

AMERICAN COMPOSERS ALLIANCE

COMPOSERS NOW FESTIVAL 2013

With 20>>21



Mary Elizabeth Mackenzie, soprano
Itay Lantner, flute
Alicia Lee, clarinet
Francesca Anderegg, violin
Claudia Schaer, violin
Erin Wight, viola
Brian Snow, cello
Yael Manor, piano

Guests Artists:
Ensemble f0 from Oberlin College

Monday, February 18, 2013 at 7:30pm
Symphony Space, Leonard Nimoy Thalia
2537 Broadway at 95th St. New York City

PROGRAM

ELIZABETH BELL

Millennium

1988

Mary Elizabeth Mackenzie, soprano; Alicia Lee, clarinet;
Yael Manor, piano

PETER WESTERGAARD

Palindrome for a Summer Evening

2007

NY Premiere

Itay Lantner, flute; Claudia Schaer, violin;
Erin Wight, viola, Brian Snow, cello

LAWRENCE DILLON

What Happened

2005

NY Premiere

I. *Gathering*

II. *Congregation*

III. *Scattering*

Francesca Andereg, violin; Erin Wight, viola;
Brian Snow, cello; Yael Manor, piano

--- INTERMISSION ---

LEWIS NIELSON

Opera Amoris

2012

NY Premiere

Ensemble f0: Sara Perez, soprano, Laura Cocks, flute,
Dustin Chung, clarinet, Sean Dowgray, percussion

CHRISTOPHER SHULTIS

Songs of Love and Longing

2003

NY Premiere

- I. *Williams Lake (8 July, 2003)*
- II. *Rio Grande Gorge Trail (16 October, 2001)*
- III. *Song Without Words*
- IV. *Rio Grande Gorge Trail (10 October, 2001)*
- V. *Osha Loop Trail (5 October, 2002)*

Mary Elizabeth Mackenzie, soprano; Yael Manor, piano

PHILLIP RHODES

***Following Picasso (A Fantasy after Stravinsky)* 2010**

NY Premiere

Alicia Lee, clarinet; Francesca Anderegg, violin;
Brian Snow, cello; Yael Manor, piano

- Please join us directly after the concert for a brief discussion with the composers.

ABOUT THE COMPOSERS



The music of **ELIZABETH BELL** includes works for solo instruments, voice chamber ensembles and orchestra, and has been performed around the world. A founding officer of New York Women Composers, Inc., she is a graduate of Wellesley College and The Juilliard School, and honed her craft under the guidance of Vittorio Giannini, Paul Alan Levi and Peter Mennin. Several major retrospective concerts have been dedicated to her works – in 1991 at the Merkin Concert Hall in New York City, in 2003 to celebrate her 75th birthday, and in Yerevan, Armenia in 2004. A concert celebrating her 85th birthday is planned for later this year (2013). There are three all-Bell CD's: *The Music of Elizabeth Bell* (MMC-Parma #2082,); *Snows of Yesteryear* (N/S-R#1029); and *A Collection of Reflections* (N/S-R#1042). Other recordings are on CRS, Classic Masters, VMM, and North/South Records.

Scored for voice, clarinet and piano, **MILLENNIUM** was inspired by the poetry of the American writer Lewis Thomas (1913-1993). A highly regarded physician and research scientist, Dr. Thomas was president of the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and dean of the medical schools at New York University and Yale. Known as the poet-philosopher of medicine, he authored several best-selling books including *Lives of a Cell* and *Late Night Thoughts on Listening to Mahler's Ninth Symphony*. *Millennium* is taken from the book *The Youngest Science* written around 1939 when "the atom bomb was nowhere in sight, but even so the new technologies of warfare seemed to have no limits."

Ms. Bell's musical setting illuminates the contrast and tension implicit in the text: the gentle, almost hum-drum language that speaks of violent events and emotions. The music juxtaposes simple, tonal passages with others that are dissonant and violent. The opening "shriek" of the clarinet- which recurs at strategic places throughout the piece- signifies the anguish hidden in the poem. The vocal line- angular, tense, and provocative- exploits the extreme registers of the voice, demanding utmost control and virtuosity from the performer. An intense and complex contrapuntal texture results from the interaction between voice and clarinet. The piano surrounds these two melodic lines with propulsive rhythms, pungent harmonies and expressive arpeggios. *Millennium* was commissioned in 1988 by the Inoue Chamber Ensemble through a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts. The work is dedicated to the memory of the composer's father, William Proctor Bell.



PETER WESTERGAARD is the William Shubael Conant Professor of Music, Emeritus, at Princeton University. A composer and music theorist, he was a student of Milton Babbitt and has composed numerous operas from *Charivari* (1953) to *Alice and Wonderland* (2006). Amongst former pupils of Babbitt, Westergaard stands out for his contributions to serial theory, as well as for his compositions, which are characterized by a delight in symmetry and mirror relationships. Westergaard was born in 1931 in Champaign, Illinois. He pursued undergraduate studies at Harvard University, graduating in 1953, and in 1956 obtained an M.F.A. degree from Princeton University.

PALINDROME FOR A SUMMER EVENING was written for the 75th birthday of Greenwood, a chamber-music camp in the Berkshires where I spent two idyllic summers of my adolescence rehearsing and performing chamber music. The instruments it's written for are those used in the Mozart flute quartets that were my particular favorites, and the "Summer Evening" of the title recalls those Saturday evenings when we gathered in the barn (ideal acoustics) to play for each other the pieces we'd been working on all week; the weather and the music of the crickets permitting, the sliding doors were left open so the evening air could waft its way through.

The "Palindrome" part of the title calls for another sort of explanation. Most people are familiar with verbal palindromes in which the letters ("A man, a plan, a canal: Panama!") or even the letters and spaces between them ("Able was I ere I saw Elba.") are the same whether read forwards or backwards, but there's a rich tradition of musical palindromes as well. The varied shapes and colors of 14th-century notation make the exact fore-and-aft symmetry of Machaut's *Mon fin est mon commencement* particularly elegant on the single page it occupies. One of the canons in Bach's *Musical Offering* is so written that both players can read it from a single part placed on a table between them. The only thing about this multi-purpose part that might look a little odd to each player are the upside-down and backwards clefs at the **end** of each staff. And indeed what each player plays will correspond exactly to what the other plays – only upside-down and backward. Hindemith even wrote a whole opera – *Hin und zurueck* – that's a palindrome. At the mid-point not only does the music turn around and do everything in exact retrograde, but so does the action: the young man who just threw himself out the window comes flying back onstage, etc., etc. (Incidentally, the words don't come back in reverse order.)

"My "Palindrome" is like Bach's—the whole piece is itself upside-down and backwards—except that there are four voices instead of two. The flute and the viola mirror one another: everything the viola does the flute does upside down and backwards. The same is true of the cello and the violin. I'm particularly fond of using this kind of symmetry for whole movements or pieces because of the kind of closure it creates. We're accustomed to that it-can't-be-otherwise sense of here-comes-the-the-end in tonal pieces but procedures that will do the same for 12-tone pieces are not that easy to create.



Composer **LAWRENCE DILLON** creates works that connect past and present in attractive and unexpected ways, provoking Gramophone to exclaim, "Each score is an arresting and appealing creation, full of fanciful and lyrical flourishes within traditional forms that are brightly tweaked." His music is characterized by a keen sensitivity to color, a mastery of form, and what the Louisville Courier-Journal has called a "compelling, innate soulfulness." Three recordings of Dillon's work were released in 2010-2011 on the Bridge, Albany and Naxos labels. His works have been commissioned and premiered in the last four seasons by the Emerson String Quartet, Le Train Bleu, the Ravinia Festival, the Daedalus String Quartet, and many others. Dillon is now Composer in Residence at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, where he has served as Music Director of the Contemporary Ensemble, Assistant Dean of Performance, and Interim Dean of the School of Music.

WHAT HAPPENED offers a puzzle for the listener: an extended first-movement sonata form that is abruptly sidetracked, a second-movement anthem in which the choir and accompaniment stubbornly refuse to keep pace with one another, and a quirky gallop of a final movement. Each movement runs into a powerful interruption, a moment of unhinged chaos, after which the music tries to reassemble itself before drifting into silence. These odd shapes reflect the riddle of the title: is *What Happened* a statement or a question?



LEWIS NIELSON (b. 1950) studied music at the Royal Academy of Music in London, England, Clark University in Massachusetts and the University of Iowa, receiving a Ph.D. in Music Theory and Composition in 1977. He has received numerous grants and awards for his works, including from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Delius Foundation, Meet the Composer, the Georgia Council for the Arts, the Groupe de Music Expérimentale de

Bourges in France, and others. Among the more notable and recent commissions are those from *red fish blue fish*, the JACK Quartet, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, and Opera Cabal. He served as Professor of Music Theory and Composition at the University of Georgia, where he directed the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble for 21 years. In 2000, he joined the composition faculty of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music where he is currently Professor of Composition and chair of the Composition Department.

OPERA AMORIS is a love song gone terribly wrong. As with any "error" or "mistake," the path taken may be rather humorous when observed from the outside but not without some poignancy upon realizing that one is oneself susceptible to showing the visible (and risible) stress of failure. The texts and delivery styles are intended; the theatricality of some of the work also. As a "labor of love," the tasks placed on the performers practically are large; the apparent lightness of the surface a façade for something other than superficial. I wrote this at the request of Sara and Laura for Ensemble f0 and the work is dedicated to them and their fine group. Text fragments drawn from William Blake and Jean Lenoir.



CHRISTOPHER SHULTIS, distinguished Professor Emeritus and Regents' Professor of Music at the University of New Mexico, began his career as an orchestra musician, first with the Lansing Symphony and then the Santa Fe Opera. He was Principal Percussionist for the New Mexico Symphony (1980-1986) and Principal Timpanist for the Orchestra of Santa Fe and Santa Fe Symphony (1980-1994). In 1980 he became Director of Percussion Studies at the University of New Mexico where the percussion ensemble was internationally recognized for its performances and worked closely with, among others, Lou Harrison, Konrad Boehmer, John Cage, Michael Colgrass, James Tenney, Christian Wolff – the latter two composing for the ensemble. Shultis now divides his time between composition and writing, and his scholarly work on John Cage is internationally recognized. He regards himself as an experimental composer drawing much inspiration from long walks in the mountains and woods. His CD, *Devisadero: Music from the New Mexico Wilderness*, is available through Navona Recordings.

SONGS OF LOVE AND LONGING

All the texts were written during walks that happened on the date and in the place listed as the title for each song. The music was written during a Wurlitzer residency in Taos, NM in the summer of 2003.



A citation from the American Academy of Arts and Letters described the work of **PHILLIP RHODES** as “music which radiates an evocative warmth of expression, while also exhibiting a highly disciplined approach to matters of form, continuity and textual setting.” Born (1940) and raised in western North Carolina, his work is as strongly influenced by the traditional music of the Appalachian South as by the works of Bartok, Schoenberg, and Stravinsky which were the foundations of his early training. He received degrees from Duke University and the Yale School of Music where he studied with Donald Martino and Mel Powell. He has taught at Amherst College and served as composer-in-residence for the Louisville Orchestra before joining the faculty of Carleton College, where he taught for 32 years. Rhodes has been the recipient of numerous commissions and composition awards including a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, the National Opera Association Prize, two Tanglewood Orchestra Prizes, two Fromm Foundation (Harvard) Commissions, and a Bush Foundation Fellowship for Artists.

During the Fall of 1957, Picasso painted a series of 58 studies which were called “*Las Meninas*, after Velazquez.” The original painting referred to is Diego Velazquez’s famous *Las Meninas* (*The Maids of Honor*), which is a large, complex portrait of the family and members of the court of Philip IV of Spain in 1656. Picasso’s studies focus not only on the larger group, but more intently, on individuals (in some 30 of the studies) with special attention given to the King’s young daughter, the Infanta Margarita Maria.

Having had the coincidental opportunity of seeing both the Picasso studies and the Velazquez in a short span of time, I became fascinated with the idea of trying something similar myself. In my project, the musical model would be Stravinsky’s *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* (the 1920 version). This is a remarkable work, which I have admired and studied for years. It also seemed to me that one could draw an analogous *formal* relationship between the Picasso studies and the Stravinsky. Not unlike Picasso’s individual studies, the Stravinsky work unfolds in a series of short, highly contrasting sections. And in both works, it is apparent that each section forms a piece of a larger, coherent whole.

Moreover, when one compares Picasso’s studies to the Velazquez painting, a strong notion of *fantasy* comes to mind – certainly in the sense of *fantasy variations* upon the subject matter of the original. It was my intention to follow a similar path of *fantasy variations* in this *homage* to Stravinsky and hence the title, ***FOLLOWING PICASSO (A FANTASY AFTER STRAVINSKY)***.

-- Dedicated to Dallas and Edith Davis Tidwell

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

20>>21 collaborates with today's emerging composers to curate deep concert experiences. Repertoire for each concert reflects the featured composer's influences and draws connections between music of the 20th and 21st centuries. The members of 20>>21 are accomplished musicians who are passionate for sharing new music with new audiences. In each performance, members of 20>>21 and the concert's featured composer explain the personal and musical significance of the pieces chosen. Following each concert, audience members are invited to meet the musicians and featured composer to ask questions and share feedback.

20>>21 had a successful inaugural season of 2011-12 featuring composers: Angélica Negrón, Gilad Cohen, Clint Needham, and Aleksandra Vrebalov. Audience members praised the ensemble for exciting repertoire, helpful discussion, and a gentle introduction to new music.

Mary Elizabeth Mackenzie, soprano

Described by the New York Times as “a soprano of extraordinary agility and concentration”, Mary Elizabeth Mackenzie has captured the attention of audiences from Los Angeles to New York. A passionate performer of contemporary music, Ms. Mackenzie has appeared with the ACME, Argento Chamber Ensemble, Ekmeles, Juilliard's AXIOM Ensemble, the Da Capo Chamber Players, Fulcrum Point New Music Project, and the Talea Ensemble. Recent opera productions include the premiere of Jonathan Dawe's *Così faranno tutti* at Columbia University and Héctor Parra's *Hypermusic: Ascension* at the Guggenheim Museum. Notable solo appearances include Jean Barraqué's *Chant Après Chant* with the Juilliard Percussion Ensemble, Schoenberg's *String Quartet No. 2* with the Borromeo String Quartet, *Pierrot Lunaire* at the Rockport Music Festival, Boulez's *Improvisations sur Mallarmé No. 1 & 2* at the Miller Theatre, and soprano soloist in Orff's *Carmina Burana* with the Grant Park Symphony Orchestra.

Itay Lantner, flute

Flutist Itay Lantner holds a Bachelor of Music from the Buchman-Mehta School of Music at Tel Aviv University, and a Master of Music degree from Yale School of Music. He performed in distinguished venues such as Carnegie Hall, Disney Hall, Auditorio Nacional de Música, and the Mann Auditorium (Tel Aviv). Mr. Lantner won the Yale Chamber Music Competition twice with his wind quintet, and received yearly scholarships from the America-Israel Cultural Foundation between 2003 and 2008. He has appeared with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the Israel Chamber Orchestra and currently serves as a flutist with the New York Chamber Soloists Orchestra. Mr. Lantner teaches at The Harmony Program, a New York-based music program inspired by Venezuela's El Sistema.

Alicia Lee, clarinet

Born into a musical family, Alicia Lee grew up in Michigan where she began playing the clarinet at the age of 12. She is the associate principal and Eb clarinet player of the Santa Barbara Symphony, a position she has held since Fall 2006. She also maintains a busy freelance career in New York City, and performs regularly with a variety of groups, including the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the Knights Chamber Orchestra, ICE, and Alarm Will Sound. Alicia has performed at Lucerne Festival, and the Spoleto Festivals in Italy and in the U.S., and in Yellow Barn Music Festival. She has also been in residence at Marlboro Music Festival for the past several summers.

Alicia holds a B.A. in French Language and Literature from Columbia University, as well as additional degrees from the University of Southern California and the Colburn School.

Francesca Anderegg, violin

Lauded for her "exceptional performances" and "fiery interpretation," violinist Francesca Anderegg delivers sensational accounts of contemporary and classical music. She made her New York debut in 2007, performing Ligeti's Violin Concerto with the Juilliard Orchestra. The New York Times praised her "dark, mournful tone" and "virtuosic panache." She has collaborated with the leading musicians of the concert stage, including Itzhak Perlman and Pierre Boulez. Anderegg holds Doctor of Musical Arts and Master's of Music degrees from Juilliard. In 2010, she was awarded the Annenberg Fellowship in the Performing Arts, a major career grant, and her first CD released on Albany Records. She is currently on the violin faculty of Interlochen Arts Camp and St. Olaf College.

Claudia Schaer, violin

Claudia Schaer is known for beautiful and intelligent interpretations, intriguing programming, and versatility as soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician. Her Bach Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin recording will be released in summer 2013. Other recent highlights include recital and chamber music tours of Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, the USA, China, England, France, Canada and Italy (with Berlin Philharmonic members). She is an avid proponent of new music, giving the New York premiere of the Lifchitz violin concerto, the Farrell concertino, among many other works. Claudia holds a Doctorate of Musical Arts from Stony Brook University, and Master's and Bachelor degrees from the Juilliard School, where she assisted her mentor, Sally Thomas, and wrote about philosophy in the *Scholastic Distinction* programme.

Erin Wight, viola

Violist Erin Wight, a Midwestern transplant to New York City, is an active chamber musician and avid performer of new music. Described by The New York Times as "engrossing" and "surehanded," she performs frequently as a member of the Red Light New Music Ensemble and Either/Or. In addition,

she is a founding member of the Toomai String Quintet, a pilot ensemble for Carnegie Hall's Musical Connections program. Ms. Wight is deeply committed to community engagement and is on the teaching artist faculty of the New York Philharmonic Program and Carnegie Hall. She completed her Master of Music degree at The Juilliard School where she studied with Paul Neubauer.

Brian Snow, cello

Praised by the Boston Globe for his "...pugnacious, eloquent, self-assurance..." cellist Brian Snow is a member of Newspeak, OMNI Ensemble, and the Praxis String Quartet. Brian has performed and recorded with a variety of artists, including Meredith Monk, My Brightest Diamond, John Legend, and the Emerson String Quartet and has worked closely with composers including Caleb Burhans, Nico Muhly, David T. Little, and Martin Bresnick, premiering dozens of new works. He studied with Aldo Parisot, Colin Carr, and David Finckel and has degrees from Stony Brook, Yale, and Longy School of Music.

Yael Manor, piano

Pianist and Artistic Director of 20>>21, Yael Manor regularly collaborates with composers as a soloist and a chamber musician. As a frequent performer of national and world premieres, Yael is driven by the belief that new music should be accessible. She works to ensure that each concert encourages open dialogue and understanding between audience members, performers, and composers. Yael has performed on some of the most prestigious stages in the United States including: the Kimmel Center, the Miller Theatre, the Dekelbourn Concert Hall, Symphony Space, Merkin Concert Hall, and Carnegie Hall, and has also been featured in a WQXR broadcast of the McGraw Hill Young Artists Showcase. She holds a Master's degree from the Buchmann-Mehta School of Music at Tel-Aviv University and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University.

Guest performers, Ensemble f0

New music quartet, Ensemble f0 was founded at the Oberlin Conservatory in 2011. Motivated by commissioning new works and attracting/interacting with new audiences, f0 works to bring new music to the public, performing in restaurants and living rooms in addition to the presently traditional concert settings. A recently founded ensemble, their first tour included premieres by Lewis Nielson, Eugene Kim, and David Bird and finished at New England Conservatory's Summer Institute for Contemporary Performance Practice (SICPP). Their upcoming summer 2013 tour will include premieres by Esais Järnegard, Alexander Chernyshkov, Michael Baldwin, Christopher Lyons, as well as Eugene Kim.

Ensemble f0 is: Sara Perez- voice, Laura Cocks- flute, Dustin Chung- clarinet, and Sean Dowgray- percussion.



Special Thanks to Friends of ACA 2013

T.J. Anderson
Daniel Asia
Elizabeth Bell
Brian Bevelander
Allan Blank
Diane Glatter
Joel Gressel and Eleanor Cory
Catherine Luening in memory of Otto Luening
Richard McCandless
Alison Nowak
Steven C. Sacco
Elliott Schwartz
Christopher Shultis
Michael Slayton
Joel Eric Suben
Joyce Hope Suskind
Frederick C. Tillis
Beth Wiemann
Wilma Zonn in memory of Paul M. Zonn

Thanks to Denis Heron and Symphony Space, and to Laura Kaminsky and Composers Now Festival.

ACA Concert Committee: Ross Bauer, Barbara Jazwinski, Beth Wiemann

ACA Director: Gina Genova

Concert Manager: Yael Manor

Stage Manager: Douglas Detrick

Lighting: Erin Sanger

Funding provided by American Composers Alliance Publishing, BMI, Cary New Music Performance Fund, the Puffin Foundation, the Aaron Copland Fund for Music, the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University, and Friends of ACA.