

*The University of Minnesota Duluth  
Department of Music Presents*

*The Third Annual  
New Music Festival*

April 25 and 26, 2002

artistic director: Justin Henry Rubin

with guest artists:

***THUD***

*Music*  
at UMD



Artist Series concerts are partially funded by the John and Mary Gonska Cultural Fund.  
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# ***THUD***

saxophones	Rhonda Taylor
clarinet	CHeryl Melfi
piano	Tomoko Uchino
violin	Rose Drucker
percussion	Lance Saxeru(D)

## **Thursday, April 25, 12:00 PM – Recital Hour Concert**

<i>Soliloquies</i>	Leslie Bassett
I.    Fast, aggressive, driving, dramatic	
II.   Flowing, singing	
III.  Fast, abrasive, contentious	
IV.   Slow, lyrical, expressive	
<i>Second piece for violin alone</i>	Stefan Wolpe
<i>Sequenza IXb</i>	Luciano Berio
<i>Sonata [Op.1]</i>	Alban Berg

## **Thursday, April 26, 7:30 PM - Tweed Museum**

<i>Sonata for Clarinet and Piano</i>	Francis Poulenc
I.    Allegro tristamente	
II.   Romanza	
III.  Allegro con fuoco	
<i>Largo</i>	Charles Ives
<i>Quartet [Op. 22]</i>	Anton Webern
<i>Distant Companion</i>	Justin Rubin
<i>Elegie et Rondeau</i>	Karel Husa
<i>Für Kommende Zeiten [No. 33]</i>	Karlheinz Stockhausen
1. ELONGATION: play or sing extremely short events until each one seems like an eternity	
2. SHORTENING: play or sing extremely long sounds until each one seems like an instant	

## **Friday, April 26, 7:30 PM –Tweed Museum**

*as a spray of reflected meadowlight  
informs the air*

Jeffrey Mumford

*In a Landscape*

John Cage

*Take Cover Story*

Rick Burkhardt

*Mulatash Stomp*

Derek Bermel

*Contrasts*

Béla Bartók

I. Verbunkos (Recruiting Dance)

II. Piheno (Relaxation)

III. Sebes (Fast Dance)

### **About the players**

As an advocate of contemporary music, and particularly new music for the saxophone, **Rhonda Taylor** has had the good fortune to work with a variety of today's most outstanding composers, such as Bernard Rands, Robert Lemay, Robert Morris, Michael Colgrass, and David Maslanka. She has commissioned and premiered works by emerging composers as well, including music by Rick Burkhardt, Justin Rubin, Jon Forshee, and Scott Winship. Most recently, Ms. Taylor has performed at such events as the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual New Music and Art Festival (Bowling Green), the 12<sup>th</sup> World Saxophone Congress (Montreal), The ThreeTwo Festival of New Music (New York), and the University of San Diego Spring New Music Festival. Upcoming projects include the commission of new solo works by Jeffrey Mumford and Jon Forshee, as well as a performance of Michael Colgrass's saxophone concerto *Dream Dancer* with the UA Wind Ensemble in the 2002-2003 season. She has studied with John Sampen at Bowling Green State University and Kelland Thomas at the University of Arizona. Additional studies of Ms. Taylor's include masterclasses held by Fred Hemke and Eugene Rousseau, as well as attending Domaine Forget Music Academy as a scholarship winner to study with Jean-Marie Londeix and Jean-Francois Guay.

**Lance Saxerud**, a native of Champlin Park, Minnesota, has performed at the Toronto 2000 Music Conference, the 2001 Summer Mallet Festival in Pite, Sweden, the 2001 Nevada Day of Percussion with CrossTalk (an electronic percussion ensemble), and is a Medici Scholar. He has been an active member of the Rosewood Marimba Band, and in February, 2001, he spent a week in Trinidad and Tobago studying steel drums at the BWIA Invaders' panyard. His teachers include Gary Cook, Norman Weinberg and Robin Horn. He has toured Mexico and has played in some of the finest halls in Europe.

**Tomoko Uchino**, a native of Japan, has been a top prize winner in such competitions as the Ettlingen International Piano Competition for Young Pianists in Germany and the Takahiro Sonoda Piano Award International Competition in Japan. She has performed as a soloist and collaborative musician throughout the United States, Europe, Japan and Thailand, appearing with such orchestras as the Kyushu Symphony Orchestra, Germania Symphony and University of Michigan Symphony Orchestra. Arizona Citizen praised her recent performance of Prokofiev Piano Concerto No. 1 for “playing...with power and authority, Uchino negotiated the work’s multiple personalities with ease.” Ms. Uchino has studied at the University of Michigan, the Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore, Maryland, where she studied with acclaimed teacher/pianist Ann Schein, and the University of Arizona under Dr. Rex Woods and Dr. Paula Fan. She has been active in performing contemporary works and enjoyed collaborating with living composers at such festivals as 3:2 Music Festival in NYC, Interlochen Summer Festival, Yellow Barn Chamber Music Festival and Baldwin Summer Music Festival.

**Cheryl Melfi** has performed with new music groups such as the Contemporary Directions Ensemble, the Phoenix Ensemble, the Nova Chamber Players, and Prime Directive. She is a founding member of the Sharon Curry Quintet and the award-winning Cirrus Winds. She has studied at the Baldwin-Wallace College Conservatory of Music, the University of Michigan, and the University of Arizona.

Violinist **Rose Drucker** is a versatile and accomplished musician with experience in solo, chamber and orchestral performance, but has a scope of sound that is particularly well suited for the varied repertoire of 20<sup>th</sup> Century literature and new music. Ms. Drucker has performed with the Tucson Symphony Orchestra and Arizona Opera, in addition to participating in international music festivals across the country.

## *About the composers and their music*

**Béla Bartók** (1881-1945) wrote *Contrasts* for the clarinetist Benny Goodman and the violinist Joseph Szigeti in 1938 in response to a commission from Goodman. Each movement is based upon traditional Magyar music, a music that the composer studied and collected voraciously in his many recording sojourns throughout South-Eastern Europe. Bartók's success can partly be attributed to his keen ability to translate into his own works the essence of this music, imbued with bold, jagged rhythms, asymmetrical melodic forms, yet which remain thoroughly elegant and emotionally riveting. The Magyar musical tradition, which flourished for centuries, was almost completely eradicated under the Nazi occupation during the Second World War. It is largely due to the dedication of Bartók (and his compatriot Zoltán Kodály) to the recording and documentation of this varied literature that much of it survives today.

**Leslie Bassett's** (b. 1923) *Soliloquies* for solo clarinet were written in 1978 for the Rev. Robert Onofrey. Each movement consists of a short character piece, and the work as a whole makes full use of the clarinet's sweeping range and broad dynamic expression, with the inclusion of some extended techniques such as resonance trills. A trombonist and arranger in an army band during World War II, Bassett has been able to maintain a viable, and communicative musical language over his extensive career while introducing many of these 20<sup>th</sup> century developments into his works.

**Alban Berg** (1885-1935) stands like the Colossus with one foot on either bank of a great river. On one side we find the ideals and harmonic ambivalencies of the inherited late Romantic Austro-Germanic tradition, such as Wagner, Mahler, and Reger. Busy with chromatic alterations and a never-ceasing stream of rhythmic activity, Berg pays homage to this domain in his *Sonata* [Op. 1] *in b minor* (composed in 1907-08, which also marked the conclusion of his formal studies with his life-long mentor, Arnold Schönberg). Although its key signature and title denote a firm reference to tonality, the listener is aurally unaware of this until the final moments conclude safely within its tonal center through gently uttered triads. On the other side of this musical landscape, we find the more subtle and evasive compositions that were emerging from the modernist figures such as Anton Webern (also a fellow student under the tutelage of Schönberg). His involvement with multiple musical languages and methods of composition enabled him to express with all the grandeur of traditional opera, a very modern perspective on life and contemporary issues with more subtlety than he could have summoned drawing on only one or the other. His two operas, *Wozzeck* (1917-22) and *Lulu* (1929-unfinished), also found unusual public favor at their first productions and have become mainstays in the repertory following his premature death at the age of 50.

**Luciano Berio**, born in 1924 - just one year following the death of the father of modern Italian music, Ferruccio Busoni - may very well have been just the type of musician that the earlier Italian master would have envisioned for the future of his art. His scope has always been Universal, gravitating towards the origin of human music – the voice. His early theatre works and electronic extensions of live performance touch on political and

sociological issues without hesitation; his subjects have ranged from the optimistic texts of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to the emotional brutality of sexual assault. On the other hand, his innate exuberance for capturing the widest breadth possible in his works and the positive nature of his personality led to the creation of music based on folk songs native to cultures throughout the world. Spoken language, despite dialect, is the common link between all of mankind, and essentially all of Berio's works reflect a sensitivity to this, despite being vocal or instrumental in nature. In his involvement with extending the possibilities of the voice without the use of artificial means, he became attracted to employing similar techniques in the field of solo instrumental composition. He began to compose a series of pieces for unaccompanied instruments entitled *Sequenza*. Each one explores the new expressive possibilities of the chosen instrument he finds while working with it in unconventional ways. A more prosaic approach to the writing is encountered within these pieces, rather than the patterned poetic mold into which 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century music is commonly poured, as he 'translates' human speech into a more abstract and distilled format. Often Berio's solos were then 'composed around' and placed into quasi-concertinos, encircled by a chamber orchestra of some dimension. These extensions are entitled *Chemins*. *Sequenza IXb* (which is based on *Sequenza IX* for clarinet from 1980), however, is just the reverse – a solo extraction from what was originally conceived as a duet for soloist and digitally produced electronic sounds. The work can be seen as a distant image, slightly blurred and indistinct, which slowly comes into focus as we approach its conclusion in time wherein the transparency of its structure is made clear. Italian writer and friend of Berio, Edoardo Sanguineti, wrote verses for each *Sequenza* in 1994-95. For *Sequenza IXb*, Sanguineti writes, "my fragile form, you are unstable and immobile: it is you, this fractured fractal of mine that returns and trembles..."

**Derek Bermel** composed *Mulatash Stomp* for the Broadview Trio in 1991. In the words of the composer:

While working on the piece, my teacher William Albright mentioned that he had once spent a wild evening at an all-night 'Mulatas' (the authentic Hungarian spelling) and the idea stuck in my mind. Having never been to a true Mulatas, I called my second-hand piece "Mulatash" and wove a techno-rhythm into the mix for some added American late-night spice.

**Rick Burkhardt's** *Take Cover Story* (1993), is comprised of two systems which attempt to inhabit the same cage. In the words of the composer:

I imagined helicopters, with their circling propellers (which on film can be seen to stand still or circle backwards) producing a thick hum of discreet, sometimes audible pulses. The hurtling motions of these machines first appeared to me on televisions, with the subdued rustle and the size of dignified birds, hovering venerably over ancient and dusty landscape....I wanted to enter that mechanical hum, to explore that awareness. *Take Cover Story* did so from a respectful distance.

**John Cage** (1912-92) is all too well known for diving into the interior of the piano to create new sounds with the instrument (an approach that became very influential on other American experimentalists such as George Crumb). Cage was at first interested in creating a quasi-Gamelan sound to the instrument, in effect providing an entire orchestra of sounds under the hands of the pianist. However, some of his earlier compositions regard the piano in its traditional mode of playing. Eventually, the dissolution of the

presence of Ego in his music led his writing down to an almost completely spontaneous level of articulation. His experimental nature and lively imagination led him to continue to explore new realms in which to create music up until his death in 1992. *In a Landscape* 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 piano writing. It has found new life in this successful arrangement for the marimba by Swedish percussionist Daniel Berg.

**Karel Husa** (b. 1921), best known for his wind ensemble work *Music for Prague*, wrote *Elegie et Rondeau* in 1960 for Sigurd Rasher. The dramatic *Elegie* is followed by the *Rondeau*, which is designed as one large crescendo, created through an expansion of all the musical parameters. Tension is additionally built by Husa's treatment of rhythm: the saxophone and the piano are in a constant state of shifting between imitation and hemiola. Rasher premiered *Elegie et Rondeau* in Rochester, NY, in the summer of 1960, and it has remained a landmark in the literature for the instrument.

**Charles Ives** (1874-1954) can in many ways be considered as America's first true composer as, unlike most of his American contemporaries and predecessors, he forged a music divergent of the principles espoused by the European Academe, drawing on everything from camp songs, the often cacophonous sounds of nature, and pure American hymnody. He can also be seen as the first in a line of American experimental composers, adapting radical concepts, harmonic ideas, and forms never before used in his wide array of works. A precocious organist and pianist, the experimental ideal was instilled in the young artist by his father who encouraged Charles to seek uncharted paths. His mature works were composed between the turn of the century and the late teens; he suffered a stroke following World War I after which he only revised and compiled the vast corpus or materials that seemed to flow endlessly during his fertile years of composition. Ives saw his music closely connected with the Transcendentalist writer/philosophers of late 19<sup>th</sup> century America, including Thoreau, Hawthorne, and Emerson, but he could equally write scathing humoresques, sometimes even bringing political matters into a musical context. Largely neglected for his complex and often dense textures, recognition came slowly for Ives, who was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 1947, which he soundly rejected. The *Largo*, one of his most exquisite chamber compositions, was not performed until 1933, over three decades after its composition in 1902, a situation that almost all of his works suffered.

**Jeffrey Mumford's** (b. 1955) *as a spray of reflected meadowlight informs the air* (2000) was commissioned by Philip Berlin and the Contemporary Music Forum of Washington D.C. The harmonic vocabulary of the work is based on the sonority of the saxophone multi-phonic which occurs in the second measure. The dramatic scenario primarily focuses on the evolution of the pairing of the saxophone and violin. Eventually as a function of the developing elasticity of that duo, both instruments liberate themselves from the percussion.

**Francis Poulenc** (1899-1963) composed his *Sonata* for clarinet and piano at the end of his life in 1962 and is dedicated to the memory of his life-long colleague and friend, Arthur Honegger. The piece is characterized by the juxtaposition of lyrical melodies with short, punctuated statements. The first movement, though fast overall, has a substantial middle section that is much slower, recollecting previous passages in other of Poulenc's works, such as the oboe sonata. The second movement is full of lush harmonies which support one of his most memorable themes. The third movement returns the listener to the character of the opening movement, but with more reckless abandon, rarely seen in other music of one of the most important French composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Justin Rubin** (b. 1971) composed *Distant Companion* as a work to be paired with the Webern *Quartet* [Op. 22]. The intriguing make-up of Webern's ensemble is compelling and fertile for musical invention, yet relatively few composers have written for such a group. The first of the two movements (similarly to the Webern) is distinctly lyrical, while the second is decidedly rhythmic in orientation. However, to ensure the complementary nature of the work, the musical narrative of the Rubin shares little with the Webern, other than its brevity and instrumentation.

**Karlheinz Stockhausen** composed *Für Kommende Zeiten* [For Times to Come] in 1968. Born in a suburb of Cologne in 1928, he studied music while working as a farmhand after the end of the Second World War. A student of Messiaen, he became very involved with the ideas of Anton Webern while cultivating the new possibilities opened up in the field of electronic and tape music. The almost scientific method with which he analyzed contemporary musical scores he also applied to his compositions through exhaustive studies on specific topics, either philosophical or acoustical. He evolved his theory of 'dimensions of sound' which became the basis for many of his subsequent pieces, which he grouped, as a biologist would classify living beings under a phylum, into larger categories. Amongst these categories, such as "*Point Music*", "*Spatial Music*", "*Formula Composition*", "*Statistical Music*", "*Multi-Formula Composition*", "*Aleatoric Music*", and "*Group Composition*", we find his "*Ritual Music*". This encompasses a wide variety of pieces, including conceptual works, such as *Für Kommende Zeiten*, which consist of written instructions. Unusual compared to the extreme control he enforces on the performer in most of his other works, these brief 'suggestive' pieces allow the improvisers involved an open-ended landscape of musical materials with which to allow sounds to happen, rather than construct artificial structures. It is Stockhausen's personal attempt at a Utopian music.

**Anton Webern** (1883-1945) is one of the least understood, though well-known composers of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Like Berg, a pupil of the great master Arnold Schönberg, his crucible-like method of composing boils down musical materials to its bare essentials, both in texture, duration, and scope. Blending highly-wrought contrapuntal devices of the Renaissance, of which he was a scholar, with the intensely expressive mode of the late Romantic period, into which he was born, his music's sensitive, pointillistic surface is best savored with repeated hearings. After his accidental death (because of a nervous American soldier's trigger-finger during the occupation after the Second World War), the cloak of anonymity under which he composed most of his

life was lifted and he quickly became a belated father-figure to many of the younger generation of composers. The *Quartet* [Op. 22] stands as the second work of his final period of composition wherein he composed fewer and fewer pieces, the brevity of each magnifying the great labor and time invested into what Stravinsky called Webern's 'diamonds'.

**Stefan Wolpe** (1902-72) composed his *Second piece for violin alone*, shortly before his death, in 1966. Born in Germany of Russian parents, he was drawn early in his musical endeavors towards the burgeoning avant garde. A lifelong Socialist, in 1923 he joined an artists' movement concerned with political progress, the Novembergruppe, which was associated with the Bauhaus and the aesthetic of Utopian Socialism. As the German political situation drew nearer and nearer to Fascism under Hitler, Wolpe began to compose a large body of songs, marches and anthems in support of anti-Fascist doctrine. When Hitler became Chancellor and the Nazis seized complete political control of Germany in 1933, Wolpe fled, first to Austria, and then to Palestine where he immersed himself in Jewish and Arabic music. While the music he composed during these troubled years remains intensely personal in expression, these new cultural influences introduced a greater notion of stasis to his works. In 1938 he emigrated to the United States, where he remained for the rest of his life, dedicated to teaching the younger generation of American composers who were eager to absorb new European ideas. His musical horizons continued to expand to include jazz and the innovations of his contemporaries, informing his later works with a broad, eclectic style that truly lies between categories, never allowing a single dogma to dominate the syntax of his musical language.

*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 Patricia Dennis, Interim Dean of the School of Fine Arts, without whose support the festival could not have taken place.*

- Justin Rubin