

music @stony brook

2011-2012 CONCERT SEASON

24th Annual Premieres! Concert

Stony Brook Contemporary Chamber Players

Eduardo Leandro, Conductor

Thursday, November 10, 2011

8:00 PM

Recital Hall | Staller Center for the Arts
Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY 11794

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 Series.

BIOGRAPHIES

Felix Pastor

Felix Pastor was born in Madrid in 1974. Music has allowed him to approach, in his composition and performance, many of his interests, like architecture, installation art, film, improvisation, interactivity, and programming.

He has composed and performed in a variety of settings ranging from film scoring to experimental music where he has had the opportunity to collaborate with artists and collectives like Dinu Ghezzo, Max Finneran, the Pamplemousse Ensemble, Yarn/Wire, ProContemporanea Ensemble and the Oleg Danovsky Dance Company both in the US and Europe.

Felix Pastor obtained his PhD in Music Composition at Stony Brook University in 2010. He now lives in Barcelona with his wife and three daughters where he composes and teaches in the department of Music Theory, Composition and Conducting at the Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya (ESMuC).

Frank Stemper

Frank Stemper has been involved with new music for more than 30 years. His music for orchestra, chamber ensemble, voice and computer has been performed throughout the United States at such venues as Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center, in England, Germany, Poland, Japan and eight other countries, at national and international new music festivals and more than 60 universities. Support and honors for his music include 32 commissions, awards from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), ASCAP, Meet the Composer, The American Music Center, The Rockefeller Fund for Music, and the Illinois, California and New York Arts Councils, to name a few, and his scores have received numerous prizes, which include the George Ladd Prix de Paris and, most recently, the New York Virtuoso Singers Competition. He has received multiple residency invitations by the governments of Romania, Mexico, Austria, Spain and The Netherlands, and has been Guest Composer for national/international music festivals and with several ensembles. He is Co-Producer of the annual OUTSIDE THE BOX new music festival in Southern Illinois, founder and Director of The Center for Experimental Music, and serves as pianist with the Altgeld Chamber Players.

In addition to his more highbrow activities, Frank Stemper works on the front lines of modern music, educating not only his own university students, but audiences, potential benefactors and performers, who are often new or resistant to the avant garde. For example, in 2008 he produced and served as pianist for performances of Schonberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* in non-traditional venues, such as a local bar. Stemper's principal teachers were composer Andrew Imbrie, theorist David Lewin, and the Canadian pianist Robert Silverman. Recordings of his music are currently available on several CD labels, and for the past 28 years he has been Composer In Residence (Professor) at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, where he and his wife live after raising their five children.

TEXTS

THE "SENSATION OF WAKING" by Frank Stemper

Text by Frank Stemper

Floating within a suspension of shimmering snowflakes, we approach the mulberry tree as it glistens on Christmas night. We are together. Just us. Clouds of frozen laughter sparkle as we drift away. Where now is that breath we breathed?

My older brother is telling me lies as we sleep in our bed one night, or perhaps one morning, together in the room at the top of the stairs.

I lie awake **listening to the silence: Restless creaks inside my wall, the intimate dripping that follows rain, the distant acceleration of a city bus.** Somewhere, a foghorn moans, arousing the cynical whispering of our furnace.

A pristine snow glows in the dark winter night. It is quiet, still, and not really cold. Only my shovel and perhaps a distant shovel break the silence. I am alone.

Everyone is asleep. A streetlight peers into my window through the fever of summer's muggy blackness. (**insert text from above**) I remember the sensation of closing my eyes one night, then suddenly waking to daylight in the room at the top of the stairs. But now I am an ageless prowler, wandering through grey, empty rooms, aware of the approaching invasion of destiny.

As my small hands clutch at the piano, I sense the mirror behind me. It gives a Christmas feel to the dark parlor, but there is no tree, no colored lights. Someone else is or is not in the room.

I reluctantly go back to bed and listen to the ringing in my ears. My fingertips come together, and the ringing immediately fills the room. At the top of the stairs unknown enemies speak about me hatefully. I can't make out the words, only their disdain.

My hands conspire with this terror: Grotesquely swelling digits touch and fuse at their chubby ends, triggering a recurring vision of failure, insincerity and wasted opportunity. I feel their fat, obtundent tips and the dread of repressed delirium on the glittering trapeze, and the horror of being asleep while I am still awake.

My older brother and I were sleeping in a big bed in the room at the top of the stairs. It was morning. I think he was still asleep, or at least trying. He was dreaming of the truth. I could see his scar. The one on the back of his head he got from the coffee table. The scar was white and scary. Outside, the snow was whiter and beautiful.

**This passage comes later in the music, i.e. out of order*

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Felix Pastor: *Acusmacia*

"Acusmacia" is a Spanish word of Greek origin that denotes an auditory hallucination. A hallucination is the apparent perception of something not present. In the case of sound, what is perceived and what is present can differ tremendously. The perception of pitch is already the result of an extreme filtering of what is present.

Acusmacia, the piece, begins with a roll on two snare drums. This sound is perceived as noise: an erratic, intermittent or statistically random oscillation. However, the actual method of production, the roll, is a periodic beating of drumsticks on a drum head. This paradox is the starting point for the piece and, through oftentimes hallucinatory procedures, it describes a journey from noise to pitch and from the acoustic to the acousmatic.

-Felix Pastor

Frank Stemper: *The Sensation of Waking*

The Sensation of Waking was written during 2010-11 for the Stony Brook Contemporary Chamber Players "Premieres" concerts. Part of it was composed under support of Fundación Valparaíso, an artist retreat on the southeast coast of Spain. Although originally composed for singer (baritone) and ensemble, tonight it will be presented in its instrumental form, with a trombone substituting for the singer. (The original form will be premiered by the Contemporary Chamber Players at a later date.) The text is my own, and should be considered as a "program" for this instrumental version. The text comes from a diary of childhood memories that I started to record in the early 1980's while living in Paris. At that time I was struck by how very vivid these memories had remained – and continue to remain – in my consciousness. It is almost like I am back there reliving the given moment or event. For example, as this piece begins I am walking with my family, as probably a 4 or 5 year old, on a dark Wisconsin winter night, through a light dusting of snow. (There – I just returned to that moment again.) Like most memories I have little control over them. Although they are sometimes sparked by another event or association (much like music), they usually just happen, randomly taking over my thoughts as I return to the past for a few seconds. I don't know if this sort of thing happens to everyone, but it does bring to mind and may possibly have triggered the time tripping experienced by protagonist Billy Pilgrim in Kurt Vonnegut's *SLAUGHTERHOUSE FIVE*.

One definition of Music might be: a collection of abstract sonic events that we as listeners associate with anything that happens to pop into our heads, e.g. emotional responses, actual memories, both abstract and non-abstract thoughts, ideas fabricated from our imaginations, as well as bits and pieces from our subconscious related to all of the above. This happens whether we are paying strict attention to the music or not – we can't really shut out sound – we don't have "ear lids." So, while putting my written memories together and then setting them with music, I experienced time tripping on a considerably grander scale. As these real memories (however distorted over the years) met the abstractness of music (my own music— from the composer's side not the listener's), my real and abstract imagination got out of hand. It was a little scary. But it all worked out as, once again, while listening to the silence, I got to look beyond the scar on the back of my older brother's head and view the new morning snow. This is therefore a personal, introspective, perhaps self-indulgent musical narrative, as is I suppose every attempted piece of artwork to some degree. However, I hope it offers some commonality, beyond just being a curiosity of sound and words – maybe striking home for everyone. After all, each of us has a childhood, and most of us have had trouble sleeping from time to time.

-Frank Stemper

V. The Snow Man - Wallace Stevens

One must have a mind of winter
To regard the frost and the boughs
Of the pine-trees crusted with snow;

And have been cold a long time
To behold the junipers shagged with ice,
The spruces rough in the distant glitter

Of the January sun; and not to think
Of any misery in the sound of the wind,
In the sound of a few leaves,

Which is the sound of the land
Full of the same wind
That is blowing in the same bare place

For the listener, who listens in the snow,
And, nothing himself, beholds
Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.

VOLUME IV

I. Nemesis - Ralph Waldo Emerson

Already blushes in thy cheek
The bosom-thought which thou must speak;
The bird, how far it haply roam
By cloud or isle, is flying home;
The maiden fears, and fearing runs
Into the charmed snare she shuns;
And every man, in love or pride,
Of his fate is never wide.

Will a woman's fan the ocean smooth?
Or prayers the stony Parcae sooth,
Or coax the thunder from its mark?
Or tapers light the chaos dark?
In spite of Virtue and the Muse,
Nemesis will have her dues,
And all our struggles and our toils
Tighter wind the giant coils.

II. At Night - Sara Teasdale

We are apart; the city grows quiet between us,
She hushes herself, for midnight makes heavy her eyes,
The tangle of traffic is ended, the cars are empty,
Five streets divide us, and on them the moonlight lies.

Oh are you asleep, or lying awake, my lover?
Open your dreams to my love and your heart to my words.
I send you my thoughts--the air between us is laden,
My thoughts fly in at your window, a flock of wild birds.

III. Dawn - Paul Laurence Dunbar

An angel, robed in spotless white,
Bent down and kissed the sleeping Night.
Night woke to blush; the sprite was gone.
Men saw the blush and called it Dawn.

IV. Many red devils ran from my heart - Stephen Crane

Many red devils ran from my heart
And out upon the page,
They were so tiny
The pen could mash them.
And many struggled in the ink.
It was strange
To write in this red muck
Of things from my heart.

V. A Dream within a Dream - Edgar Allan Poe

Take this kiss upon the brow!
And, in parting from you now,
Thus much let me avow-
You are not wrong, who deem
That my days have been a dream;
Yet if hope has flown away
In a night, or in a day,
In a vision, or in none,
Is it therefore the less gone?
All that we see or seem
Is but a dream within a dream.

I stand amid the roar
Of a surf-tormented shore,
And I hold within my hand
Grains of the golden sand-
How few! yet how they creep
Through my fingers to the deep,
While I weep- while I weep!
O God! can I not grasp
Them with a tighter clasp?
O God! can I not save
One from the pitiless wave?
Is all that we see or seem
But a dream within a dream?

THE BOOK OF AMERICAN POETRY by Stacy Garrop

VOLUME III

I. Grace Before Song - Ezra Pound

LORD God of heaven that with mercy dight
Th'alternate prayer wheel of the night and light
Eternal hath to thee, and in whose sight
Our days as rain drops in the sea surge fall,

As bright white drops upon a leaden sea
Grant so my songs to this grey folk may be:

As drops that dream and gleam and falling catch the sun
Evan'scent mirrors every opal one
Of such his splendor as their compass is,
So, bold My Songs, seek ye such death as this.

II. Fire and Ice - Robert Frost

Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.

III. Peace - Amy Lowell

Perched upon the muzzle of a cannon
A yellow butterfly is slowly opening and shutting its wings.

IV. We Real Cool - Gwendolyn Brooks

We real cool. We
Left school. We

Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We
Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We
Die soon.

"We Real Cool" Reprinted by Consent of Brooks Permissions.

Alex Mincek: *Color - Form - Line: II*

Color - Form - Line: II is my second piece based on Ellsworth Kelly's book, "Line, Form, Color." Kelly's book is a collection of images which proceed from blank spaces to lines (thus establishing forms) and then finally to colors. My own piece roughly follows this succession, albeit in the opposite order. The piece begins with a focus on composite timbres then on temporal form before finally shifting toward discernible contours, analogous to lines.

-Alex Mincek

Stacy Garrop: *The Book of American Poetry, Volumes III and IV*

From 2008 to 2010, I undertook a project called *The Book of American Poetry*. The goal of the project was to present poetry by twenty famous American poets within a single, large-scale song cycle that would serve as the musical equivalent of reading a poetry anthology. The poems that I chose needed to fulfill several requirements: to serve as a representative poem of each American-born poet, to cover a wide range of topics, and to complement as well as contrast the other poems in the project.

The project itself is broken down into smaller "volumes." Each volume contains five poets. The instrumentation for all of the volumes is identical, except for the vocal type (volumes I and II are for baritone; volumes III and IV are for mezzo-soprano). Each vocalist is accompanied by flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano, and percussion.

The poets included in all four volumes are Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Emily Dickinson, e.e. cummings, Ernest Hemingway, William Carlos Williams, Carl Sandburg, Langston Hughes, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Henry David Thoreau, Walt Whitman, Ezra Pound, Robert Frost, Wallace Stevens, Amy Lowell, Gwendolyn Brooks, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Sara Teasdale, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Stephen Crane, and Edgar Allan Poe.

-Stacy Garrop

24TH ANNUAL PREMIERES! CONCERT

Acusmacia (2010), for two percussionists and electronics

Felix Pastor (b. 1974)

James Beauton and Joshua Perry, *percussion*

The Sensation of Waking

Frank Stemper (b. 1951)

Justin Waller, *solo trombone*

Laurie Baefsky, *flute*; Megan Shumate, *clarinet and bass clarinet*

Brian Glass, *trumpet*

Natalie Kress, *violin*; Saeunn Thorsteinsdottir, *cello*

Philip Rowan, *bass*; Katherine Dowling, *piano*

Eduardo Leandro, *conductor*

~ Intermission ~

Color-Form-Line: No. 2

Alex Mincek (b. 1975)

Ray Furuta, *flute*; Kendra Hawley, *oboe*

Aleksandr Karjaka, *bass clarinet*; Seth Goodman, *bassoon*

Amanda Tabor, *horn*; Julia den Boer, *piano*

Christopher Howard, *percussion*

Eduardo Leandro, *conductor*

The Book of American Poetry (2010)

Stacy Garrop (b. 1969)

Volume III

I. Grace Before Song (Ezra Pound)

II. Fire and Ice (Robert Frost)

III. Peace (Amy Lowell)

IV. We Real Cool (Gwendolyn Brooks)

V. The Snow Man (Wallace Stevens)

Volume IV

I. Nemesis (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

II. At Night (Sara Teasdale)

III. Dawn (Paul Laurence Dunbar)

IV. Man red devils ran from my heart (Stephen Crane)

V. A Dream within a Dream (Edgar Allan Poe)

Wonjung Kim, *mezzo-soprano*

Ray Furuta, *flute, piccolo, and alto flute*

Megan Shumate, *clarinet and bass clarinet*

Naria Kim, *violin*; Susanna Mendlow, *cello*

Michael Smith, *piano*; Derek Kwan, *percussion*

Eduardo Leandro, *conductor*

*All works on the program are World Premieres and were composed for the
Stony Brook Contemporary Chamber Players.*

Alex Mincek

Alex Mincek is a New York-based composer and performer. He studied composition with Tristan Murail and Fred Lerdahl at Columbia University (DMA) and with Nils Vigeland at the Manhattan School of Music (MA).

Mincek's music has been programmed at many prestigious venues and international festivals including Carnegie Hall, Miller Theatre, the Strasbourg Musica Festival, Festival Présences of Radio France in Dijon, Voix Nouvelles at the Abbaye de Royaumont in Paris, Festival des Musiques Démesurées in Clermont-Ferrand, the Internationales Musikinstitut Darmstadt (IMD), Unerhörte Musik in Berlin, the Contempuls Festival in Prague, and the Ostrava New Music Days in the Czech Republic.

Mincek has collaborated with wide variety of ensembles including the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Les Percussions de Strasbourg, the Janacek Philharmonic, the New Mendelssohn Chamber Orchestra -Leipzig, Ensemble Cairn, Ensemble Le Balcon, Ensemble Linea, Ensemble XXI, Wet Ink Ensemble, SEM Ensemble, Present Music, Talea Ensemble, Dal Nienti, Yarn/Wire and the JACK Quartet. Mincek's music has also been recognized through commissions and awards from major arts institutions such as the French Ministry of Culture, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts, ASCAP, the National Endowment for the Arts, MATA, Radio France, Meet The Composer and the Issue Project Room.

Mincek currently serves as the saxophonist, bass clarinetist, and artistic director of the Wet Ink Ensemble, a group dedicated to contemporary music, which he founded in 1998.

Stacy Garrop

Stacy Garrop has won numerous awards including the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's Elaine Lebenbom Memorial Award, Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble's Harvey Gaul Competition, Raymond and Beverly Sackler Music Composition Prize, two Barlow Endowment commissions, and additional competitions sponsored by the American Composers Orchestra, Charleston Symphony Orchestra, Civic Orchestra of Chicago, Minnesota Orchestra, New England Philharmonic, and the Omaha Symphony. Her works have been performed by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Grant Park Music Festival Orchestra, Albany Symphony Orchestra, the Cecilia, Chiara, Biava, Enso, and Artaria String Quartets, Indiana University's New Music Ensemble, Lincoln Trio, Rembrandt Chamber Players, Chesapeake Music Festival performers, and the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, as well as by the choirs Chicago *a cappella*, South Bend Chamber Singers, musica intima, Princeton Singers, and Volti. Her chamber and orchestral music is published by Theodore Presser Company; Cedille, Innova, Equilibrium, Chicago *a cappella* Records, Ravello, and Summit record labels have recorded her music on twelve various CDs. She has attended residences at the Aspen Music Festival, Atlantic Center for the Arts, Banff Centre for the Arts, MacDowell Colony, Millay Colony, Ragdale Foundation, Wellesley Composers Conference, and Yaddo, and has been in residence with the Albany Symphony (2009/10), Skaneateles Festival (2011), Volti Choral Institute (2011), and the Music in the Loft chamber series (2004/05 and 2006/07). Dr. Garrop is an Associate Professor of Composition at the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. For more information, please visit her website at www.garrop.com.

STONY BROOK PREMIERES!

Since 1988, the Stony Brook Contemporary Chamber Players has commissioned many new works by composers around the U.S and abroad for the annual Premieres! Concert played in New York City and Stony Brook University. The series was begun in 1988 by Stony Brook faculty composer John A. Lessard in collaboration with CCP directors Gilbert Kalish and Raymond DesRoches.

From 1990 to 1999, faculty composer Daria Semegen served as the World Premieres Concert commissions coordinator. During these years, the concert series attracted an increasing and enthusiastic interest among composers. Since the Fall of 1999, faculty composer Perry Goldstein has administered the World Premieres concert commissions.

The CCP has commissioned the premieres of over eighty new works, including those of Pulitzer Prize winners Wayne Peterson and Melinda Wagner, and MacArthur Fellowship recipient Ralph Shapey, among many other composers representing a wide variety of styles and aesthetic approaches.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The Stony Brook Contemporary Chamber Players (CCP) is part of the performance program of the Department of Music at Stony Brook University, on Long Island. The group is directed by faculty performance artist Eduardo Leandro.

Hailed by The New York Times as “a small army of musicians who demonstrate consistent accomplishment,” the Stony Brook Contemporary Chamber Players performs a large number of concerts annually, including several in New York City and on tour. These include the Stony Brook Premieres! Concert, Stony Brook Composers Concerts, Percussion Plus, Postmodern, 20th Century Classics, and other new music events.

Players from the CCP have been heard in performance with Continuum, New Millennium Ensemble, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Aequalis, New Jersey Percussion Ensemble, Earplay, The Guild Trio, Argento, Bang on a Can, and many other new music groups.