

*The University of Minnesota – Duluth
Department of Music Presents*

*The Second Annual
New Music Festival*

April 25 and 26, 2001

artistic director: Justin Henry Rubin

with guest artists:

ensemble Green

Music
at UMD



Artist Series concerts are partially funded by the John and Mary Gonska Cultural Fund.
The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

The programs

ensemble GREEN

piano	Bridget Convey
flute	Julie Renee Long
clarinet	Elana Weber
violin	Thomas McEvilly
cello	Lynn Angebranndt

Wednesday, April 25, 7:30 PM –Tweed Museum

Improvisation, Politics, Sonic Extensions, and Theatre

Tentacles version for five instruments (arr. Green) Bob Fernandez (1985)

Vertical Thoughts 2 Morton Feldman (1963)
for Violin and Piano

Living Room Music: The Story John Cage (1940)

Four Systems Earle Brown (1954)

Experimental Etudes: Knight Moves Arthur Jarvinen

Vox Balaenae for three masked players George Crumb (1971)
for electric flute, electric cello, electric piano

Vocalise (...for the beginning of time)

Variations on Sea-Time

Sea Time

Archeozoic (Var.I)

Proterozoic Archeozoic (Var. II)

Paleozoic Archeozoic (Var. III)

Mesozoic Archeozoic (Var. IV)

Cenozoic Archeozoic (Var. V)

Sea Nocturne (...for the end of time)

Thursday, April 26, 12:00 PM - Recital Hour Concert

Going it alone - some new solo repertory

- Three Pieces for Clarinet Alone* Igor Stravinsky (1919)
- Guero* Helmut Lachenmann (1970)
for Solo Piano
- Sonata Op. 6* Finn Mortensen (1953)
for Solo Flute
I. *Introduzione adagio-allegro vivace*
II. *Allegro giocoso*
- Blue-Grey* Joseph Brennan (2000)
for Clarinet and Piano
- Going On* Donald Davis (1991)
for Unaccompanied Cello

Thursday, April 26, 7:30 PM –Tweed Museum

Olivier Messiaen (12/10/1908 - 4/27/1992) Memorial Anniversary Concert

- Le Merle Noir* for Flute and Piano (1952)
- Regard des Anges* for Solo Piano (1944)
[XIV from *Vingt Regard sur l'enfant-Jesus*]
- Quatour pour la fin du Temps* (1942)
for Violin, Clarinet, Cello and Piano
I *Liturgie de cristal*
II *Vocalise, pour l'ange qui annonce la fin du Temps*
III *Abîme des oiseaux*
IV *Intermède*
V *Louange à l'Eternité de Jésus*
VI *Danse de la fureur, pour les sept trompettes*
VII *Fouillis d'arcs-en-ciel,*
VIII *Louange à l'Immortalité de Jésus*

About the composers and their music

Robert Fernandez has been active in the field of new music for three decades, performing as a percussionist for some of the most influential American composers over this period of time. Many of these composers, such as Morton Feldman, John Cage, Earle Brown, and Pauline Oliveros, employ aleatoric and/or improvisational forms in their works. This in turn has influenced Fernandez in his own attitude toward composition, which brings us to *Tentacles*, a work founded on principles not unlike those that govern the works of Earle Brown: musical fragments that can be rotated, used in different combinations, and articulated employing varying ensemble strengths, creating solos, duets, and full ensemble textures. Brown developed these ideas from his early interests and involvement with jazz. The concept of controlling improvisation so that the work is at once repeatable, yet ever-changing with each performance, is one that he shares as a concern with other composers on this program. He maintains an active career as an Afro-Cuban percussionist.

Morton Feldman (1926-1987), like the title of one of his compositions, falls *between categories*. At once a composer interested more in what was going on around him in the visual arts (especially the 'American expressionist' painters Mark Rothko, Philip Guston, and Jackson Pollack), a composer vacillating between obsessively precise notation and aleatoric/graphic scores that draw on the performers' intuition and abilities to improvise, a composer who uses negation of material at one point in his life and extensive repetition and patterning at another, and a composer whose early aphoristic and enigmatic work is offset by a late period of composing in epic proportion. But at all times, he is a composer of quiet music, wherein each event is surrounded by a halo of delicate tone and piercing sentimentality. *Vertical Thoughts 2* is a work which in itself lies between each of these categories, or characteristics, of Feldman's particular art.

John Cage (1912 – 1992) *Living Room Music* is in four movements: "To Begin", "Story", "Melody", and "End". Cage indicates that "any household objects or architectural elements may be used as instruments, such as magazines, a table, largish books, the floor, a window frame." In *Story* the players perform a rhythmic reading of a text from Gertrude Stein's *The World is Round*: "Once upon a time the world was round and you could go on it around and around." This is an informal music, a home entertainment. Cage's music often does not even require professional musicians. In fact his earliest ensemble consisted of bookbinders he knew. In *Living Room Music* they are as the amateurs of Colonial America (Cage had a fervent interest in William Billings and early American forms of music), sitting around a table in their homes and playing/singing for their own enjoyment. Cage's experimental nature and lively imagination led him to continue to explore new realms in which to create music up until his death in 1992. *Living Room Music* brings his interests in Zen philosophy of greater freedom in the manner in which musical structure can be formed together with his unique approach to sound sources.

Earle Brown a composer often associated with the so-called *New York School* (consisting also of John Cage, Morton Feldman, and Christian Wolff) was born on 26 December 1926 in Lunenburg, Massachusetts. As he developed as a composer he found that giving the musicians *symbols* and *images* rather than standard notation allowed his pieces to remain intricate and open, while requiring individual actions of the performers. Earle once said, "Music is my material, but art is my subject."

Arthur Jarvinen (b.1956) is well-known as a new music performer, composer, and physical poet, having been featured on prominent concerts and festivals throughout the U.S. and abroad for the past two decades. He is a founding and continuing member of the *California Ear Unit*. Jarvinen's theatrical experiments have generated a unique body of work he calls "physical poetry". These are non-narrative audio/visual compositions for the stage, incorporating sound, text, movement, lighting, and props. In his own words:

Experimental Etudes is an overview, in etude format, of some of the more important compositional trends in contemporary music of the last forty years, especially the American experimental tradition. It is meant for the benefit of students who wish to explore contemporary music but may find themselves either overwhelmed by the complexity, technical difficulty, and unfamiliarity of this music, or who may not have teachers expert in, or even sympathetic to this type of work. Teachers who wish to explore contemporary music with their students will find this an excellent framework in which to do so. The etudes are aimed at players of undergraduate or advanced high school level. However, with some imagination teachers should be able to adapt many of these ideas to even younger players, and even experienced professionals will find the book challenging and enlightening.

George Crumb (b. 1929) [in his own words]: *Vox Balaenae* (Voice of the Whale), composed in 1971 for the New York Camerata, is scored for flute, cello and piano (all amplified in concert performance). The work was inspired by the singing of the humpback whale, a tape recording of which I had heard two or three years previously. Each of the three performers is required to wear a black half-mask (or visor-mask). The masks, by effacing the sense of human projection, are intended to represent, symbolically, the powerful impersonal forces of nature (i.e. nature dehumanized). I have also suggested that the work be performed under deep-blue stage lighting.

The form of *Voice of the Whale* is a simple three-part design, consisting of a prologue, a set of variations named after the geological eras, and an epilogue. The opening *Vocalise* (marked in the score: "wildly fantastic, grotesque") is a kind of cadenza for the flutist, who simultaneously plays the instrument while singing into it. This combination of instrumental and vocal sound produces an eerie, surreal timbre, not unlike the sounds of the humpback whale. The conclusion of the cadenza is announced by a parody of the opening measures of Strauss' *Also sprach Zarathustra*.

The *Sea-Theme* ("solemn, with calm majesty") is presented by the cello (in harmonics), accompanied by dark, fateful chords of strummed piano strings. The following sequence of variations begins with the haunting sea-gull cries of the *Archezoic* ("timeless, inchoate") and, gradually increasing in intensity, reaches a strident climax in the

Cenozoic ("dramatic, with a feeling of destiny"). The emergence of man in the Cenozoic era is symbolized by a partial restatement of the *Zarathustra* reference.

The concluding *Sea-Nocturne* ("serene, pure, transfigured") is an elaboration of the *Sea-Theme*. The piece is couched in the "luminous" tonality of B major and there are shimmering sounds of antique cymbals (played alternately by the cellist and flutist). In composing the *Sea-Nocturne* I wanted to suggest "a larger rhythm of nature" and a sense of suspension in time. The concluding gesture of the work is a gradually dying series of repetitions of a 10-note figure. In concert performance, the last figure is to be played "in pantomime" (to suggest a *diminuendo* beyond the threshold of hearing!); for recorded performances, the figure is played as a "fade-out".

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) was never a stone that gathered any moss; he always was donning new guises and looking for fresh modes of materials to work with, whether they be contemporary, or hundreds of years old. These brief pieces for clarinet were referred to by the composer himself as "a personal, introspective set of sounds." Their rhythmic ideas draw on American ragtime, but are infused with Stravinsky's clear-cut idiosyncratic sense of melodic formulation.

Helmut Lachenmann, born in Stuttgart in 1935, matured as a composer during Germany's most active environment for new music, wherein Cologne became a hotbed of international exchange of ideas and a place where experimental music blossomed under the direction of artists such as Karlheinz Stockhausen and Pierre Boulez. Lachenmann's music, although originally influenced by the post-Webern serialists, began to take on a new philosophy, abandoning all traditional modes of thought and how we perceive sound. In fact, he applies the idea of *Verweigerung* (refusal, rejection, repudiation) to his process of composing, finding that the use of historical models and materials a "bureaucratic mentality". In *Guero*, we find no actual playing, in the normal sense, of the piano. Instead, the physical instrument is treated as a sound resource of extraordinary range and possibilities.

Finn Mortensen (1922-1983) was the first Norwegian composer to bring the ideas of the Second Viennese School to his homeland. Mortensen is well known to be a composer who allowed for great inclusiveness of style and material to be generated and developed in his work without bias. His *Flute Sonata*, however, clearly harvests the Neo-Classical style envisioned by Paul Hindemith.

Joseph Brennan, who currently teaches at Pomona College in California, composed *Blue-Gray* specifically for the performers here at this festival. A work characterized by a multitude of textures and moods, it creates an arch-structure, taking the listener on a furious journey, though beginning and ending with a peaceful sentiment and sense of tranquility.

Donald Davis (b.1957), an LA based composer, was inspired to compose *Going On* following reading Samuel Beckett's trilogy of novels Molloy, Malone Dies, and The Unnamable. The tormented narrative is reflected in his composition through a prism of

relentless reduction and repetition of the barest of materials. Beckett's terminal vision, as expressed in the final lines of *The Unnamable*, portrays the existential doom of sustained resignation: "...it will be the silence, where I am, I don't know, I'll never know, in the silence you don't know, you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on."

Olivier Messiaen - a personal note here - on April 27, 1992, I was driving home in the late afternoon after a rehearsal in Connecticut. I can remember the very bend in the road, the position of the sun on the horizon, and the cool quiet breeze around me as I heard of Messiaen's passing on the car radio. There are many great composers and artists from the 20th century, but none perhaps as steadfast in his ideas and ideals as Messiaen, none as intrigued, with almost a child-like naïvete, by simplicity and a natural sense of beauty as he, even as he approached the end of his life. Soon afterwards, Bridget and I (both attending the same college in New York at the time), along with another friend, took a trip to the Cathedral of St. John in New York City where a memorial concert for this seminal composer was being mounted. The nave was filled with mourning admirers and a cross-section of the art-music loving public. The concert began with the quiet deep tones of one of his organ works, the organist hidden from view, the sounds resonating as if from darkness in the massive building, caressing the walls and penetrating the bodies of the audience. The place was quiet, and, without applause, a succession of his pieces were performed, almost like a procession of pall bearers, exhibiting both the emotional breadth and distinctive palette that were ever-present in the variety of genres in which he worked throughout his career. The final work was the *Quatour*, performed amidst only the glow of candles, after which we all left in stunned silence; it was a magical evening.

Messiaen assumes the position of an eclectic composer, whose work sounds anything but that of a pastiche or clothed imitation. Birdsong, Catholic liturgical chant, serial tone-row interpolations, Hindu rhythm, Balinese percussion - all of these elements and many more are brought together through an iridescent tapestry of his own personally developed chromatic modality, and all come to the service of what he considered his primary function in life: to express his faith through his music. The *Quartet for the End of Time* was composed during the Second World War, when he was imprisoned in a concentration camp by the German occupying forces in France. He wrote the work for whatever musicians he could find, on whatever paper he could beg, and for whatever instruments in whatever condition the Germans deigned to provide. It was his only way of enduring, and the first performance was given in the camp, for its prisoners, in the dark, memorized by the players, of whom only himself at the piano and one other would survive to perform again after the war. *Vingt regards* (Twenty Images of the Infant Jesus) was composed in a fury of activity after his release from the prison. In a cycle of immense scope and duration, part XIV brings the imagery of fire and ecstatic vision to the surface in a tour de force. *Le Merle Noir*, composed after the war, exhibits both his increasing fascination with birdsong, while the contemplative and introspective severity of his earlier pieces gives way to a more joyous atmosphere.

About the ensemble

“This is a group well-equipped to fight the good fight, championing 20th-century music in a mobile chamber setting.” –Los Angeles Times

As young advocates of new music, *ensemble GREEN* was founded in 1997 to perform music of our time in a fresh and innovative voice. In a performance called “gifted” by the Los Angeles Times, *GREEN* debuted at the Ojai Music Festival’s “Meet the Artists” series in December 1997.

Formerly in quintet form, the ensemble recently expanded to its current instrumentation to fully explore the possibilities of the chamber music repertoire. The composition of the ensemble continues to evolve according to the demands for the performance of innovative music. Ms. Convey has been fortunate to collaborate with fine musicians with whom she shares these goals. In its performance choices *GREEN* intertwines the musical worlds of earlier composers such as Bartok, Messiaen, Carter and Cage with the newer realms of Chen Yi, Jarvinen, Crockett, Hoey, Golia, Naidoo and many others.

ensemble GREEN has been highly involved with premiering works and collaborating with the composers of our time. During our 2000/2001 season, composers Shaun Naidoo, Vinny Golia, Chris Arrell, Tom Flaherty, Marc Lowenstein, Steve Hoey and others have written pieces for *ensemble GREEN*. In January 2000 *ensemble GREEN* was the “ensemble-in-residence” for the Society of Composers, Inc. Region VII Conference 2000. In May 1999 *GREEN* was invited to perform for the Pacific Contemporary Music Center’s “Festival of New Music 1999” and recently was invited back as “guest ensemble” for the PCMC’s “Festival of New Music 2000”.

About the players

A musician who enjoys performing music of our time, pianist **Bridget Convey** has found much fulfillment in collaborating with living composers. While in New York, Bridget began performing twentieth century repertoire under the guidance of percussionist Raymond DesRoches, and was given the opportunity to collaborate with many living composers. In Fall 1999, Bridget was invited as a guest artist to the Percussive Arts Society International Convention 1999 in Columbus, Ohio, to lecture and perform John Cage’s masterpiece *Sonatas and Interludes for Prepared Piano*. Currently, Bridget is professor of music at Pasadena City College and is pianist and director for the ever-growing Los Angeles based new music ensemble, *ensemble GREEN*. Originally from New York, Bridget Convey currently resides in Pasadena, California. She relocated to Southern California to study with Vicky Ray at the California Institute of the Arts, where she received her MFA in 1997.

Julie Renee Long received her B.M. from the Cleveland Institute of Music and her M.M. from the University of Southern California. She is currently pursuing her DMA in flute

performance at the University of Southern California with minor fields in Early Music and Music Education. In addition to Julie's early studies on the Renaissance and Baroque flutes, she also enjoys contemporary music and her involvement with *ensemble GREEN*. Julie is the former principal flutist of the Debut Orchestra and the American Youth Symphony, and is currently the co-principal flutist of the Pacific Institute Symphony. She is the flute coach for the Idyllwild Summer Arts Youth Symphonic band program and was one of six semi-finalists selected to play in the National Flute Association Young Artist Competition in the year 2000. Julie's major teachers include Jim Walker, Anne Diener-Zentner, Martha Aarons, and David Shostac.

Elana Weber is a native of Tucson, AZ. She received her BFA degree in music performance in 1996 from the University of Arizona where she studied under Jerry Kirkbride, and her MFA at CalArts in 1998, studying under William Powell. She was also chosen to be the guest soloist with the Arizona Symphonic Winds for their "Summers in the Park" concert series in June of 2000. She has presented several premieres, and played principal on the premiere of David Maslanka's *Mass* CD and as soloist on the CalArts performance and competition CD. Elana has taught privately since 1991 and has also taught Music Theory and Music Appreciation on the high school and college levels. Currently, she teaches her private clarinet studio of 17 and is working as a personal assistant for Danny Elfman.

Thomas McEvilly is a native of Cincinnati, Ohio. After attending the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts in Houston, he went on to study violin and viola at the University of Houston School of Music where his teachers included Milton Katims and Fredell Lack. After receiving a gold medal at the 1990 Texas Music Festival Chamber Music Competition, he joined the New York based Mantovani Orchestra. Since moving to Los Angeles in 1998, Thomas has worked both as a studio musician and as a member of local groups including the Los Angeles Baroque Orchestra.

Lynn Angebrannt received her M.A. from the California Institute of the Arts. She was a member of the Santa Fe Pro Musica from 1986-1995. She has appeared in concert with the CalArts Twentieth Century Players, the California EAR unit, and in the Los Angeles productions of *IMUSICIRCUS* a realization of John Cage's *circus on*. She has been a guest artist at the Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival, and for the past two summers has appeared as a performer for the Arco Santi Composers workshop in Arizona. She sits as principal cellist in the Torrance Symphony and substitutes for several local orchestras as well as the Fresno Philharmonic. Ms. Angebrannt is currently on the board of the LA Violoncello society and teaches and freelances throughout Southern California.

I would personally like to thank the guest artists for their enormous work in preparing for this festival, and extend appreciation to Dr. Judith Kritzmire, Music Department Head, and Robert Bucker, Dean of the School of Fine Arts, without whose support the festival could not have taken place.

- Justin Rubin