

State University of New York at Stony Brook
Department of Music
presents

**THE STONY BROOK CONTEMPORARY CHAMBER
PLAYERS**

**NINETEENTH ANNUAL PREMIERES
CONCERT**

Thursday Evening at 8:00
November 9, 2006
Staller Center Recital Hall
Stony Brook University

Saturday Evening at 8:00
November 11, 2006
Tenri Cultural Center
New York City, New York

CONTEMPORARY CHAMBER PLAYERS WORLD PREMIERES SERIES

Since 1988, the Stony Brook Contemporary Chamber Players has presented annual concerts in New York City consisting primarily of world premieres of pieces written for the ensemble. Each year's works are also previewed at the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

In its seventeen seasons, the ensemble has commissioned and premiered over seventy works. Composers selected for commissioning represent a wide range of styles, geographical locations, and age groups.

The university setting provides copious rehearsal time and the nurturing environment that are difficult to find in today's fast-paced professional world. Many of the graduate students who make up the ensemble are professional caliber performers who have chosen to attend Stony Brook because of its dedication to music who have chosen to attend Stony Brook because of its dedication to music of our time. The ensemble aims to present outstanding performances of new works, in collaboration with the commissioned composers. The World Premieres concerts have been acclaimed by composers and performers, and have received favorable reviews from *The New York Times*, *Musical America*, and the *Long Island Voice*.

Stony Brook's unique commissioning program has been recognized by composers internationally as an outstanding contribution to contemporary music, one which is virtually unmatched by other student ensembles in the nation.

The Stony Brook Contemporary Chamber Players is co-directed by Stony Brook University faculty members Gilbert Kalish and Eduardo Leandro, who are known nationally and internationally for their distinguished involvement in the performance of contemporary music.

State University of New York at Stony Brook
Department of Music presents

**Stony Brook Contemporary Chamber Players
Nineteenth Annual Premieres Concert**

Gilbert Kalish and Eduardo Leandro, Directors
Ian Antonio, Coordinator

Staller Center for the Arts Recital Hall
Thursday Evening, November 9, 2006 at 8 o'clock

Tenri Cultural Center, New York City
Saturday Evening, November 11, 2006 at 8 o'clock

PROGRAM

Flux and Fire (2006)

Robert Gibson
(b. 1950)

Esther Noh, Emmy Holmes-Hicks, violin
Elizabeth Keufler, viola; Brian Snow, cello

Oblique Narratives (1989-90)

Lukas Ligeti

- I. Goodness of Fit
- II. Sides of a Point
- III. Wind of Forward Motion

Jacob Rhodebeck, Tuyen Tonnu, piano

***Disparate Measures* (2006)**

David Rakowski
(b. 1958)

- I. Flight
- II. Adagio
- III. Vapor Lock

Salley Koo, Emmy Holmes-Hicks, violin
Kuan-Chen Huang, viola; Jonathan den Herder, cello
Sophie Patey, piano

—**Intermission**—

***Between Thought and Thing* (2006)**

Richard Festinger
(b. 1948)

Ya-Ting Yu, flute; Michael Hrivnak, horn
Antonio Thompson, trumpet; Ryoko Arai, violin
David Hamano, viola; Kirsten Jermé, cello
Kevin Dufford, percussion; Anna Vinnitsky, piano
Eduardo Leandro, conductor

***Out of a Dark Sea* (2006)**

Huck Hodge
(b. 1977)

Ya-Ting Yu, flutes; Alicia Bennett, clarinets
Jacquelyn Adams, horn; Annaliese Kowert, violin
Heather Tuach, cello; Christopher Graham, percussion
Denise Fillion, piano; Emily Montoya, harp
Eduardo Leandro, conductor

All works on tonight's program, with the exception of the first movement of Lukas Ligeti's *Oblique Narratives*, are World Premieres.

The Music Department at Stony Brook University wishes to thank the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University for its ongoing and unwavering support of the Annual Premieres Concert.

PROGRAM NOTES

Robert Gibson: *Flux and Fire* (2006)

My quartet, *Flux and Fire*, takes its title from a fragment of Heraclitus in Brooks Haxton's luminous translation: *Fire in its ways of changing/is a sea transfigured/between forks of lightning/and the solid earth*. Heraclitus (sixth century, BC) was prescient in his understanding of energy (fire) as the essence of matter, and that all things are in a state of flux.

I have always been interested in the process of transformation in music, and I have frequently found inspiration for my instrumental music in literature. While writing this piece I began listening to Paul Rusesabagina's extraordinary account of his personal experience during the Rwandan genocide of 1994 (*An Ordinary Man* as an audio book on CD), and my sense of the ways light and darkness are intermingled and transformed in our individual lives and in social structures was greatly intensified as a result. Listening to a story being told is an ancient and visceral experience, and the rhythm and cadence of the reading made the goodness and evil in the account palpable. While there is no specific program to my piece, I believe that the restless and sometimes feverish imagery that I retained from this story accounts for these elements that are substantially present in my quartet. In the larger frame, the poet Stanley Kunitz has captured the ultimate sense of transformation ("Reflections" from *The Collected Poems*): "Years ago I came to the realization that the most poignant of all lyric tensions stems from the awareness that we are living and dying at once."

—Robert Gibson

Lukas Ligeti: *Oblique Narratives* (1989-90)

Oblique Narratives, a suite of three pieces for two pianos which can also be played independently, is among my earliest pieces, written while I was studying composition at the University for Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, Austria.

The titles of the suite and of its first component piece, "Goodness of Fit," are taken from works of Christopher Alexander, an architect and theoretician of environmentally friendly city planning who teaches at the University of California, Berkeley. The 2nd and 3rd pieces of the suite are receiving their world premieres tonight.

"Goodness of Fit" is probably my only composition that features a 12-tone row, heard as an accompaniment at the opening of the piece and remaining prominent throughout most of the duration. It sounds quite tonal, unlike most dodecaphonic music, but nevertheless uses all 12 tones of the chromatic scale. After the opening section, there is a contrasting episode, featuring melodies influenced by mysterious signals I discovered on the radio while driving along a German Autobahn...probably something military. In rhythmic unison at first, they soon unfold into a polyphonic structure, and gradually elements from the beginning of the piece reemerge, including the 12-tone row, which accompanies melodies influenced by music from Africa and the Caribbean and, most notably, the piano styles of Chico Marx and Conlon Nancarrow.

"Sides of a Point" brings various themes, small melodic fragments, chord sequences, and contrasting landscapes of pointillism and blurriness. But where does all this lead? That is the question, and the answer is, most likely, nowhere. The idea came from listening to Joe Zawinul's piece "Birdland," composed for his band Weather Report. Unlike in most jazz pieces, it's hard to pinpoint what the "theme" really is. "Sides of a Point" applies this multi-thematic ambiguity to the world of "classical" composition.

"Wind of Forward Motion" is an odd piece. The main source of influence is Kwela, a form of neotraditional "township" music from southern Africa. In some types of Kwela-related music, harmonic changes occur just before the beat. That also happens here, and the result is a feeling of uncertainty as to where the beat falls within the music. Unlike Kwela, and more like sonata form, the material presented at the

outset is taken through a series of modulations, creating a total loss of orientation, not only metrically but also harmonically. Terra firma ultimately reappears on the horizon, but a feeling of forward motion, going somewhere fast, always remains. Where are we going so quickly?

—Lukas Ligeti

David Rakowski: *Disparate Measures* (2006)

I started writing *Disparate Measures* at Yaddo last summer, and started with a vague notion that I would be writing something that involved songs or flights of birds. I was given the studio that overlooks some small ponds, one of which was the hanging out area for a Great Blue Heron. Daily I witnessed the heron taking off—always a little clunkily and heavily—and perching on a tree very close to my studio window. Every time the heron left that perch, the branch under him broke off. This sort of heaviness was in my mind when I wrote the first movement of *Disparate Measures*—it is full of warbly gestures that rise only very slowly. The slow movement that follows is a slow chorale based around sustained open strings in one instrument, interrupted by a piano solo, and resuming for a closing. The finale is a dangerously fast scherzo that features the pianist in perpetual motion, eventually recapitulating the opening of the whole piece, and settling into a loud and fast conclusion.”

—David Rakowski

Richard Festinger: *Between Thought and Thing* (2006)

Between Thought and Thing, scored for flute, trumpet, horn, violin, viola, cello, piano and percussion, was written for the Stony Brook Contemporary Chamber Players. The title derives from Coleridge, who used the phrase as an aphoristic description of the essential nature of representational painting. Painters often present the viewer with highly realistic depictions of things which do not actually exist. The irony becomes extreme in artistic movements such as surrealism. Music

cannot really be said to be representational in the way a painting may be. Yet a piece of music often acts as a powerful metaphor suggesting physical movements, emotional states, etc. Analogous to the painter, the composer presents to his audience sonic metaphors for intense experiences which may be pulled directly from the imagination. These various musings on the nature of the musical experience went into the composition of the kaleidoscopically colored atmospheres, and both subtle and dramatic expressive contrasts, depicted in *Between Thought and Thing*.

—Richard Festinger

Huck Hodge: *Out of the Dark Sea* (2006)

In early January I decided I needed to escape from the City for awhile so I went out to the easternmost point of Long Island. I ended up on an abandoned stretch of beach and by this time it had already grown dark but I nevertheless decided to go for a walk. Since there wasn't any light on the beach my eyes quickly picked up on something I had never seen before. With each wave there came little grains of sand that, for whatever reason, shined an intense blue light for a short time and then would die out. The raw visual beauty of this image—of a vast and utterly dark sea endlessly dissolving into scattered points of light—was striking and seemed to evoke an interesting musical metaphor. Throughout this piece a variety of wave-like and pointillistic structures interact in antithesis and synthesis with each other as do dark and bright instrumental and electronic timbres. The piece is also interested in exploring this metaphor through what Nietzsche might call a principle of individuation by means of a process of musical rarefaction spanning the spectrum: noise-timbre-pitch-motive-theme. I would like to dedicate this piece to Wim Smit whose memorial ceremony I regrettably could not attend.

—Huck Hodge

BIOGRAPHIES

Robert Gibson's compositions have been performed throughout the United States and in Europe, China and South America. His music has also been presented on National Public Radio and by noted performers and ensembles, including bassists Bertram Turetzky and the late David Walter, clarinetist Esther Lamneck, pianist Santiago Rodriguez, the Clarion Wind Quintet, Prism Brass Quintet, the Contemporary Music Forum, the 21st Century Consort, the Meridian String Quartet, The National Symphony Bass Quartet, and the Stern/Andrist Duo.

Mr. Gibson has been a composer member of the Contemporary Music Forum of Washington, DC (1987–2001). Since 1985 he has worked with computer music systems, and his electronic works have been performed at national and international conferences and festivals, including The Society for Electro–Acoustic Music in the United States national conferences and the Sonic Circuits Electronic Music Festival. Mr. Gibson's compositions have been recorded on Golden Crest (*The American Music Project*, Clarion Wind Quintet, 1979) and Spectrum Records (*Soundscapes*, 1982; *Music of Robert Gibson*, 1986). *Chamber Music*, a Capstone compact disc of his chamber works appears on *Fanfare* magazine's 1996 Want List as one of critic William Zagorski's five notable recordings of the year. Mr. Gibson is professor and director of the School of Music at the University of Maryland, College Park.

Lukas Ligeti was born in Vienna, Austria, studied at the University for Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, then spent two years as a visiting scholar at Stanford's computer music center, and has lived in New York City since 1998. Interested in polymetric structures, new methods of ensemble interplay, the potential and problems of technology, and drawing

significant influences from his experiences as a drummer playing jazz and improvised music as well as from world music and collaborations with traditional musicians, especially in Africa, Mr. Ligeti is an unusual figure in the contemporary music world, fitting uncomfortably between the genres and probably simply cultivating a genre all his own.

He has received commissions from the Ensemble Modern, Kronos Quartet, American Composers Forum, Vienna Festwochen, Radio France, New York University, and many others, and his music has been performed by the Vienna Radio Symphony, Orchestre National de Lyon, London Sinfonietta, Amadinda, and So Percussion Groups, and others at festivals worldwide. His chamber music CD "Mystery System," released by Tzadik Records in 2004, has received great acclaim.

"World music" collaborations are an important part of Lukas' activities; they have been commissioned by the Goethe Institute, Austrian Development Cooperation, and others. In 1994 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, he founded the group Beta Foly, combining African traditional music and computer technology in experimental ways; the CD "Lukas Ligeti & Beta Foly" was released by Intuition Music (Germany) in 1997, and the ensemble performed at numerous festivals in Europe.

David Rakowski grew up in a dairy farming region in northern Vermont, playing trombone in community bands, and keyboards in a bad rock band. He studied composition with Robert Ceely, John Heiss, Milton Babbitt, Peter Westergaard, Paul Lansky, and Luciano Berio, and capped off his formal study with four years of utterly boring word processing jobs. His music has been performed widely, and he is the only composer to be commissioned both by Speculum Musicae and the United States Marine Band. He has twice been a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in music, and is the most recent recipient of the Barlow Prize—this year, a commission to write for a consortium of five wind ensembles. His music is published by C.F. Peters. Even though he has held faculty positions at

Stanford, Columbia, Harvard, and New England Conservatory, he is currently the Walter W. Naumburg Professor of Composition at Brandeis University.

Richard Festinger's music has been performed throughout the United States, and in Europe and Asia. His works have been commissioned by Parnassus, Earplay, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, the New York New Music Ensemble, the Alexander String Quartet, Network for New Music, the City Winds, the Laurel Trio, the Left Coast Ensemble, the Alter Ego Ensemble, the Miroglio-Aprudo Duo, the Washington Square Contemporary Music Society, and the Redwood Symphony Orchestra. His music has been performed by Griffin, the New Millennium Ensemble, Speculum Musicae, Phantom Arts, Composers Inc., the Empyrean Ensemble, the Sun String Quartet, the Berkeley and Riverside Symphonies, sopranos Jane Manning and Karol Bennett, the Orchestra da Camera Italiana G.F. Ghedini, the Ensemble Italiano per la Musica Contemporanea, Ensemble Anti-Dogma, the Seoul, Korea Festival of Electro-Acoustic Music, and the Boston Chamber Ensemble.

Mr. Festinger's works have been commissioned by the Jerome Foundation, the Fromm Foundation at Harvard University, the Koussevitzky Foundation in the Library of Congress, the Barlow Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trust, and the Mary Flagler Cary Trust. He has been a resident artist at the Camargo Foundation, Cité Internationale des Arts, Yaddo, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, the Bogliasco Foundation, the Bellagio Study Center, the Couvent des Récollets, the Aaron Copland House, and the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. He has been a fellow at the Wellesley Composers Conference and the June in Buffalo Festival, and has received both the Walter Hinrichsen Award and an Academy Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Mr. Festinger has taught at the University of California in Berkeley and Davis, and at Dartmouth College, and since

1990 he has been a professor of music at San Francisco State University. His music is published by C.F. Peters, and Maison Jobert, and his works have been recorded for the Centaur, CRI and CRS labels.

Huck Hodge is currently a Faculty Fellow at Columbia University where he teaches undergraduate composition. His primary teachers at Columbia are Tristan Murail (composition), and Fred Lerdahl (music cognition and composition). He has also studied with Walter Zimmermann at Columbia University and at the *Universität der Künste*, Berlin. Prior to this he studied Music Theory and Computer Music at the *Musikhochschule Stuttgart*, where his teachers included Georg Wötzer and Marco Stroppa.

Hodge's music has been performed in Germany, South Africa, Canada, the United States, and Italy at numerous festivals such as the *Berliner Festspiele: Maerzmusik* and ISCM Global Interplay festivals. In January he collaborated with members of Ensemble Modern, the Berliner Philharmoniker and composer Thomas Adès to present a concert of experimental improvisation at Carnegie Hall, where he directed one of three groups of improvisers. His piece for solo cello and electronics, *Phantasie*, was commissioned by *Musik der Jahrhunderte* as part of the ISCM World New Music Festival, 2006. In addition, he has received commissions and performances from many ensembles such as Second Instrumental Unit, the NYU New Music and Dance Ensemble, Ensemble Adapter, TimeTable Percussion Trio, and Counter)induction. Forthcoming commissions include a string quartet for the San Francisco-based Afiara Quartet and a piece for chamber orchestra for the Columbia Sinfonietta. His work has received funding through organizations such as the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for Humanistic Studies, the Ernst von Siemens *Musikstiftung*, the Fritz Reiner Center for Contemporary Music, the government of Baden-Württemberg, the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University and the *Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst*.