmann, Wolfgang Rihm, Pascal Dusapin, Vladimir Tarnopolsky, Ole Lützow-Holm, and others. In she 2005 she was granted a scholarship from the Künstlerdorf Schöppingen Foundation for creative work at Künstlerdorf Schöppingen (Germany).

In 1995 her composition Misterioso for two flutes and double bass was awarded First Prize at the Juozas Gruodis Composers' Competition. In 2003 Serksnyte was awarded the prize for the best chamber work of the year (Oriental Elegy for string quartet) at the competition organized by the Lithuanian Composers' Union. In 2005 she was awarded the Gold Stage Cross (as the best theatre composer in Lithuania), and the prize for young artists of the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture. In the same year her composition Vortex for violin solo and large ensemble was selected as a recommended work in general category at the International Rostrum of Composers in Vienna, and was also selected among the finalists of the Gaudeamus Prize.

Raminta Serksnyte participates regularly as a composer and pianist at contemporary music events and her compositions have been performed in such festivals as ISCM World Music Days (Zagreb, 2005), New Paths in Music (New York, 2005), Gaudeamus Music Week (Amsterdam, 2004, 2005), Klangspuren (Tyrol, 2004), Forum neuer Musik (Cologne, 2004), Musik unserer Zeit (Münster, 2004), Arts & Science Festival (Stockholm, 2002), Arena Festival (Riga, 2002), Gaida (1997, 2000–05), Jauna muzika (2001), and others, as well as at concerts in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Sweden, Norway, Great Britain, France, Austria, The Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, Poland, Canada, Argentina and the USA.

In 2003 the works of Raminta Serksnyte represented Lithuanian music at New Music Concerts' presentation A Glimpse of Lithuania and her music was a highlight of the tour of the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra in Sweden. Her works found their way in the repertoires of such prominent performers as violinist Irvine Arditti and the Arditti Quartet (Great Britain), Kroumata percussion group (Sweden), Asko Ensemble (The Netherlands), Stavanger Symphony Orchestra (Norway), Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra, St. Christopher Chamber Orchestra, Gaida Ensemble, Jauna Muzika Choir and many others.

Raminta Serksnyte's oeuvre is dominated by neo-romantic idiom, enriched with some features of minimalism, sonorism, jazz and folk music; in her compositions the constructive principles of Western music are pervaded with Eastern contemplativeness and subtlety. A great amount of expression, colourful imagery and strong communicative ability are characteristic of her music; the composer pays much attention to the dramatic development, dynamics of form, and the details of instrumentation. One can feel a broad spectrum of certain psychological conditions or musical archetypes emanating in Serksnyte's music: from calm meditation (Aurei Regina Caeli), a sense of mystery (Misterioso) and nostalgic, melancholic moods (Adieu) to dramatic expression (De profundis) and outbursts of vital energy (Idée fixe). On the other hand, many of her compositions contain colourful soundscapes seemingly inspired by the exalted reflection of nature. In her own words, a composition is a certain uplifted state of mind, materialized by means of sounds, and its impressiveness depends on the composer's technical mastery.

Raminta Serksnyte

Vortex for violin and ensemble (2004)

The main idea of the piece is connected with literal and figurative meanings of "vortex". The initial sound material – stepwise motion in scales, spiralling as in a vicious circle, gets more and more dynamic and complicated with every new turn. Finally everything blends into an amorphous mass, sinking and dissolving in the vortex...

Vortex for violin solo and large ensemble was premiered by violinist Irvine Arditti at the Klangspuren Festival in Austria in September 2004. In 2005 Vortex was selected as a recommended work in the general category at the International Rostrum of Composers in Vienna, and was also selected among the finalists of the Gaudeamus Prize.

— Raminta Serksnyte

Raminta Serksnyte

Almond Blossom for chamber ensemble (2006)

One of the last paintings of Van Gogh – "Almond Blossom" – was the direct inspiration of this piece. Though most of his paintings have a dark, gloomy mood, "Almond Blossom" is distinguished by its incredibly light impressionist colours and subtle oriental flavour. My piece is also based on hearing music in "colours", trying to achieve "light-dark" and "warm-cold" sonorities.

— Raminta Serksnyte

Mikolajus Konstantinas Ciurlionis (1875–1911) the Lithuanian painter and composer, played the piano by ear at age four and by seven could read music fluently. He attended the Warsaw Conservatory from 1894 to 1899 and then the Leipzig Conservatory in 1901. Returning in Warsaw by 1902, the urge to paint took a stronger hold on him and when the Warsaw School for Fine Arts opened in 1904 he enrolled. In 1905 Ciurlionis travelled to the Caucasus and the landscape there had a profound effect on him. Equally, the revolutionary turmoil which erupted in Russia during that year caused him to reflect on his own national identity and on the political situation in Lithuania. This new consciousness developed into an active concern for Lithuanian culture; by the time he finally returned to the country and settled in Vilnius in the autumn of 1907, he had already organized the First Lithuanian Art Exhibition where 33 of his works were shown. In the autumn of 1908 he went to St Petersburg and flung himself into the cultural life of the Russian capital: several of his works were heard in February 1909 in one of the Evenings of Contemporary Music in a programme containing works by Medtner and Skryabin, while his paintings were seen in a salon organized by the Union of Russian Artists. After spending the summer in Lithuania, he returned to St Petersburg where he slowly sank into depression. By the end of the year he was found by a friend completely oblivious to the world. He was sent back to Druskininkai and despite a temporary improvement he lapsed into deeper apathy. While walking in woods he caught a cold that developed into pneumonia. He died in April 1911 having never seen his daughter Danuta, born 11 months earlier.

That Ciurlionis spent his creative life in three main places – his student years in Warsaw (and Leipzig), his short but significant Lithuanian period and his final years in St Petersburg prior to his collapse – is symbolized in the phases of and influences on his creative development and in a consideration of the significance of his work as a whole. One of the perpetual paradoxes presented by Ciurlionis is that while he is regarded as the founder of both Lithuanian painting and music, and while he employed Lithuanian folk motifs in his work in both genres, he is nonetheless an artist of cosmopolitan sympathies and his work is symptomatic of trends that operated in not only those Russian and Polish artistic circles with which he had contact but were also in evidence in Germany, France, Britain, Scandinavia and America. Ciurlionis's years in Lithuania had greater historical significance than other periods of his life; even though he never succeeded in establishing a centre for Lithuanian culture, his activities in Vilnius were responsible for his subsequent near sanctification in the country.

— Jonathan Powell (excerpted)

M.K. Ciurlionis

Preludes for piano

M. K. Ciurlionis' piano compositions are the best testimonies of the development of his style. His earlier preludes charm the listener with sincerity, noble discretion and perfect form. Since 1904, one can observe a substantial stylistic change in his piano compositions, and his personality appears in them with growing intensity. He is moving towards polyphonic thinking, the harmony and rhythm are becoming more complex, and Ciurlionis is developing his own specific serial technique.

A tempestuous impetus coexists with serene meditation; magnificent, fantastic episodes remind us of some of his own paintings. Concise and austere in form, yet going hand in hand with abundant fantasy, his works often resemble free improvisation. "You can feel the oscillations of atmosphere over the woods and fields", as Romain Rolland said about these preludes. Ciurlionis' late piano works, composed during several years before his premature death in 1911, constitute the most valuable and original part of his musical heritage.

— Vytautas Landsbergis

Algirdas Martinaitis (b. 1950) studied composition with Prof. Eduardas Balsys at the Lithuanian Academy of Music, graduating in 1978. In 1987–90 Martinaitis worked at the Russian Drama Theatre, and in 1995–98 served as a music director at the Academic Drama Theatre. He was among the first Lithuanian composers to receive the highest national

artistic distinction — the Lithuanian National Award — in 1989. In 1997, he was hailed the Best Theatre Composer of the Year. In 2004, his multimedia performance *The Prayer of the Faithful Word* was announced the best electro-acoustic composition at the composers' competition organized by the Lithuanian Composers' Union.

His music is heard regularly at new music festivals in Lithuania and abroad, including the Baltic Music Festival in Stockholm (1992), Vale of Glamorgan Festival (1996, Great Britain), Probaltica'97 (Poland), and MaerzMusik (2003, Germany).

Having made a name for himself with his early chamber pieces (*Music of the Last Gardens*, *Birds of Eden*, *Cantus ad futurum*), Algirdas Martinaitis came to be known as a composer of poignantly introspective and nostalgic music, often fraught with impulsive, poetic character. The composer speaks in meditative undertones, charged with expression and tranquility, with subtle and pithy intonations combining active rhythms and asymmetric sound structures.

Later in his career, Algirdas Martinaitis in an attempt to testify to his independence, turned towards “new animality” (as the composer puts it himself) and created the impressive *Book of the Beginning and the End*. It is a cycle consisting of eight independent parts, ranging from Orwellian satirical newspeak in *Seven Animality Commandments*, to the theatrically hooting sirens and electric grindstone in *Arma Christi*, or *Abaddon*, permeated with biblical motifs.

Martinaitis often speaks with irony of the striving for technical mastery and absolutism of the composer's craft, and calls his creative method “nonsystematic” music or “writing by hand”. His “technique” enables him to synthesize extremely diversified material: sound world inherent in the Lithuanian folk music, personal impressions of the oriental cultures, theatrical gestures, and “documentary” fragments of *musique concrete*. According to the composer, the synergy of verbal, musical and visual mediums, with recognizable rhetorical figures acting as unifying agents, are especially important in his music. In the pieces of the past decade, Algirdas Martinaitis has followed a new path by inviting the music from the past with which he feels spiritual affinity, rethinking and commenting on the works of his favourite composers.

Algirdas Martinaitis

Birds of Eden (1981) for electric cello and tape

A constantly repeating rhythm pattern (like the flickering of the imaginary Eden or fluttering of bird's wings) follows the expressive solo cello part. According to the composer, “this is a flight over people's nest, elevated feelings, relaxation, meditation”.

— Violeta Zilinskaite

Once upon a time the Europeans were sailing along the shores of India. Upon seeing exotic birds, they decided that these are Manug Devata – the divine birds...

— Algirdas Martinaitis

Born April 28, 1972 Tallinn, **Helena Tulve** is one of the most original talents in contemporary Estonian music. Her elaborate and rationally constructed works achieve exquisite expressiveness and emotional tension. Her works do attest to the richness and variety of her musical experiences and interests: the French spectral music, IRCAM's experimentalism, Saariaho and Scelsi, Gregorian chant and exotic melody-designs. In Tulve's own words: “Of utmost

importance to me is the extending of musical boundaries. By this I mean the extension of timbral, formal and stylistic borders as well as the opening-up of music's geographical boundaries. The latter has greatly advanced the former."

Pieces of chamber music for various ensembles form the bulk of Helena Tulve's work until now. The colourfulness and fluidity of her compositions suggest a comparison to natural processes. In Tulve's works, melodies verge on dissolving into the expressive variety of sound. The music is rich in timbral nuance. The composer makes use of micro-intervals, vibrato and untraditional playing techniques – anything that enhances the delicacy and fluidity of the sound-texture.

Comments the composer: "It's so strange, the way I listen. The music in my brain dissolves to the extent that I no longer hear the underlying structure. My head's filled with colours, with non-musical materials. For me, to compose means to interpret".

Apparently, Tulve's music depicts the workings of a creative mind in the process of experiencing the world – sound turning into colour, colour into light... However, Tulve's sound paintings are far from idyllic; the psychological tone of her music is mostly dramatic.

Helena Tulve has studied composition at the Tallinn Music High School with Alo Põldmäe and from 1989 to 1992 at the Estonian Academy of Music with Erkki-Sven Tüür, being the latter's sole student of composition thus far. She furthered her training in Paris with Jacques Charpentier at the Conservatoire national supérieur de musique et de danse from which she graduated in 1994 with the Premier Prix. There she also studied Gregorian chant and traditional music from 1993 to 1996. Tulve has attended György Ligeti's and Marco Stroppa's summer courses. In addition, she attended the annual Cursus de Composition et Informatique Musicale at IRCAM in 2001. She has lectured on composition at the Estonian Academy of Music since 2000.

Tulve's music has been performed in many European countries, in the USA and Canada, and at numerous contemporary music festivals: BIG Torino (Turin, 2000, *Öö* [Night]), Music of Friends (Moscow), Vancouver New Music, Les Boréales (Caen), MaerzMusik (Berlin, 2003, *à travers*), Klangspuren (Schwaz, 2003, *à travers*), Icebreaker (Seattle, 2004, Saar [Island]), Europamusicale (Germany, 2004, *lumineux/opaque*) and several others. Her work *Cendres* was premiered by the Estonian NYVD Ensemble at the Warsaw Autumn in 2001; *abysses* was written for the Ensemble Courage and premiered at Matrix Herbstfestival in Leipzig, December 2003.

Helena Tulve served as composer-in-residence to the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir in 2001/2002 concert season. Commissioned by the choir, her chamber opera *It's Getting So Dark*, based on the 10th century Japanese female writer Sei Shonagon's diary-like work *Pillow Book*, premiered at the Tallinn Town Theatre in 2004.

In 1998, at UNESCO's International Rostrum of Composers in Paris, Tulve's *à travers*, a piece for chamber ensemble was acknowledged as the recommended work in the category of composers under 30. Her orchestral composition *Sula* [Thaw] won the Rostrum in Paris in 2004. In 2000 Helena Tulve was granted the Heino Eller Composition Prize. For the creative achievements in 2004, she was awarded the Estonian Music Council Music Prize and the Estonian Cultural Prize. In January 2005, Estonian Radio honored her with the title of the Musician of the Year. In March 2006 she was composer-in-residence at the Estonian Music Days Festival in Tallinn.

Helena Tulve

lumineux / opaque [luminous / opaque](2002) for violin, cello, piano, percussion

Light and matter interact.
Matter can absorb, reflect, diffract, disperse and radiate light.

A body that absorbs all the light and does not reflect anything is absolutely black.
Sun is an absolutely black body; its brightness is heat.
All bodies radiate.
A mirror reflects light and sends back your own figure.
A piece of glass diffracts light and can show the rainbow spectrum.
Surface irregularities, or droplets of water in the atmosphere, cause dispersion, – random deviation of light.
Substances that are not completely reflective, filter light and modify its spectrum according to absorption and selective reflection.
An object absorbing all the light it does not reflect is opaque.

— Helena Tulve

Born in Riga, **Andris Dzenitis** he studied at the Darzins Music School (composition with Peteris Vasks 1993–96). His Sonata for Violin and Piano Pamestie (The Abandoned) was awarded the chamber music prize (1994) by the Latvian Composers' Union. As a Herder Scholarship winner he studied composition at the Vienna School of Music and Drama with Kurt Schwertsik (1996–97). Dzenitis continued his studies at the Latvian State Academy of Music with Peteris Plakidis (1997–99) and then at the Lithuanian Music Academy with Osvaldas Balakauskas (1999–2003) where he also qualified for his Master's degree. He has taken part in young composers' seminars at Ivanov (Russia, 1995), Boswil (Switzerland, 1996), and attended master courses at Stockholm with Magnus Lindberg, Pär Lindgren and Bent Sørensen in 2002. His music has been performed in Latvia and abroad: at the Baltic Breezes Over Malaysia (1996), at the Warsaw Autumn Festival (1997), the Gaida Festival in Vilnius (1998, 2002), at Spelplan Stockholm (2002), Maerzmusik Berlin (2003) and elsewhere. Dzenitis is active as a music critic and journalist. He has presented lectures at the London Guildhall School of Music (2001) and the Latvian Academy of Culture (2002). He was the organizer of the Young Baltic Composers' mastercourses at Dundaga (Latvia).

Andris Dzenitis

Seven Madrigals by e.e.cummings (2004) for mezzo-soprano and six instruments

I first got to know the poetry of the American poet and painter Edward Eastlin Cummings in the autumn of 2000. The originality of his poetry, language and grammar inspired me for another view of reality, sounds, rhythms, textures and time proportions that firstly found expression in Four madrigals by E.E.Cummings written for the Latvian Radio choir.

The inner polyphony of Cummings' poetry — division of words and syllables, word linkage, visuality, semantic use of letters and punctuation — was a strong premise for polyphony of musical texture expressed by a choir group. Last year, as I intended to work on a multiform cycle of miniatures, I returned to E.E. Cummings and this time chose seven, verbally even more complicated and meaningful poems. Just like before I realized that the rich colours and space of the poetry as well as its asceticism define specific rules. The core difficulty was to match these rules to monophony and instrumental character system, not for the potential of vocal polyphony.

The attractive poetry created a phantasy about an original setting of instruments – clarinet (bass clarinet), trumpet, trombone, percussion, viola and cello, playing with different timbral colours of instruments. The essence of the poetry and music varies from eclectic kitsch, polystylistics to monologue of voice and salacious tasting of timespace. At times it seems weird to me, a marked composer of big forms, that some of these madrigals do not exceed a minute.

— Andris Dzenitis

Soloists

Japanese-born **Fujiko Imajishi** has made her home in Canada since 1968. After studies with Lorand Fenyves, Ruggiero Ricci, Franco Gulli and the Hungarian Quartet she went on to win both the Montreal and Toronto Symphony Competitions. Imajishi has performed as soloist with leading Canadian orchestras and is currently the concertmaster of both the National Ballet of Canada and Esprit orchestras. She has enjoyed a long association with New Music Concerts with whom she gave the Canadian premiere of Ligeti's Violin Concerto in 1999. NMC's compact disc Lutoslawski conducts Lutoslawski includes her performance of Partita and Chain II recorded during the composer's final conducting appearance in 1993. Imajishi is a founding member and first violinist of Accordes, whose recordings of music by Jean Papineau-Couture, Harry Somers and Alexina Louie have been released on the Canadian Music Centre's Centrediscs label.

A member of the Toronto Symphony since 1970, **David Hetherington** is the orchestra's Assistant Principal Cellist. He coaches the cello section of the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra and is Music Director of the Inter-Provincial Music Camp. As soloist, he has performed with the TSO, the Niagara Symphony, at the Elora Festival and frequently with New Music Concerts. Hetherington has toured Canada, the United States and Europe as a chamber musician. In addition to his activities with Accordes he is a founding member of the Amici Chamber Ensemble, which presents an annual series of concerts at Glenn Gould Studio and has made eight recordings for Summit Records, Naxos and CBC. Hetherington also made the premiere recording of Talivaldis Kenins' prize-winning cello sonata for Centrediscs. He plays a 1695 cello made by Giovanni Grancino of Milan.

Saskatoon native **David Swan** gained national exposure at the age of sixteen as winner of the first Eckhardt-Gramatté Competition for the Performance of Canadian Music. After completing doctoral studies at the University of Indiana, he settled in Toronto, where he has freelanced continuously since 1986. His varied activities include ensemble and solo performances, accompaniment, recording and teaching, and he retains a special interest in 20th century repertoire. He served for many years as organist of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Toronto, and appears regularly with New Music Concerts.

Mezzo-soprano **Patricia Green** has gained international renown for her expressive voice, noted for its three-octave ease in diverse repertoire. She sang her acclaimed European debut at the 1997 MUSICA Festival, (Strasbourg, France) in Ligeti's Requiem with L'Orchestre de Radio-France and went on to open MUSICA in 2000, performing Dusapin's La Melancholia. She sang her debut at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam in 1998 with the Dutch Radio Philharmonic. Ms. Green toured France, England and Canada with Autumnleaf Performance in the opera Kopernikus by Claude Vivier. Recently she sang a lauded New Music Concerts performance under the baton of Pierre Boulez in his work Pli selon pli at Glenn Gould Studio and Gilles Tremblay's Oralleluiants with NMC in Toronto and Montreal earlier this month. Ms Green has appeared with conductors Leonard Slatkin, Peter Eötvös, Zoltan Pesko, Sir David Willcocks, Reinbert de Leeuw and Gustav Meier. Ms Green has performed extensively at the Kennedy Center with the Theatre Chamber Players and sings chamber music with organizations across Canada and the US. CD recordings are available on Newport Classics, Albany Records, and Live Unity Productions. She currently teaches at the University of Western Ontario.

New Music Concerts

Robert Aitken, artistic director

35th season | 293rd and 294th events

Saturday May 27 and Sunday May 28, 2006 Elliott Carter Double Portrait

Concert One: May 27 at the Music Gallery at Saint George the Martyr

7:15 Film | 8:45 Concert

Guest Composer: **Elliott Carter**

Guest Artist: **Virgil Blackwell**, clarinet

Robert Aitken, flute; **Fujiko Imajishi**, violin;
David Hetherington, cello; **Max Christie**, clarinet

7:15 Pre-concert Elliott Carter Film Screening:
A Labyrinth of Time (2004; director: Frank Scheffer)

8:45 Concert

Elliott Carter (USA 1908):

Scrivo In Vento (1991) solo flute 5'

Riconoscenza (1984) solo violin c.4'

Gra (1993) solo clarinet 5'

Figment No. 2 (Remembering Mr. Ives) (2001) solo cello 5'

Steep Steps (2001) solo bass clarinet 3'

Rhapsodic Musings (1999) solo violin c.4'

Figment No. 1 (1994) solo cello 5'

Enchanted Preludes (1988) flute and cello 6'

Concert Two: May 28 at Glenn Gould Studio

8:00 Concert

Guest Composer: **Elliott Carter**

Erica Goodman, harp soloist; **David Swan**, piano soloist

New Music Concerts Ensemble; **Robert Aitken**, artistic director

Elliott Carter (USA 1908) **Dialogues***** (2004) solo piano and seventeen instruments

Elliott Carter – Mosaic*** (2005) solo harp and seven instruments

Elliott Carter in conversation with **Robert Aitken**

Elliott Carter – Mosaic*** (2005) solo harp and seven instruments

Elliott Carter (USA 1908) **Dialogues***** (2004) solo piano and seventeen instruments

*** Canadian premiere

Elliott Carter is one of America's most distinguished creative artists in any field. — Aaron Copland nominating Elliott Carter for the Gold Medal of the National Institute of Arts and Letters for Eminence in Music (1971).

Twice winner of the Pulitzer Prize, first composer to receive the United States National Medal of Arts, one of the few American composers ever awarded Germany's Ernst Von Siemens Music Prize, and in 1988 made Commandeur dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the

Government of France, Elliott Carter is internationally recognized as one of the leading American voices of the classical music tradition. He recently received the Prince Pierre Foundation Music Award, bestowed by the Principality of Monaco, and was one of a handful of living composers elected to the Classical Music Hall of Fame.

First encouraged toward a musical career by his friend and mentor Charles Ives, Carter was recognized by the Pulitzer Prize Committee for the first time in 1960 for his groundbreaking compositions for the string quartet medium, and was soon thereafter hailed by Stravinsky for his Double Concerto for harpsichord, piano and two chamber orchestras (1961) and Piano Concerto (1967), both of which Stravinsky dubbed "masterpieces". While he spent much of the 1960s working on just two works, the Piano Concerto and Concerto for Orchestra (1969), the breakthroughs he achieved in those pieces led to an artistic resurgence that gathered momentum in the decades that followed. Indeed, one of the extraordinary features of Carter's career is his astonishing productivity and creative vitality that continues to flourish in his tenth decade. Critics agree that his recent scores are among the most attractive, deeply-felt and compelling works he has ever written.

This creative burst began in earnest during the 1980s, which brought major orchestral essays such as Oboe Concerto (1986-87), Three Occasions (completed 1989) and his enormously successful Violin Concerto (1990), which has been performed in more than a dozen countries. New recordings of Carter's music appear continually, making him one of the most frequently recorded contemporary composers.

Carter's crowning achievement as an orchestral composer may be his 50-minute triptych *Symphonia: sum fluxae pretium spei* ["I am the prize of flowing hope"], which received its first integral performance on April 25, 1998 with Oliver Knussen conducting the BBC Symphony Orchestra as part of the ISCM World Music Days in Manchester. A prize-winning recording of *Symphonia* by Knussen and the BBCSO has been released on Deutsche Grammophon. It is paired with Carter's lively and playful Clarinet Concerto (1996), which has traveled widely in performances by the Ensemble InterContemporain, Orpheus, London Sinfonietta, Ensemble Modern, and several other distinguished ensembles. Those works were followed by a pair of works for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra: Cello Concerto (2001), premiered by Yo-Yo Ma with the orchestra, and *Of Rewaking* (2003), an orchestral cycle of three songs on texts by William Carlos Williams; Daniel Barenboim led the premieres of both works. Boston Concerto, commissioned by the Boston Symphony Orchestra and premiered by the ensemble under Ingo Metzmacher, also made its debut in 2003. The first few weeks of 2004 brought a pair of acclaimed new scores: *Micomicon*, a witty concert-opener for the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and the incisive *Dialogues* for piano and large ensemble, commissioned by the London Sinfonietta.

Carter's first opera, *What Next?*, commissioned by the Staatsoper Unter den Linden in Berlin, was introduced there in 1999 under Daniel Barenboim. The 45-minute work, to a libretto by Paul Griffiths, comments wryly on the human condition as its six characters, unhurt but confused, confront the aftermath of an auto accident. *What Next?* has been hailed by critics from around the world for its wit, assured vocal writing, and refined orchestration.

Carter continues to show his mastery in smaller forms as well. Along with a large number of brief solo and chamber works, his later years have brought major essays such as *Triple Duo* (1983), *Quintet* (piano and winds, 1991), and *String Quartet No. 5* (1995), composed for the Arditti Quartet. Another dedicated advocate of Carter's music, Ursula Oppens, joined forces with the Arditti Quartet to give the premiere of *Quintet for Piano and String Quartet* in November 1998 at the Library of Congress's Coolidge Auditorium in Washington, followed by tour performances throughout Europe and the U.S. Recent works include *Asko Concerto*, written for Holland's ASKO ensemble, and *Tempo e Tempi*, a song cycle on Italian texts for soprano, oboe, clarinet, violin, and cello, both receiving their premieres in Spring 2000.

A native of New York City, Carter has been compared as an artist to another New Yorker, Henry James, with whom he is seen to share multifaceted richness of vision and fastidiousness of craft based on intimate familiarity with Western (and in Carter's case, non-Western)

artistic traditions. Like Henry James, Carter and his work reflect the impress of a lasting and deeply felt relationship with Europe, a relationship dating from adolescent travels with his father, nourished by study of the fruits of European artistic and intellectual culture, and cemented by a 3-year course of musical training in Paris with Nadia Boulanger during the period 1932–1935. Enriched through wide acquaintance with European artists, including many, such as Bartók and Stravinsky, who came to America during World War II, Carter has seen his work as widely appreciated and as actively encouraged overseas as in his own country. In 1987 the Paul Sacher Foundation moved to acquire all Carter's musical manuscripts, to be permanently maintained in a public archive in Basel alongside similarly comprehensive deposits of the manuscripts of Stravinsky, Boulez, Bartók, Hindemith, Strauss and other universally acknowledged 20th-century masters. (Biography courtesy of Boosey & Hawkes)

Scrivo In Vento (1991) for solo flute

Scrivo In Vento, for flute alone, dedicated to the wonderful flautist and friend, Robert Aitken, takes its title from a poem by Petrarch who lived in and around Avignon from 1326 to 1353. It uses the flute to present contrasting musical ideas and registers to suggest the paradoxical nature of the poem.

It was first performed on 20 July 1991 (coincidentally on Petrarch's 687th birthday) at the XVIIIe Recontres de la Chartreuse of the Centre Acanthes devoted to my music at the Festival of Avignon, France, by Robert Aitken.

— Elliott Carter

Riconoscenza (1984) for solo violin

Riconoscenza per Goffredo Petrassi, for solo violin, was composed for the 1984 Festival Pontino celebrating the 80th birthday of Petrassi, Italy's foremost living composer. It was first performed at a festival concert in the medieval refectory of the Abbey of Fossanova, Priverno, Italy, by Georg Mönch on June 15, 1984.

— Elliott Carter

GRA (1993) for solo clarinet

GRA ('Play' in Polish) for solo clarinet, was written as a tribute to my dear friend, Witold Lutoslawski, to commemorate his 80th birthday. During the twenty-five or so years that I have known Witold, I have never ceased to admire his impressive works and his gracious personality. This clarinet piece combines frequently changing, playful characters together (all based on the same material) and recalls to me my many delighted visits with the composer in America and Poland.

— Elliott Carter

Figment No. 2 (Remembering Mr. Ives) (2001) for solo cello

Figment No. 2 was composed in the spring of 2001 as a present for the wonderful American cellist Fred Sherry, who with his outstanding instrumental and organizational abilities and his boundless enthusiasms has done so much for music.

This short Figment for solo cello recalls fragmentarily bits of the Thoreau movement of the Concord Sonata and Hallowe'en by my late friend Charles Ives, whose music I have known since 1924 and have loved these works in particular.

— Elliott Carter

Steep Steps (2001) for solo bass clarinet

Steep Steps was written for the greatly admired clarinetist and friend, Virgil Blackwell, during the summer of 2001. Its title comes from the fact that, unlike the other woodwind instruments, the clarinet overblows at the twelfth, a large interval that forms the basis of much of this composition.

— Elliott Carter

Rhapsodic Musings (1999) for solo violin

Rhapsodic Musings is a present to Robert Mann on his 80th birthday. It is a small tribute to his extraordinary, devoted advocacy of contemporary music. As is well-known, with the other members of the Juilliard Quartet he gave such pioneering and commanding performances of quartets by Bartók, Schoenberg, and many others, including my own, that many of these works became part of the performers' repertory. His teaching and other activities brought these scores to the attention of students.

Using his initials R. M. in the title of this short violin solo and in its main motive – re, mi (D, E) – this piece tries to suggest some of his remarkable human and artistic qualities. It was composed in June, 2000, in Southbury, Connecticut.

– Elliott Carter

Figment No. 1 (1994) for solo cello

The idea of composing a solo cello piece had been in the back of my mind for many years, especially since so many cellists had been urging me to do so. When Thomas Demenga asked me for this at my 85th birthday concert in Basel (in 1994) for a concert he was giving sponsored by the Naumberg Foundation in New York, I soon set to work. Thomas Demenga had already impressed me greatly when he played some of my chamber works at my 80th birthday concert in Badenweiler, Germany and especially by his wonderful recording of these works for ECM, New Series.

Figment, for cello solo, presents a variety of contrasting, dramatic moments, using material derived from one musical idea.

– Elliott Carter

Enchanted Preludes (1988) for flute and cello

Enchanted Preludes is a birthday present for Ann Santen, commissioned by her husband, Harry, and composed in gratitude for their enthusiastic and deeply caring support of American music. It is a duet for flute and cello in which the two instruments combine their different characters and musical materials into statements of varying moods. The title comes from a poem of Wallace Stevens: *The Pure Good of Theory*, "All the Preludes to Felicity," stanza no. 7:

*Felicity, ah! Time is the hooded enemy,
The inimical music, the enchanted space
In which the enchanted preludes have their place.*

The score was given its first performance by Patricia Spencer, flute, and André Emelianoff, cello, of the Da Capo Chamber Players in New York, on May 16, 1988.

– Elliott Carter

Dialogues (2004) for solo piano and seventeen instruments

Dialogues for piano and chamber orchestra is a conversation between the soloist and the orchestra: responding to each other, sometimes interrupting the other, or arguing. The single varied movement is entirely derived from a small group of harmonies and rhythms. Commissioned by the BBC for the brilliant young pianist, Nicolas Hodges, it was composed in New York during 2003.

– Elliott Carter

Mosaic (2005) for solo harp and seven instruments

Carlos Salzedo, the extraordinary harpist, was a member of the small group of modernists that surrounded Varese and Ives in the 1920s and 30s and has remained a memory which I cherish. His unusual developments in harp technique always seemed to me too infrequently explored in recent times. So in writing Mosaic, commissioned by the Nash Ensemble, I decided to explore many of his exciting inventions to recall his friendship in the early 1930s.

The score is formed by many short mosaic-like tessera that I hope make one coordinated impression.

– Elliott Carter

New Music Concerts

Robert Aitken, artistic director

35th season | 295th event

Friday June 9, 2006: Music of Iannis Xenakis

7:15 Illuminating Introduction | 8:00 Concert

Glenn Gould Studio

Guest Artist: **Lori Freedman**, bass clarinet

New Music Concerts Ensemble; **Robert Aitken**, artistic director

Iannis Xenakis (Greece/France 1922-2001) – **Echange** (1989) for bass clarinet and ensemble

Iannis Xenakis – **Jalons** (1986) for 15 instruments

James Harley (Canada 1959) – ***aXis**** (2006) for ensemble (NMC commission)

Iannis Xenakis – **Phlegra** (1975) for 11 instruments

* Canadian work | ** World premiere

Iannis Xenakis (1922-2001), a French composer and mathematician of Greek parentage, belonged to the pioneering generation of composers who revolutionized 20th-century music after World War II. With the ardour of an outsider to academic musical life, he was one of the first to replace traditional musical thinking with radical new concepts of sound composition. His musical language had a strong influence on many younger composers in and outside of Europe, but it remained singular for its uncompromising harshness and conceptual rigour. His inspirations were the mythologies of Greek culture and natural phenomena such as the sounds of rain or the slow movement of shifting sand on a beach. His tools were chance operations, computer technologies and mathematical procedures, and at its best his music combines organic yet meticulously thought-out design with intense emotion.

Conspicuously described as “a musical revolutionary”, **Lori Freedman** is known internationally as one of Canada’s most provocative and creative performers. Her work includes contemporary, improvised and electroacoustic music, and frequent collaborations with dance, theatre and visual artists. Over thirty composers have written solo bass clarinet works for her and she has been recorded on 24 commercial CDs. “Freedman has an erotic character in performance that’s smooth like honey and sharp like a bee sting, making any expedition with her worth taking.” (Robert Everett Green – The Globe and Mail).

James Harley, born 1959, Vernon, B.C., Canada, began studying composition in 1980. Prior to that, he had been active as a pianist, jazz and classical, played percussion, and also studied electroacoustics at Western Washington University. After graduating in 1982, he took up residence in the UK in order to study composition with Paul Patterson at the Royal Academy of Music. Recipient of grants from the Canada Council and the Leverhulme Trust, among others, Harley remained in London for three years, benefiting from a number of performances and prizes. In 1985, having been awarded the prestigious Mendelssohn Scholarship, which enables British composers to spend a period abroad, he moved to Paris. There, Harley studied aesthetics with Iannis Xenakis, musical acoustics at the Université de Paris, attended seminars at IRCAM and the Collège de France (Pierre Boulez), and worked extensively with Xenakis’ UPIC computer music system at CEMAMu. While in Paris, Harley won a number of prizes, including two in the 1986 CBC Radio Young Composers Competition in Canada. In the fall of 1996, Harley moved to Los Angeles, and taught part-time at USC and the California Institute of the Arts. In 1999, he began teaching in Minnesota, directing the Music Technology program at Minnesota State University Moorhead. In 2002, he was awarded a McKnight Foundation Composition Fellowship. Harley is currently Assistant Professor at the College of Arts of the University of Guelph. As a researcher, Harley has written on various aspects of contemporary music; his book, *Xenakis: His Life in Music*, was published by Routledge in 2004.

Iannis Xenakis

Phlegra (1975)

Phlegra, for a mixed ensemble of 11 instruments (woodwinds, brass, strings), was composed in 1975. It was the first of four commissions for the London Sinfonietta, a remarkable collaboration that stretched to Xenakis's very last composition, O-Mega, completed in 1997. The title refers to the "battlefield where the Titans and the new gods of Olympus clashed." The music teems with energy, sustained textures being animated with accented articulations, dramatic dynamic swells, and microtonal ornamentation. Contrasting passages contain dense chordal or cluster voicings, fast melodic runs, glissandi of various kinds, and complex rhythmic pointillism. In his foreword to the score, the composer notes: "I have continued here the construction of textures and their organization on a higher level. I refer to texture in the general sense of form — Textures in the sense of form are the cornerstone of art and knowledge."

— James Harley

Iannis Xenakis

Jalons (1986)

Jalons, composed in 1986, was commissioned by Pierre Boulez to celebrate the 10th anniversary of l'Ensemble InterContemporain. For that same concert, Olivier Messiaen, mentor of both Xenakis and Boulez, contributed a new piece as well, his final work for solo piano, Petites esquisses d'oiseaux, performed by Yvonne Loriod. Jalons is one of just a few works Xenakis wrote that includes harp (Alax, for three ensembles each featuring a harp, was composed the year before), and its addition to the ensemble highlights the range of colours explored in this score. Other unusual sonorities include high woodwind multiphonics, and low growling textures featuring the contrabass clarinet and contrabassoon along with tuba and double bass. Delicate chamber passages are contrasted with massed textures.

— James Harley

Iannis Xenakis

Échange (1989)

Échange, from 1989, is the only work Xenakis wrote to feature a woodwind soloist. In this case, the rich sound of the bass clarinet is set off by a mixed ensemble of woodwinds, brass, and strings. That same year, Xenakis also composed Epicycle for solo cello and ensemble. It's interesting to note that prior to these the only concertante works he wrote featured keyboard soloists (three works for piano and orchestra, and one for harpsichord and ensemble). In subsequent years, though, Dox-Orkh (violin and orchestra), Troorkh (trombone and orchestra), and O-Mega (percussion and ensemble) appeared. Échange was commissioned by Harry Sparnaay and the ASKO Ensemble of Holland. The music is in many ways rather traditional, featuring undulating melodic contours, and highlighting the sonorous tone of the low register of the bass clarinet supported by surprisingly harmonious textures in the ensemble.

— James Harley

James Harley

aXis (2006)

aXis is scored for 13 instruments: woodwinds, brass, and strings. It was commissioned by New Music Concerts, Toronto, for this concert celebrating the music of Iannis Xenakis, held as part of the soundaXis festival. The title is intended to pay homage both to Xenakis and to the festival. Beyond that, the title points to the way the music was conceived: various Xenakian ideas as "axis" — the center around which the music rotates; the basic rhythmic impulse that begins the piece, to be varied, elaborated, and returned to; the homophonic texture of the opening, evolving into independent instrumental groups, then individual instruments, then back again; the formal shape of the piece, turning around the point of departure. If there are explicit references to the soundworld of Xenakis, they come from his later work, from Jonchaies (1977) and beyond. His music has influenced me greatly, but more, his rigor of thought and questioning of basic principles have challenged me to go my own way.

— James Harley