

new music concerts presents: an homage to
Morton Feldman



Photo: Barbara Monk Feldman

7:00 pm friday january 12 1996
weston recital hall / ford centre for the performing arts

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Stasis, as it is utilized in painting, is not traditionally part of the apparatus of music. Music can achieve aspects of immobility, or the illusion of it: the Magrittelike world Satie evokes, or the "floating sculpture" of Varèse. The degrees of stasis, found in a Rothko or a Guston, were perhaps the most significant elements that I brought to my music from painting. For me, stasis, scale, and pattern have put the whole question of symmetry and asymmetry in abeyance. And I wonder if either of these concepts, or an amalgamation of both, can still operate for the many who are now less prone to synthesis as an artistic formula.

—from Feldman's essay, "Crippled Symmetry" (1981)

New Music Concerts' fourth event of its twenty-fifth anniversary season will take place on **Friday, January 12th** and commemorates what would have been the seventieth birthday of one of the musical forefathers of abstract minimalism, the late American composer **Morton Feldman** (12th January 1926—3rd September 1987). A native of Brooklyn, New York, Feldman began to study the piano under the guidance of the magisterial Madame Maurina-Press at the age of 12. At 15 he began a series of rather disorganized theoretical studies with the American serialist Wallingford Riegger and at 18 survived some quite argumentative lessons with a challenging Stefan Wolpe. Feldman's subsequent encounter with John Cage and his coterie in 1950 was crucial to his further development in several regards, not only in the initial sense of what Feldman later described as Cage's example having given him the "permission" to have confidence in his own instincts, but also as a result of the close artistic association Feldman came to have with the other composers in Cage's circle, notably Earle Brown, Christian Wolff and David Tudor. With the exception of Cage, Feldman was by far the most articulate member of the group and renowned for his highly influential teaching at the State University of New York at Buffalo and beyond. Of even greater personal significance to Feldman were the friendships he established among the abstract expressionist painters of that time, including Mark Rothko, Jackson Pollock, Robert Rauschenberg and in particular the man he described as "my closest friend and closest friend in art", Philip Guston—presently the subject of an ongoing exhibit at the **Art Gallery of Ontario**.

Feldman's 'indeterminate' works of the early 1950's were among the first examples of a purely graphic musical notation and gave only a general indication of pitch, register and duration. Despite the degree of chance involved, they exhibit an exacting concern for the control of densities and instrumental combinations, presented in a highly subdued, carefully shaded dynamic range. From 1953 onwards Feldman gradually returned to the conventional notation of the melodic component of his works and concentrated on strategies to ensure a measure of memory and free association to the realm of rhythm and durations. He regarded musical form not as a pre-ordained rhetorical structure but as a rhythmic sequence of events in a non-repetitive and often protracted progression of exact time proportions and durations.

New Music Concerts has had a long-standing relationship with Feldman's music, culminating with the historic 1984 world première of his Second String Quartet in a five-hour performance by the Kronos Quartet. A 1988 memorial concert featured the Canadian première of Feldman's four-hour composition, *For Philip Guston*. The performers on that occasion were flutist **Robert Aitken**, pianist **Barbara Pritchard** and percussionist **Robin Engelman**. These same artists will re-unite at 8:00 pm on the stage of the **George Weston Recital Hall** to interpret Feldman's 90-minute composition, *Crippled Symmetry* (1983). The performance will be preceded at 7:00 by Paul Falkenberg's 1951 film profile of **Jackson Pollock** with an accompanying score by Feldman. This will be followed by a videotaped interview (filmed at the Atlantic Centre for the Arts in New Smyrna Beach, Florida, not long before Feldman's death) in which the composer discusses the genesis of the work we will be hearing.

New Music Concerts' first appearance at the
George Weston Recital Hall at the Ford Centre for the Performing Arts
is sponsored by **River Oaks Homes** and **Merrick Homes**.
The **Ford Centre** is located at **5040 Yonge Street** in North York.
For single ticket information and sales* by phone please call
the **Livent** box office at **(416) 872-2222**. (*A service charge applies.)

New Music Concerts 25th Anniversary Season 1995-1996

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Robert
Aitken
artistic
director

**Saturday, October 28th, 1995, 8:00 pm, Glenn Gould Studio:
An Evening with Christos Hatzis**

The première performance of three recently completed song cycles by this prolific Greek/Canadian composer featuring soprano Monica Whicher and countertenors Kyle Church Cheseborough and Ron Greydanus.

**Sunday November 12th, 1995, 2:30 pm, Walter Hall:
Orpheus Then and Now**

A tribute to British composer Sir Michael Tippett in his 90th year. New Music Concerts in co-operation with the Aldeburgh Connection presents a programme including works for voice and piano and string quartet. Featured artists on this concert include soprano Valdine Anderson, tenor Benjamin Butterfield, baritone James Westman, pianists Bruce Ubukata and Stephen Ralls and The Accordes String Quartet.

**Sunday, December 3rd, 1995, 8:00 pm, Premiere Dance Theatre:
Henri Dutilleux**

This concert honouring the famed 80 year old French composer features The Accordes String Quartet playing his "Ainsi la nuit". This evening's performance also includes the première performance of Bruce Mather's "Vega Sicilia" and works by composers Harry Freedman, and Omar Daniel, featuring guitarist Rachel Gauk, soprano Valdine Anderson and cellist David Hetherington. Presented in co-operation with the Toronto Symphony.

**Friday, January 12, 1996, 8:00 pm, Recital Hall, Ford Centre:
Homage to Morton Feldman**

On the 70th anniversary of his birth New Music Concerts presents a film interview with this legendary composer and performs his rarely heard "Crippled Symmetry" with Robert Aitken, flute, Barbara Pritchard, piano and Robin Engelman, percussion.

**Sunday, February 4th, 1996, 8:00 pm, Premiere Dance Theatre:
GRAME**

An appearance by the exciting French contemporary music ensemble from Lyon on the occasion of their North American tour. This concert features new live and electro-acoustic works by French and Canadian composers.

**Wednesday, March 6th, 1996, 8:00 pm, The Gallery School, AGO:
A Tribute to the Group of Seven**

In co-operation with the Art Gallery of Ontario, the New Music Concerts Ensemble, conducted by Robert Aitken, presents a free concert honouring the current Group of Seven exhibition. Canadian composer Michel Longtin's "Pohjatuuli" was inspired by the paintings of some of Canada's most celebrated artists. Also being performed are Alban Berg's classic "Kammerkonzert" with Fujiko Imajishi, violin and Marc Widner, piano and the prize winning piece of New Music Concert's Young Composer's contest.

**Friday, May 24th, 1996, 8:00 pm, Premiere Dance Theatre:
AGON**

This ten member ensemble from Prague, specializing in alternative music, performs recent works by young Czech composers with two works by Vancouver based composer Rudolph Komorous.

For further information or seasons subscriptions:

☎ 416 961 9594

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