

Stony Brook Premieres!

Find a Composer Concert

Wednesday, 12 March 2008
8 p.m., Staller Center for the Arts, Recital Hall

The Legend of Waianapanapa Caves

David Hamano, viola and Alexandria Le, piano

Nolan Stolz

The H Trio

II. Help

Rowan Harvey, violin; Charlotte Muir, cello; and Eriko Nagai, piano

Krystal Grant

Waves

Solomiya Ivakhiv, violin

John B. Hedges

Wedge Miniatures

Sally Wall, oboe and English horn and Eriko Nagai, piano

Nissim Schaul

- I. Here's the wedge
- II. Make your wedge murmur
- III. Deconstruct your wedge
- IV. The wedge as seen from above
- V. Look Mom! A Hexachord!
-Very nice, Sally. Now, can you use its complement?
- VI. Wedge. On. Fire.!
- VII. I can make pretty chords with my wedge . . .
- VIII. . . . and rip them apart
- IX. The wedge is my favorite toy

Reservoir

Eric Starr, trombone

Matthew Vandegriff

Program Notes from the Composers

The Legend of Waianapanapa Caves, Nolan Stolz

The Legend of Waianapanapa Caves is a programmatic chamber work for viola and piano, although a version for violin and piano also exists. It is based on a Hawaiian legend that explains why sometimes during the year, the water in the Waianapanapa caves seemingly turns red. The legend is about Princess Popoalea and her cruel husband Chief Kakae. One day, the princess fled from the chief with her serving maid. They sat on a ledge along the opening of the cave, and she fanned the princess with a Kahili feather. The Kahili feather is a symbol of royalty, and when the chief saw the reflection of the feather in the water, he learned of her hiding place and murdered her. It is said that the water turns red because it is the blood of the princess. The story is told in the music, and each section is labeled to coincide with the story. The music at the beginning of the piece is similar to a chant I heard four women sing before they entered the cave. I had a digital camera with me, and I recorded their ritualistic chant. The chant returns near the end of the piece after the murder scene. It is then followed by an eerie version of the princess theme, representing her ghost. I composed the form of the piece first, but without a pencil and paper handy, I used rocks from the black sand beach, took a video, and narrated to myself the form as a reminder. Upon my return to my studio in Makaha Valley (on the island of Oahu), I composed the chief theme, which is very forceful and low in register. I composed the princess theme at Makaha Beach, this time with a pen and paper handy. Then suddenly, a large wave came and nearly ruined my sketch, but it was still discernible, besides it was only a two-minute drive back to the studio, short enough so that I would not forget. I won't forget, however, the wave ruined my cellular phone! The Kahili feather music is serene, like the relief the princess must have felt being away from the chief. The Kahili reflection music uses mirror writing, melodically and formally. The Waianapanapa caves are located near the black sand beach at Waianapanapa State Park, just north of Hana on the island of Maui. If you are curious to know why (scientifically) the water turns red, the information is available on the 'web, but believe what you wish!

Nolan Stolz (b. 1981, Milwaukee, WI) is a composer, musician and teacher. His music has been performed in Europe, Canada and throughout the United States, including performances by the Matrix Music Collaborators and the Fireworks Ensemble, both New York City-based groups. His music has been programmed at festivals such as the Electroacoustic Juke Joint, Oregon Bach Festival, Music Today Festival, Las Vegas Music Festival and the Las Vegas International New Music Festival. In 2007, Stolz was awarded 2nd prize in the New Zealand Association of Organists International Composition Competition for his solo organ piece *Ascension to a Memory*.

Stolz teaches at Three Rivers Community College in Norwich, CT and at The Hartt School, where he is pursuing a doctorate in composition and theory, studying composition with Larry Alan Smith and electronic music with Robert Carl. He holds degrees from the University of Oregon and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. His previous composition teachers include Virko Baley, David Crumb and Robert Kyr.

Stolz is also active as a drum set performer and studio musician in both the rock and jazz idioms. He appears on several commercial recordings, one which includes jazz greats Ron Carter, Phil Woods, Monty Alexander and several others.

A list of works, discography and sound samples are available at www.nolanstolz.com.

The H Trio, Krystal Grant

"Help" is the second movement of *The H Trio* for violin, cello, and piano. (The other movements are I. Hatred and III. Hope.) After class one day, my mentor from college, Michael Alec Rose, taught me the Schlomo Carlebach tune for Psalm 121. In this piece, I use only the first half of the tune, which sets the text of the psalmist asking where his help comes from. I imagined different attitudes for this asking and developed the tune in dialogue with my own melody and chorale.

While studying to become a pianist, **Krystal Grant** rediscovered her zeal for composition during an undergraduate fugue-writing project. Her instrumental and vocal works incorporate modes and improvisation with influences ranging from Beethoven and Shostakovich to Miles Davis and Rubén González. Her pieces have been performed at the Ho Chi Minh City Contemporary Music Festival in Vietnam, the Third Street Music School Settlement in New York City, and the 8th Annual Middle Tennessee Composers Festival Concert in Nashville. She has participated in masterclasses with Bright Sheng, Paul Moravec, and Elizabeth Austin. In addition to her Bachelor of Music degree in piano performance, she graduated from Vanderbilt University with a second major in Spanish and extensive work in composition/theory under Michael Kurek and Michael Slayton. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in composition and a certificate in cultural studies at Stony Brook University where she has studied with Dan Weymouth and Sheila Silver. When she is not writing music, Krystal spends her time accompanying, researching Latin American culture, and teaching piano and music theory.

Waves, John B. Hedges

I have written several short sketches for a solo instrument on which I build a larger piece later. In the case of 'Waves', the piece is a study on a simple melodic phrase loosely representing a wave, the ocean being one of my primary artistic inspirations.

John B Hedges was born in 1974 in Wilmington, Delaware. The son of a rock musician, he began studying classical music at the University of Pennsylvania, receiving his B.A. in Music in 1994 and his M.M. from Westminster Choir College in 1997. During this time, John B was assistant conductor of the Plainfield (NJ) Symphony Orchestra studying with Roumanian conductor, Sabin Pautza. He then completed post-graduate studies at the Curtis Institute of Music where he studied with Richard Danielpour and Ned Rorem. In his summers, John B twice attended the Aspen Music Festival where he studied with John Harbison and George Tsontakis and twice attended the Contemporary Composition and Performance course at the Britten-Pears School (as both composer and conductor.) John B subsequently returning to the U.K. as assistant to composer/conductor Oliver Knussen. In addition, he has participated in the Academie Musicale de Villecroze in France and in the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra's Composition and Conducting Institute and assisted composer Tan Dun on the Metropolitan Opera premiere of 'The First Emperor'. John B Hedges' music has been performed throughout the U.S. as well as Canada, France and England. As a composer and conductor he has worked with the Ensemble Modern, New Jersey Symphony, Shanghai Symphony, Curtis Symphony Orchestra and Chamber Ensembles the Aspen Contemporary Ensemble among others. He has also conducted concerts at the Academie Musicale de Villecroze and with the Britten-Pears Contemporary Ensemble as part of the Aldeburgh Festival. Recently, John B completed "The Invitation: a shipwreck opera in one act" in collaboration with fiction writer Aimee Bender and *On the Good Foot: a James Brown tribute piece* for the Albany Symphony's 'Dogs of Desire'. In a January of 2008, the Grand

Rapids Symphony premiered Prayers of Rain and Wind with contrabass soloist Joseph Conyers for whom it was written. John B has also served as orchestral arranger for the eclectic string trio "Time for Three" and ABBA: The Tour. John B has received the Alfred Casselo Award, the Theodore Presser Career Grant, Honorable Mention in the 2000 and 2003 ASCAP Awards, and 2nd prize in the Florilege Vocal de Tours Choral Composition Competition for his piece, "Le Diapason d'Humeur": a collaboration with poet Fred Colier. He also received a 2006 Independence Foundation Fellowship, a 2006 fellowship from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts and residencies at the artist's colony, Yaddo. In his spare time, John B loves to play and sing lots of funk and r&b.

Wedges Miniatures, Nissim Schaul

When I began *Everybody's Going There*, a piece that turned out to be a recorder quartet, it was scored for oboe and piano. As a result, a lot of the basic material was ill-suited for the eventual ensemble – a recorder quartet can play exactly four notes at once while a piano can play many more. As a result, I ended up either chopping out or truncating a lot of good material that I didn't want to go to waste. So with *Wedge Miniatures*, the material returns full circle, in a somewhat less-serious mood than *EGT*, to its roots in the oboe and the piano.

The fundamental material, which runs through both *EGT* and *Wedge Miniatures*, is "the Wedge," a musical shape that looks a bit like an upside-down doorstop. I extract harmonies from it, and run it through all sorts of transformations and permutations throughout *Wedge Miniatures* until by the last movement, it is barely recognizable.

Nissim Schaul (www.nissimmusic.org) is a composer of music for classical instruments, and the occasional radio or film project. These days, he's looking for the intersection of still space and grand gestures.

Currently living in Paris, Nissim has spent most of his adult life in New York City. His work has been heard throughout the region, including at Symphony Space's Thalia Theatre. Most recently, his recorder quartet, *Everybody's Going There*, was performed by QNG—Quartet New Generation in Reno, Nevada (at the Nightingale Concert Hall), and two new works – preludes for Baroque trio and a choral work with violin and piano based on Raymond Queneau's *Exercices de style* – were premiered in and around New York City. Nissim's music has also appeared on public radio's Studio 360.

Reservoir, Matthew Vandegriff

In Oklahoma, and many other places in the world I'm sure, there are abandoned water tanks. In an empty water tank, there can be anywhere from 30 seconds to a couple of minutes of reverberation. People have used these to make recordings and it was with this in mind that I wrote this piece for solo trombone. Fortunately, with the use of electronics, we can bring the water tank into the concert hall. The piece is intended to have overlapping, colliding, and ringing musical passages with all the muddiness such an uncontrollable sound environment would produce.

Matthew Vandegriff is an Oklahoma native currently pursuing a Ph.D. in composition at Stony Brook University.