

# **LIONEL NOWAK AND FRIENDS**

***December 6, 2014***

***7:30pm Tenri Cultural Institute***

***New York City***



Lionel Nowak, 1958

***With guest artists: Marc Peloquin, Yael Manor,  
and the Oldfather & Wyman Piano Duo***

***Co-sponsored by the American Composers Alliance Inc.  
a BMI-affiliated publisher***

- \*\* *world premiere*
- \* *New York premiere*

## **Program**

### **Marc Peloquin, piano**

**Materialisms** (1949) (for Alice Peck) Lionel Nowak  
I. Pentavariant IV. Intermezzo  
II. Void V. Distroit  
III. Chromantic

**Four in a Row** (1959) Lionel Nowak  
(easy pieces on the twelve tones)  
I. Walk in the Wood  
II. Angry Dancer  
III. Foggy Day  
IV. Clown

**Suite: For Days Remembered** (1945) Lionel Nowak  
I. Prelude IV. Dance  
II. March V. Dirge  
III. Lullaby VI. Celebration

### **Yael Manor, piano**

**Honey** (2014) \*\* Lawrence Dillon  
**Toccata for Piano** (2003) \* Karl Kroeger

## **Intermission**

### **Christopher Oldfather & Fredrica Wyman Piano Duo**

**Imaginary Landscape** (2013) \*\* Raoul Pleskow

### **Yael Manor, piano**

**Code of Unsilence: A Prayer** (2006) Richard Cameron-Wolfe

**Rayuela Preludes** (2011) Reinaldo Moya  
*Capitulo 1 - Encontraria a la Maga?*  
*Capitulo 109a - Interludio*  
*Capitulo 7 - Toco tu boca*

### **Marc Peloquin, piano**

**Two Problems** (1957) (for Julian DeGray) Lionel Nowak  
**Chords at Night** (1988) Otto Luening  
**Nocturne and Toccata** (1944) (for Laura) Lionel Nowak

## Notes on the works, the composers, and the pianists:

A new collected print edition of 15 works of **Lionel Nowak**, spanning the years 1944-1982, is forthcoming from American Composers Alliance in 2015. It will be accompanied by a new recording release, also in 2015, featuring 10 archival recordings of works performed by the composer, by Claude Frank and by Allen Shawn, as well as new recordings by Marc Peloquin of the five Nowak works heard this evening.

The three pieces from the 1940s were written not long after my father's term as music director and composer for the Humphrey-Weidman Dance Company. In a 1986 interview he said, "I learned a lot about composing through the modern dance, charting new waters for the then recent fresh approach to dance." My father also spoke of the encouragement of Otto Luening whom he first met at the Bennington School of the Dance in 1938. His later compositions may reflect another influence – "I think the person who did the most for me composition-wise was Carl Ruggles. He was never my teacher, but we would just sit and talk about things in a musical way in general." *Nocturne and Toccata* was written for and dedicated to my mother, Laura Nowak.

--note by Alison Nowak

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**Lionel Nowak** (1911-1995) was born in Cleveland, Ohio. He made his debut as a pianist at the age of four and at 12 years old became the youngest pianist to solo with the Cleveland Orchestra. As a teenager he was organist, choir-master and composer of anthems. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he studied theory and composition with Roger Sessions, Quincy Porter and Herbert Elwell. His piano teachers included Beryl Rubenstein and Edwin Fischer. In 1988 he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the Institute.

From 1938 to 1942 he was music director and composer-pianist for the Doris Humphrey-Charles Weidman Modern Dance Company in New York City; he wrote several large ballets for the company (and one for Jose Limon.) He was on the music faculties of Converse College and Syracuse University in the mid-1940s and then settled permanently in

Bennington, Vermont. He taught at Bennington College for forty-five years. From 1946 to 1963 he toured nationally for the Association of American Colleges' Arts Program. From 1950-1963 he was on the staff of the Bennington Composers Conference and later served at various times as Chairman of the Board, Music Director and Senior Composer (1970s-80s) of the Chamber Music Conference and Composers Forum of the East.

As an educator, Nowak served on the steering committee of the Yale Seminar on Music Education and was consultant for the Manhattanville Music Curriculum Project. At Bennington College he was Director of Development and Dean of Faculty from 1972 to 1975. He was a trustee of the Vermont Academy of Arts and Sciences and president from 1975-77. In 1980 he was awarded a citation by the Vermont Council on the Arts. He composed over 150 works from solos and concertos to song cycles and chamber music. His works have been recorded on CRI, Golden Crest and Opus One, and are available through ACA.

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Composer in Residence at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, **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 has been commissioned and performed in the last few years by the Emerson String Quartet, Le Train Bleu, the Ravinia Festival, the Daedalus String Quartet, the Lincoln Trio, the Seattle Chamber Music Society, the Cassatt String Quartet, the Mansfield Symphony, the Boise Philharmonic, Wintergreen Summer Arts Festival, the Salt Lake City Symphony, the Quartetto di Sassofoni d'Accademia, the University of Utah, the Winston-Salem Symphony, the Portland Symphony and the Idyllwild Symphony Orchestra. He is recorded on the Albany, Bridge, Naxos, CRS, and Channel Crossings labels.

The youngest of eight children raised by a widowed mother, Dillon lost 50% of his hearing in a childhood illness. He began composing at the age of seven, when he started piano lessons. In 1985, he became the youngest composer to earn a doctorate at the Juilliard School, joining

the Juilliard faculty upon graduation. He has been awarded two Artist Fellowships by the state of North Carolina, the highest honor accorded to artists in the state.

**Honey** is a meditation on the texture, longevity and adaptability of an 8000-year-old source of sweetness. The score of *Honey* comes with the following text:

*Open the tomb and you will find a jar. Break the seal, and taste. See?  
Thousands of years have not dented its flavor, armies and thieves have  
not quickened its flow.  
Watch it spread in a puddle on your plate,  
it slows down the tongue,  
brings sovereignty to plain surroundings.  
Use it as a name for the one to whom you adhere,  
though everything else dissolves. Use it as a prayer that binds you to  
your moment,  
that binds you to moments long before you were born,  
and long after your moment  
has faded and dispersed.*

An eight-minute composition built from a simple rising scale, *Honey* is in four sections, first treating the main figure fugally, then in a chorale texture, as an aria and as a dance. *Honey* is dedicated to my wife Rebecca, who taught me most of what I know and everything I haven't forgotten about honey. – *note by the composer*

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Nationally-known as both a composer and musicologist, **Karl Kroeger** was born in Louisville, KY in 1932. He studied composition and musicology at the Universities of Louisville and Illinois, and received a Ph.D. in musicology from Brown University. For three years in the mid 1960s he was a Ford Foundation composer-in-residence in Eugene, OR, where he composed music for performance by public school ensembles. He has taught at Ohio University, Morehead State University, Wake Forest University, and Keele University in England; he was director of the Moravian Music Foundation for almost a decade, and for almost two decades he was a Professor at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

His music has been widely performed in the U.S., and in Europe and South America. He currently lives in the greater Chicago area.

My “**Toccata for Piano**” was composed in 2003, but its origins go back to the piano accompaniment for a song I wrote in about 1980. The piano part to the song contained musical ideas and gestures that I thought could be expanded and developed. The “Toccata” contrasts two musical ideas – one rhythmically nervous and impulsive, the other more sustained and lyrical. The main movement is preceded and followed by a quasi-improvisatory introduction and coda. Unlike most of my compositions, which were written for specific performers or occasions, this one was written for the sheer joy of composing it. The work was first performed publicly in 2010 in Chicago by Sharon Peterson.

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**Raoul Pleskow** was born in 1931 in Vienna, Austria and educated in New York City. His principal teachers in composition were Karol Rathaus, Otto Luening, and Stefan Wolpe. He has been recipient of many honors, including by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music, the National Institute of Arts and Letters, and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. His works have been performed by the Cleveland Philharmonic, the Tanglewood Festival Orchestra, the Stony Brook Contemporary Chamber Players, and many others. Commissions include those by the Chamber Players of the Kennedy Center, the Aeolian Chamber Players, the New York Virtuosi, North/ South Consonance and the Unitarian Church of All Souls. He was Chairman of the music department at C.W. Post University from the late 1960s until 1994.

**Imaginary Landscape** was written in 2013. Although it's played without a pause, it consists of a brief prelude, and a brief coda. The bulk of the piece is characterized by rapid changes in texture and broken and un-broken symmetries. –Raoul Pleskow

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**Richard Cameron-Wolfe** studied at Oberlin College and Indiana University. In 1974 he taught at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and then moved to New York City to collaborate with the Jose Limon

Dance Company. From 1978-2002, he taught at Purchase College-SUNY, after which he relocated to New Mexico. He is currently preparing his third CD on the Furious Artisans label, titled "Time Refracted" - in fact, a hybrid CD/DVD to include two of his micro-operas. It was preceded by his "Paris X" (as pianist) and "Burning Questions" (as composer). In 2013-14 Cameron-Wolfe's music was performed in Russia, Ukraine, Latvia, China and the United States. In 2015, he will participate in February "Brothers" concerts in Moscow and St. Petersburg and a March 14 ACA-endorsed "Music from New Mexico" concert in New York City at the DiMenna Center's Cary Hall.

**Code of Unsilence: A Prayer** was written as a commentary on the composer's chamber cantata, \*A Measure of Love and Silence\* (its text by Tatyana Apraksina, sung in Russian and in the English translation of James Manteith). The piano work was composed immediately after the completion of the cantata and contemplates the spiritual philosophical essence of the larger work's musical and poetic themes. It nevertheless has a life of its own and can be performed without need for access to the source work. It was premiered in Russia in 2006 during the Astrakhan Festival, with the composer as pianist, offered there in memory of Astrakhan composer Alexander Blinov.

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**Reinaldo Moya** is a Venezuelan-American composer whose rhythmically and emotionally-charged works depict the multitude of voices and influences present in the whole of the American continent today. He's the recipient of the Van Lier Fellowship from Meet the Composer and the Aaron Copland Award from the Copland House, which led to a residency at Aaron Copland's historic home in NY state in 2012. His String Quartet was hailed as "Admirable...reaching a climax of Shostakovichian angst" by the New York Times.

Moya been commissioned by the Minnesota Opera to write a new opera for their Project Opera. An adaptation of Will Weaver's best-selling book *Memory Boy*, the opera will have a libretto by Pulitzer Prize-winner Mark Campbell and is scheduled be premiered in the spring of 2016. Moya is a graduate of The Juilliard School where he received his masters and doctorate degrees, under the tutelage of

Samuel Adler and Robert Beaser. He is currently on the faculty at St. Olaf in Minnesota and is a member of the Theory and Composition Faculty at the Interlochen Arts Camp.

Julio Cortázar's novel **Rayuela** (Hopscotch) from 1963 represents one of the most impressive achievements of Latin American literature. Written in an episodic, snapshot manner, the novel has 155 chapters. At the beginning of the book the author suggests the book can be read in two possible ways. Either in direct sequence and stop at chapter 56, or alternatively by hopscotching through all the chapters according to the "Table of Instructions" designated by the author. When I first read Rayuela, I knew I wanted to translate its sprawling, urban scape into a set of piano pieces. This first set of preludes represents the beginning of a series that will reinterpret and comment upon Cortázar's novel. They are not intended to be program music. Sometimes the inspiration came by way of a mood, a narrative technique, an image or any of the possible reactions one can have while reading it.

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**Otto Luening** (1900-1996) Those who know only Luening's groundbreaking electronic compositions from the early 1950s—experiments in sound that managed to be both radical and charming—may be startled initially by the structural clarity of these piano pieces. It should not be forgotten that the most important influence on the young Luening was Ferruccio Busoni, among the greatest piano virtuosos in history and a composer of highly cerebral, markedly original music. —*Tim Page, CD liner notes NWCR872*

In 1959 Luening founded the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center, now the Computer Music Center, along with fellow ACA member Vladimir Ussachevsky. The center was the first in the United States devoted to the music using electronic technology to generate sound materials, and provided a home for early electroacoustic composers. From the late 1940s until his retirement, Luening served as Columbia's principal instructor in musical composition. In 1965, with Jack Beeson and then-provost Jacques Barzun, he inaugurated the University's doctoral program in composition. In recognition of his many achievements, Luening received an honorary degree from the University in 1981.

In Otto Luening's **Chords at Night**, chords are first stated, then rolled, creating a regular, walking rhythm. "I can't think of any other Luening piece like this," says the pianist Marc Peloquin, who found himself most intrigued by the composer's later works "Blocks of sound—very sonorous, chordal throughout." This is a good example of what Paul Griffiths (in his New York Times review of Luening's centennial concert) called Luening's 'mysteriously wobbly sense of harmony'."

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A New York Times critic recently declared that **Marc Peloquin's** "energetic approach yielded a performance that was refreshing and alive. Individual lines rang out with remarkable definition and clarity." The pianist, called an "innovator ivory tickler" by TimeOut New York has appeared in a wide range of venues from MoMA, the Guggenheim Museum, the Look & Listen Festival and Bargemusic in New York City, to the Bush Center in Dallas, Palacio de Belles Artes in Mexico City, the American Academy in Rome, the Darmstadt International Festival in Germany and the Cultural Center of Roubaix, France. He is the creator, curator, pianist and host of the Keyed Up Music Project, a New York City concert series, celebrating its fifth anniversary this year, which explores the unique sound worlds of composers, their influences and those they have influenced. He also has a long-standing piano partnership with Roberto Hidalgo as the Split Second Piano Ensemble.

In addition, Peloquin collaborates with the Pulitzer Prize winning American composer/pianist David Del Tredici. July 2012 saw the release of *Gotham Glory*, the first in a series of four recordings Marc is completing on the Naxos label of the complete works of the legendary composer. Gramophone's review of the disc stated "A longtime Del Tredici champion and associate Peloquin imbues these composer-supervised performances with idiomatic aplomb and a powerful yet flexible technique." Marc Peloquin's other recordings include the solo piano works Otto Luening (CRI), works by Chester Biscardi (Naxos) and the songs of Samuel Barber with soprano Melissa Fogarty (Aureole label.) He resides in New York, is on the faculty of the New School University and is a resident teaching artist at the Bloomingdale School of Music.

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Pianist and champion of new music, **Yael Manor** regularly collaborates with composers both as a soloist and a chamber musician. A frequent performer of national and world premieres, she has been praised for her “breathtaking and powerful performances.”

Founder and Artistic Director of 20>>21, Yael develops programs that explore the multicultural experience of today’s music. She is driven by the belief that new music should be accessible, and works to ensure that each concert encourages open dialogue and understanding between audience, performers, and composers. Currently, Yael is collaborating with several composers to record a CD of piano pieces from the ACA catalog. The album is expected to be released in the summer of 2015.

Yael has performed on some of the most prestigious stages in the United States including: the Kimmel Center, the Miller Theatre, the Dekelbom 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 from the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University. She currently lives and teaches in New York City.

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**Christopher Oldfather** and **Fredrica Wyman** have been playing duet and two-piano music together since 1971. They began performing officially as a duo in 1976 in a performance and recording of Bartok’s Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion. Over the years they have given many concerts as a duo, particularly of duet (one piano four hands) music, which requires a level of intimacy that they enjoy. They have been married since 1973. Separately they each maintain busy free-lance careers: Chris is a critically acclaimed interpreter of contemporary music and has an international career as a soloist and chamber musician. Fredrica runs a private teaching studio in Nyack, is President of the Rockland Music Teachers Guild, is former Artistic Director of GraceMusic and also performs with various chamber groups locally and in NYC.

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