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new music

new music concerts

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fractal epitaph kasekets

mandelbrot music

a portrait concert

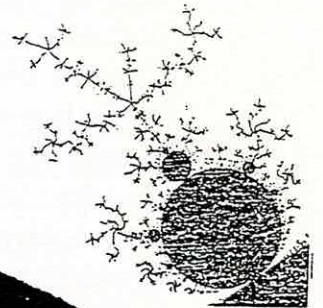


g

chrisp imitation

tenney

form II



new music concerts presents
Udo Kasemets - a portrait

For years I have been fascinated by systems which humans have devised to bring order to their observations and understanding of the events in the universe. I have studied the I Ching, the Mayan Calendar Round, Buckminster Fuller's Synergetics, Stephen Hawking's History of Time, Johannes Kepler's Harmony of the World, the fundamentals of modern astronomy, principles of phonetics and alphabets of various cultures, the structure of the DNA helix, and more, and have attempted to establish correspondences between data representing certain features of some of these systems and data defining parameters of systems ordering sounds in time and space.

-Udo Kasemets, 1995.

Composer, conductor, pianist, organist, vocal coach, writer, critic, educator, dedicated concert-goer and entrepreneur, **Udo Kasemets** has been an integral and energetic part of the new music community in Toronto since the late 1950's. Born in Estonia in 1919, Kasemets came to Canada by way of Germany in 1951; he became a Canadian citizen in 1957. His early musical training took place at the Conservatory in his hometown of Tallinn and continued at the Stuttgart Academy of Music. Immediately prior to his immigration to Canada he attended a series of lectures by Ernst Krenek, Edgard Varèse and Hermann Scherchen at the Kranichstein Institute for New Music in Darmstadt that was to make a profound impression upon him.

As a consequence of this experience the conventional, folk-influenced compositions of Kasemets' youth evolved over the years to embrace the dodecaphonic systems typical of the mid-1950's. By 1960, however, he abandoned this Euro-centric approach entirely in favour of the open forms, unconventional notations, and chance procedures pioneered in the works of **John Cage**. Kasemets' radical conversion was initially celebrated by few and deplored by many. The presentations he organized at the Isaacs Gallery, the *Musica Viva* concerts, and the "Men, Minds and Music" series, while controversial and dismissed by a certain perfidious music critic as "a complete waste of time", were nonetheless seminal events in the development of contemporary musical culture in Canada.

John Cage (1912-1992), the leading composer of the American avant-garde, continues to be a powerful aesthetic influence throughout the musical world. A student of Schoenberg and Cowell, his approach to music was completely original and visionary. Among his innovations were

the invention of the 'prepared' piano, the early use of tape and other electronic resources, and, most significantly, the development of the principle of **indeterminacy**. Intensely interested in Asian philosophy, by 1950 he was studying the *I Ching*, the Chinese "Book of Changes". In his four-volume piano work of 1951, *Music of Changes*, pitches, durations and timbres are all determined by the use of charts derived from the *I Ching* and the tossing of three coins.

James Tenney, born in Silver City, New Mexico in 1934, studied with a succession of prominent American avant-gardists and electronics experts. Among them were Carl Ruggles, Lejaren Hiller, Kenneth Gaburo, and Edgard Varèse. He is a graduate of the Juilliard School of Music, Bennington College (B.A. 1958), and the University of Illinois (M.A. 1961). In the early 1960's, in collaboration with Max Matthews and others at the Bell Telephone Laboratories, he became deeply involved in the development of computer music. Tenney is currently both Professor of Music and Distinguished Research Professor at York University in Toronto and has written works for a variety of media, both instrumental and electronic, many of them using alternative tuning systems.

New Music Concerts celebrates the accomplishments of Udo Kasemets with the world premiere of the large-ensemble version of **Mandelbrot Music: QSOSQ for New Music Concerts** (1995), commissioned by NMC through the Ontario Arts Council. The work is constructed after the mathematical formula which describes the geometry of fractals. The orchestra of 26 musicians and voice performs without a conductor and is drawn from the resources of the most accomplished contemporary ensembles in Toronto, including representatives from **New Music Concerts**, **Arraymusic**, **5th Species**, and the **Accordes String Quartet**.

Two of the remaining compositions highlighting the concert honour the memory of John Cage. Kasemet's **Fractal Epitaph** (1992; revised version for string quartet, 1995) features the voice of soprano **Susan Layard** in an intimate work derived from the tones C-A-G-E. The collaborative ensemble returns to perform James Tenney's **Form No. 2: in memoriam John Cage** (1993). They will also present a rare performance of the 1972 orchestral version of John Cage's tribute to Erik Satie, **Cheap Imitation**.

The concert takes place on Sunday, April 9, 1995 at the Premiere Dance Theatre, Harbourfront Centre. The 8:00 pm concert is preceded by an introduction at 7:15. For tickets please call 973-4000.

New Music Concerts

1 Sunday, October 23, 1994
duMaurier Theatre Centre
Harbourfront Centre
Galina Ustvolskaya

2 Sunday, November 27, 1994
Premiere Dance Theatre
Harbourfront Centre
Norma Beecroft

3 Sunday, February 5, 1995
Art Gallery of Ontario
Walker Court
Erwin Schulhoff

4 Sunday, March 19, 1995
Premiere Dance Theatre
Harbourfront Centre
Tan Dun/Melissa Hui



Premieres

Personalities

Portraits

94
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sea
son

Sunday, April 9, 1995
Premiere Dance Theatre
Harbourfront Centre
Udo Kasemets **5**

Sunday, April 30, 1995
The Great Hall at Hart House
University of Toronto
Olivier Messiaen **6**

Sunday, April 30, 1995
Premiere Dance Theatre
Harbourfront Centre
Olivier Messiaen **7**

Sunday, May 28, 1995
duMaurier Theatre Centre
Harbourfront Centre
Estrada/Scodanibbio **8**

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