

University of Minnesota Duluth Music Department Presents
the
New Music Festival 2013
with guest artist

Rhonda Taylor, saxophones

Program

Justin Henry Rubin Aurai
(b. 1971)

Rick Burkhardt El Avion Grande
(b. 1970)

Giacinto Scelsi Maknongan
(1905-1988)

Gérard Grisey Anubis et Nout
(1946-1998)

Benjamin Grosser Not Pitch
(b. 1970)

About the Artist:

Rhonda Taylor is dedicated to the creation and performance of meaningful sonic art of our time. She has worked with a variety of today's most outstanding composers, including Robert Morris, Jeffrey Mumford, Robert Lemay, and Pulitzer Prize winner Bernard Rands. She has also commissioned and premiered works by such emerging composers as Rick Burkhardt, Avi Tchamni, Ben Carson, Justin Rubin, Chris Arrell, and Jon Forshee. Her recent activities include lecture recitals on Gérard Grisey's Anubis et Nout at institutions in the U.S. and abroad, performances at NASA Conferences, World Saxophone Congresses, and new music festivals throughout the United States. Her solo recordings can be found online on cdbaby, itunes, and amazon.com. Upcoming projects include working closely with Guggenheim Award winning composer Steven Takasugi on a new work for solo saxophonist and electronics to be premiered in 2014 as well as taking part in a consortium commission of a new work for baritone saxophone and electronics by Nathan Davis. Her primary teachers were Kelland Thomas at the University of Arizona and John Sampen at Bowling Green State University. Dr. Taylor has been on faculty at New Mexico State University since 2003, where she is the College Assistant Professor of Saxophone and Music Theory. Rhonda Taylor is a Conn-Selmer artist and plays on Selmer Paris saxophones exclusively.

About the Composers and the Works

In Greek mythology, the Aurai are the winged nymphs of the breezes. Composed by Justin Rubin in early 2013 in a similar framework as Scelsi's piece (see below), it was designed to be performed for different wind instruments - this incarnation for the saxophone (the particular saxophone at the discretion of the performer). And like the nymphs, the instrument is to take on the persona of multiple forces contributing to a cumulative gust that dissipates over time.

Rick Burkhardt is a composer, songwriter, accordionist, and actor with degrees in Music Composition from the University of California San Diego and the University of Illinois. He wrote *El Avion Grande* for Kelland Thomas in 1996. Thomas premiered *El Avion Grande* at the 1997 ThreeTwo Festival in New York. The work consists of seven sections, each of which contains a dialogue between two sonic extremes, such as quiet/loud, high/low, short/long, etc. The text is from Federico Garcia Lorca's *Poet in New York*, and is presented throughout the work at varying levels of intelligibility. Burkhardt writes that "Lorca considered the idea of a poet in New York an oxymoron. Nowadays he would be deported." Rhonda Taylor's recording of *El Avion Grande* is available online as part of her 2009 CD, *Audition*.

Maknongan is one of Giacinto Scelsi's characteristic mature works. Scelsi developed his own compositional style following an emotional breakdown earlier in his career, where, in a form of self-therapy, he repeated single notes at his piano for hours. Scelsi's resulting sensitivity to timbre is evident in his compositions that followed, and his ideas and music from this second half of his life were of particular influence on the spectral composers that emerged in the early 1970s. *Maknongan* is designed to be performed by any low-pitched instrument. A meditation centering around 3 chromatic pitches (012), the piece gradually transitions from an agitated opening to a calm ending.

Gérard Grisey is most recognized as a founder of spectral music, along with Tristan Murail. Grisey originally wrote *Anubis et Nout* in 1983 for contrabass clarinetist Harry Sparnaay, dedicated to the memory of Claude Vivier. He completed the bass/baritone saxophone version for Claude Delangle in 1990. The titles refer to the deities of the same names in the Egyptian Book of the Dead. Anubis (named for the god who helps souls pass into the underworld) is constructed using subharmonic spectra; Nout (named for the goddess of the sky) consists mainly of 12ths slowly moving through prime cell (0134) and its related subsets. According to Jean-Noel Crocq, a clarinetist who worked closely with Grisey on the timbral effects in the piece, Anubis represents the violent death, while Nout reflects the maternal, comforting death.

Benjamin Grosser is an artist and a composer. His website is <http://bengrosser.com>. *Not Pitch* was written for saxophonist Taimur Sullivan in 1995, and was premiered at the Settlement Music School in Philadelphia, PA. The tape part was produced using software written by the composer. Rhonda Taylor's recording of *Not Pitch* is available online as part of her 2012 CD, *Interstice*.