

Flying Forms

Marie Dalby, *viola da gamba*
Marc Levine, *violin*
Tami Morse, *harpsichord*
with guest Elisabeth Holmertz, soprano

Sunday, February 10, 2008 at 3:00 p.m.
Staller Center for the Arts ~ Recital Hall

Talking About Dancing..... Timothy Andres (2007)

Coraldan Robinson McClellan (2007)

Substitutions..... Nissim Schaul (2007/08)

Rolling

Giggling *and not getting up* Matthew Pierce (2003/07)

Sarabande – *Tombeau*..... Peter Winkler (2007)

~ pause ~

The Muses, *a suite for baroque instruments*..... Zachary Wadsworth (2007)

- I. *to Calliope, muse of epic poetry*
- II. *to Crato, muse of erotic poetry*
- III. *to Thalia, muse of bucolic poetry*
- IV. *to Polyhymnia, muse of sacred poetry*
- V. *to Terpsichore, muse of dance*
- VI. *to Euterpe, muse of lyric poetry*
- VII. *to Melpomene, muse of tragedy*
- VIII. *to Clio, muse of heroic poetry*
- IX. *to Urania, muse of astronomy*

Marie Celeste..... Dawn Chambers (2007)

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

Flying Forms is a period instrument chamber music ensemble with the mission of transforming communities and inspiring expression through excellence in performance, innovative education and creative collaboration. Considered by harpsichordist Arthur Haas to be “the bright future of early music performance in the United States,” Flying Forms is quickly establishing a presence in America’s early music scene often collaborating with prominent musicians, musicologists and baroque dancers. They perform regularly throughout the New York metropolitan area on concert series and at universities and secondary schools. (www.flyingforms.org)

Marc Levine is an active performer and teacher of violin in New York City and Long Island. A former member of the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, Marc is not only an informed performer of new music, but of early music as well. On the baroque violin Marc has performed with Early Music New York, Fred Renz/director, Concert Royal, Dallas Bach Society, the Naumburg Early Instrument Players, Stony Brook Baroque, and is a founding member of the group Flying Forms. As an orchestral musician, Marc has held concertmaster positions at Indiana University, Stony Brook University, and the Amherst Early Music Institute all of which included the leading of opera productions, Marc’s specialty. Chamber music credits include performances with Eugene Drucker, Lawrence Dutton, Arthur Haas, Gilbert Kalish, The Aulos Ensemble, The Chamber Music Society of Minnesota, and a performance with the Stony Brook String Quartet at Carnegie Hall. As a soloist Marc has performed with groups in Indiana, Minnesota, North Carolina, and most recently in New York City with Ensemble 212, a group where Marc serves as concertmaster.

Marc holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Stony Brook University and Masters and Bachelor of Music degrees from Indiana University. His teachers include Pamela Frank, Ani Kavafian, Franco Gulli, Henryk Kowalski, and Young-Nam Kim.

Marie Dalby performs on viola da gamba throughout Connecticut and the greater New York area. She is a member of *Flying Forms*, and the New York Consort of Viols, one of the oldest viol consorts in the country and in residence at Manhattan’s Church of the Transfiguration. Marie collaborates with singers and other early music groups on a regular basis such as Parthenia, Philharmonia Virtuosi, Richard Savino and Jennifer Ellis. In addition to founding and directing the Yale Temperament Consort, Marie teaches viola da gamba at Amherst Early Music Weekend Workshops and the Neighborhood Music School in New Haven, CT.

Marie has studied with Grace Feldman and Larry Lipnik, and has participated in masterclasses with Wendy Gillespie, Sarah Cunningham and Jaap Schroeder. She has a BA in Humanities from Yale University and is currently pursuing a master’s degree in medieval church history at the Yale Divinity School, through their Institute of Sacred Music, Worship and the Arts.

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

Tami Morse, harpsichordist, is increasingly sought after as a soloist and chamber musician in the United States. She has performed with ensembles such as Foundling, the Long Island Baroque Ensemble, North Shore Pro Musica, Stony Brook Opera, Plymouth Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Canton, Ensemble 212 and the Big Apple Baroque Band. In addition to her faculty appointment at the May 2007 Amherst Early Music Weekend Workshop she has recently completed a tour in Taiwan, and as a founding member of the group Flying Forms, has many upcoming projects and performances.

Tami is a candidate for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree at Stony Brook University studying with the acclaimed harpsichordist and teacher Arthur Haas. In addition to her studies in the United States, Tami was awarded a prestigious DAAD grant, which she used to study in Germany at the Hochschule für Musik in Cologne with Ketil Haugsand. As artistic director of the newly formed Early Music Concert Series at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Islip, New York, Tami is dedicated to making early music accessible to today's audiences and laying a foundation for its study and performance in the United States.

Elisabeth Holmertz, Swedish soprano, obtained her musical training from The Norwegian State Academy of Music and Hochschule für Musik Köln studying with Prof. Barbro Marklund and Prof. Barbara Schlick. Specializing in early and contemporary music, Elisabeth has sung with some of the finest groups and orchestras in Norway, including the Radio Orchestra, Cikada, Cikada, Oslo Sinfonietta, and The Norwegian Chamber Orchestra amongst others.

In Europe she has worked with groups like Elyma (Gabriel Garrido) and Huelgas-ensemble (Paul Van Nevel) on some of the most prestigious stages; Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), Radio France (Paris) and Festival de Beaune... On the opera stage she has performed Ophelia (new opera by Norwegian composer Henrik Hellstenius), Hedda Gabler (Norwegian composer Kyrre Sassebo Haaland), Purcell's Dido (and Sorceress in the same performance!), Armide (J.B Lully), and some Venuses and Nymphs.

ABOUT THE COMPOSITIONS

Timothy Andres (b. 1985, Palo Alto, CA) is a creator and interpreter of cutting-edge music. He grew up in rural Connecticut and is pursuing a master's degree at the Yale School of Music (studying with Ingram Marshall and Aaron Jay Kernis). His compositions synthesize his classical-music background with interests in the natural world and minimalist music, art, and design. An avid performer from an early age, he has played at Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, and Alice Tully Hall, focusing on recent works. "New music cannot be intimidating when played with this degree of skill and zest," proclaimed *Boston Globe* critic Richard Dyer of a recent piano concert in New York.

About the piece:

Until recently, I've had very few experiences in the world of period instruments or historical performance practice, so when Marie Dalby asked me to write a piece for her baroque trio, I was a bit at sea. Listening to Marais and Buxtehude recordings, I immediately grew enamored of the "straight-tone" quality of the string playing, as well as the refined sense of gesture evident in the dance movements.

Talking About Dancing is part suite, part conversation, part theme and variations. Initially, the instruments breathe together in drawn-out versions of Baroque figurations, which are first ornamented and later stripped down. The music becomes more repetitive and mechanistic, finally winding itself down altogether in short spasms.

Robinson McClellan (b.1976) is a composer, scholar, and concert presenter. His music has been heard internationally in a variety of settings including the Oregon Bach Festival and the Vatican, through commissions from the Albany Symphony, the Museum of Biblical Art (NYC), Yale Schola Cantorum, and Trio Eos, and others. His choral music appears in an Episcopal hymnal and his orchestra music will be read by the Fort Worth Symphony. He is a doctoral candidate in composition at Yale. As a scholar, Robin researches pibroch, the seventeenth-century Gaelic bagpipe musical form; his work will be published in Scotland in an anthology of related scholarship. He is also founder and director of El Salto, a unique forum for contemporary music performed in a context of broad-minded spiritual inquiry (www.el-salto.org). Visit www.robinsonmcclellan.com.

About the piece:

Coral dan is designed to be easily memorized and performed without written music. To this end, it follows an ancient orally-transmitted music tradition that remains largely unknown in modern times, having completely died out except for two remnants: one in a manuscript of Welsh harp music copied in 1623 by Robert ap Huw (B. M. Addl. MS 14905), containing pieces that may date three or four centuries before that; and the other in pibroch (or piobaireachd)—a living but obscure Scottish Gaelic bagpipe tradition.

One of the fascinating things about both remnants is the intricate patterning found in their harmonic and metric structures. The Welsh harp MS gives what it calls the 24 "mesurs of cerdd dant" or "measures of string music," a formalized compositional system of patterns represented in a binary code: "1" stands for *cyweirdant*, or "string of concord," and "0" for *tyniad* or "string of inflection"—so that the mesurs represent patterns of contrasting consonant and dissonant chords. The mesur usually serves as a ground bass in the lower part while the upper part repeats a melody in which continuous variation provides interest. Thus on the surface, the music in ap Huw's MS resembles the passacaglia and chaconnes later found throughout Europe; what makes these Welsh mesurs distinctive is the peculiar sense of symmetry and inversion in their patterns: for example, the mesur called *bryt odidog* is written as: 0010 0010 1101 1101.

Pibroch is still played today, but it predates the reels and marches most often heard on the Highland bagpipes: most pibrochs were composed between 1550 and 1750 using an oral compositional method. Pibroch makes the most of limited pitch material (nine notes on the pipes) via intricate patterns of consonance and dissonance over the drone. Some of these are very similar to the Welsh mesurs: for example, the most common formal plan in pibroch is nearly identical to the Welsh mesur shown above.

ABOUT THE COMPOSITIONS

Part of the reason for these patterns in Welsh harp music and pibroch is to help musicians perform lengthy and complex pieces of music without written music. Pibroch is always performed from memory, relying on the performer's ability to memorize at two levels: locally, a few short melodic fragments which repeat, and structurally, the larger patterns into which they fit. This memorization process requires considerable concentration, but far less than what would be required to memorize, say, a Bach partita. To this day, pibroch teachers will give their students a new fifteen-minute piece at lunch and expect them to perform it from memory by dinnertime.

Taking up this idea, this piece borrows the mesur which the ap Huw MS calls *coraldan*: 1110 1001 0001. Like the early Welsh harp music and pibroch, the piece is a set of variations, each of which contrasts two sonorities according to the order laid out in the mesur.

I have two goals in writing a piece like this: First, as a listener and player of pibroch, I find the musical effect of its patterns both hypnotic and mysteriously moving; by using them in a new piece I want to draw on their emotional power and intellectual interest, and to explore their potential in new forms. Second, I want to counter classical music's over-reliance on the written page. Playing from memory allows a different, often deeper, kind of engagement and internalization of the music. This piece does not ask for improvisation (though a few details are left to the performers' discretion); like other classical music, it is highly determined, 'composed' music. But because the music is specifically designed so that it can be played from memory more easily than a typical written, 'composed' piece, it seeks to remove the barrier of score and music stand between performers and audience, in hopes of inspiring renewed energy and spontaneity.

Nissim Schaul 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, and writing a lot of music for early instruments because they sound cool.

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. Nissim's music has also appeared on public radio's Studio 360.

About the piece:

On the program tonight, we will hear two of four preludes I recently wrote for harpsichord. The whole work, in its solo form, was conceived to be accessible, both technically and aesthetically, to student harpsichordists. The trio version adds a tiny touch of virtuosity to the mix and features the strings. The first prelude (~2:00) is lively and rhythmically flexible. The finale (~3:00) alternates between a long melody and a repetitive rhythmic figure, and ends in an ever-tightening frenzy.

Composer-Violinist **Matthew Pierce** is celebrated for his new classical scores commissioned by major American ballet companies. His work has been performed around the country and around the world at Covent Garden in London and the Opera Garnier in Paris. Lauded by media and musicians alike, Pierce's scores have been described as "new, tuneful, dancey" (Allen Ullrich, Voice of Dance), "the ideal musical vessel" (Steven Winn, San Francisco Chronicle), and "possibly the best commissioned score in Houston Ballet's history" (Molly Glentzer, Houston Chronicle). Pierce's work has been singled out for such critical distinctions as the 2003 Obie Awards (Village Voice) and the "Best Cultural Event of 2003" for Imaginal Disc (San Francisco Chronicle). He is the conductor of the Matthew Pierce Ensemble, the Gemini Youth Orchestra and the Metropolitan Chamber Symphony of Five Towns.

ABOUT THE COMPOSITIONS

About the piece:

Giggling and Not Getting Up made its premiere at the War Memorial Opera House in 2003 as the first movement to Julia Adam's ballet titled Imaginal Disc. An imaginal disc is the bag of cells that transforms into a butterfly during metamorphosis. Originally commissioned by the San Francisco Ballet, this piece has been newly arranged for Flying Forms. A nod to the Renaissance style, this arrangement marks the first work I've written for the Viola da Gamba, an instrument that has held my fascination since I was introduced to it through the movie "Tous les Matins du Monde.

Peter Winkler is Professor of Music at Stony Brook University. His principal composition teacher was Earl Kim, with whom he studied at Princeton and Harvard Universities. His compositions include both concert works and popular music; many of his pieces involve a synthesis of popular and classical styles. In 2001, he began writing music for period instruments, including his *Partita*, which was premiered by the Stony Brook Baroque Ensemble in 2002. As pianist, he appears with Rhoda Levine's opera improvisation group, "Play it by Ear" and with his wife, violinist Dorothea Cook, in the duo "Silken Rags" who released a CD of original works in 2004.

About the piece:

My *Sarabande-Tombeau* is based on music I wrote shortly after the tragedy of September 11, 2001; (part of my *Partita* for the Stony Brook Baroque Ensemble.) The Sarabande is followed by three *doubles* (variations), one for each of the three instruments. The violin *double*, also from 2001, was a memorial to Stony Brook's beloved violin teacher Mitchell Stern, who had suddenly passed away the previous spring. In the next *double*, written seven years later, the gamba adds its voice to the elegiac song, but with the harpsichord *double* the song falters and disintegrates; all that's left at the end is a stumbling funeral march. It is as though, in the face of the enormity of the suffering in the years since 2001, a *tombeau* is no longer possible; the music has lost its voice.

A 24-year-old native of Richmond, Virginia, **Zachary Wadsworth's** compositions have been performed by the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, the Atlanta Philharmonic Orchestra, the Yale Philharmonia, and the Long Leaf Opera. He was awarded first prize in the 2007 ASCAP / Lotte Lehmann Foundation Art Song Competition and in the Long Leaf Opera One-Act Competition, a Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and two ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composers Awards. Zachary has studied at the Eastman School of Music and Yale University, and he is currently pursuing a DMA at Cornell University. His composition teachers have included Steven Stucky, Martin Bresnick, Ingram Marshall, Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez, Robert Morris, and Syd Hodkinson.

About the piece:

The Muses is a suite of nine short character pieces composed in December of 2007 and dedicated to Flying Forms.

- I. a Sinfonia to Calliope, muse of epic poetry.
- II. a string duet to Erato, muse of erotic poetry.
- III. a harpsichord solo to Thalia, muse of bucolic poetry.
- IV. a motet to Polyhymnia, muse of sacred song.
- V. a Courante to Terpsichore, muse of dance.
- VI. a Recitative and Arietta to Euterpe, muse of lyric poetry.
- VII. a lute solo to Melpomene, muse of tragedy.
- VIII. a duet to Clio, muse of heroic poetry.
- IX. a meditation to Urania, muse of astronomy.

ABOUT THE COMPOSITIONS

Born in London, UK, **Dawn Chambers** has lived in New Mexico since 1981. Several years ago she was asked to write the music for the PBS documentary "Kinaalda', a Navajo Rite of Passage," which started a hitherto undreamed-of addiction to composition. She is completing a PhD in composition from Stony Brook University, where she studied with Sheila Silver, Dan Weymouth and Peter Winkler. While at Stony Brook she won honorable mention in the International Society of Bassists competition for Cante, premiered her Spinstersongs in San Francisco and Manhattan, won the Ackerman award, and was one of the main organizers of the Music for Peace festival, in which some two hundred concerts took place over one weekend worldwide. When not teaching, playing or writing music she enjoys her land in the Datil Mountains and driving to powwows. She is determined to put three hundred thousand miles on her pickup by the end of the year.

About the piece:

The 31-meter brigantine "Mary Celeste" out of New York was discovered in the winter of 1872 drifting empty under full sail in the Azores. She already had a history of disaster; the onboard death of her first captain, a serious collision and a shipwreck. No trace was ever found of her passengers or crew, and she quickly became a symbol of the mysteries of the sea.

My great-uncle and my grandfather, in whose household i was raised, were sailors and full of such stories; the tangled horror of being becalmed in the Sargasso, the Bermuda triangle, pirates and monsters. It's possibly why i live in the New Mexico desert. But i think such stories illustrate the archetype of the "veil of illusion", so i wrote this text, using the fictional spelling of the ship's name that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle popularized:

Uncertain the boat that gets us there.
Flat fool Sargassos foul us down
saltswollen and weeded under a far horizon. We're still
butterball ten year olds sailing the
distance. Shanteys sheet out in the wind's mouth
Anchors jettisoned, we skim
creaking depths oldgreyed
Spliced tendons knot each sound.
Stale futures trim the haunted reefs -
Haul the tops and hide from the captain! -
Each barefoot cabin brat willing
the first hail of solid ground. Then morningfresh
and the scent of sweetwater found
to be just another seaserpent
streaming windward in its pasted glory
We board. It's nothing
an overripe hulk
Scales tarnished under Capricorn

The vocal line skims anchorless above the instruments, whose voices feature trills, clusters, half-steps and similar slippery devices. The overall form is that of a slightly mangled dance suite; Fantasy, Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Toccata, Gavotte, Minuet, Recitative, Jig, Reprise; but all elided and waterstained.