

CUBE circuits

The Latest Buzz from CUBE
Contemporary Chamber Ensemble

Fall 2006

What's Up for Fall

CUBE

In addition to the concerts described in the lead articles:

On **Friday, October 6** CUBE will present a noon-time concert of American Chamber Music at St. Xavier University, McGuire Hall, 3700 West 103rd Street, Chicago, Illinois. Tickets are \$6/\$5, free for SXU students and faculty. CUBists Patricia and Philip Morehead, Caroline Pittman, Christie Miller, and Douglas Brush will perform a concert of works by Poulenc, Morehead, Saylor and Malcolm Arnold.

On **Saturday, October 7** at 3PM Pianoforte Chicago and CUBE will present a piano recital by David Holzman, acclaimed for his performances and recordings of major works of the twentieth century. The concert will take place at PianoForte Chicago, 410 S Michigan Ave, room 825, in Chicago. Mr. Holzman has won acclaim both for
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CUBE @ MCA's Sonic Impact

Read about this exciting event coming up, an article by CUBE's Larry Axelrod. On page 2.

Sonic Impact

Saturday, October 28, 3pm-10pm

Sunday, October 29, 10am-9pm

Tickets: \$15 for the first concert and \$5 for each additional concert on the same day. All other events are free.

CUBE @ Chicago Humanities Festival Peace and War:

Facing Human Conflict

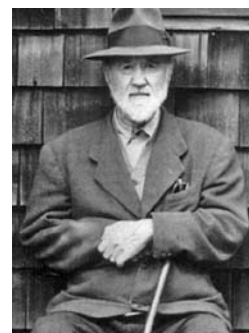
by Janice Misurell-Mitchell

"Searching for Peace in Time of War" will be CUBE's contribution to this year's Chicago Humanities Festival. The ensemble has put together a program that spans a period of almost a hundred years, from Ives' songs during World War I, to the setting of a poem about wars in Europe and the Middle East by Ilya Levinson, to Patricia Morehead's work on a text of Margaret Atwood about the Vietnam War, to Janice Misurell-Mitchell's musical theatre piece about the Iraq wars. Barbara Ann Martin will be CUBE's guest soprano.

The concert will be Sunday, November 12, from 1-2pm in Ganz Hall, 7th floor of Roosevelt University, 430 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago. Tickets are \$10 and are available at the door or through the Chicago Humanities Festival website, www.chfestival.org

Charles Ives' *Three Songs of the War* were written from 1917-1919. The first, "He is There", on a text by the composer for soprano and piano (with optional violin, flute or fife), reflects Ivesian musical imagery: the excitement of the small town marching band playing as young men in uniform leave to fight. Ives used no less than thirteen borrowed tunes, among them "The Battle Cry of Freedom", "Reveille", and "The Star Spangled Banner". The Ives scholar and performer, John Kirkpatrick, in describing Ives's paradoxical nature, said, "Charlie was a passionate pacifist, but he could get fightin' mad about his pacifism." The other two songs are closer to meditations on the ravages of war. "In Flanders Fields" (text by John McCrae) and "Tom Sails Away" (text by Ives) the composer refers to the battlefields in France, again quoting tunes similar to the patriotic ones above, but in a more reflective mood.

"Out of the Depths I Cry" (Psalm 130 is the reference) is for soprano and chamber ensemble by Chicago composer Ilya Levinson on a text by Ruth Gembicki Bragg. The composer says, "In this piece I wanted to give voice to victims of violence. Each act of violence is a personal tragedy; we, as a mass, usually don't hear these victims, separated by thousands of miles of distance, lack of communication devices, passages of time, language barriers to name a few..." The poet says, "Historically, worldwide, men have



Charles Ives



Barbara Ann Martin

controlled governments, economies, arts and sciences, the military and the waging of war, leaving women only their voices to protest the loss of their families, freedoms and peace."

Patricia Morehead's "It's Dangerous to Read Newspapers", for soprano and piano, is based on the poem of the same name by fellow Canadian, Margaret Atwood. Morehead says that the poem "struck a strong chord for me... One is afraid to know the news these
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What's Up for Fall

CUBE (cont. from page 1)

his recitals and his recordings concentrating on modern keyboard masterworks. He has premiered hundreds of works by composers from around the globe and has made first recordings of many of them. Born in New York, Mr. Holzman studied with Paul Jacobs at the Mannes School and with Nadia Reisenberg at Queens College. Mr. Holzman will play works by Shapey, Wolpe, and Sessions.

CUBE is delighted to take part in a collaborative series presented by PianoForte Chicago and WFMT. The Friday Fazioli Salon Series features a wide variety of artists performing on the outstanding Fazioli piano. On **November 24** at 12:15 PM CUBE will present a program of music for one and two pianos, including works by Patricia Morehead, Sebastian Huydts and Witold Lutoslawski, with pianists Jeffrey Jacob, Sebastian Huydts, and Philip Morehead. The concert will be broadcast live on WFMT 98.7. For more information call PianoForte Chicago at (312) 291-0000. ■



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CUBE
600 S. Dearborn St. #2016, Chicago, IL 60605
Voice 312/554-1133; Fax 312/803-2186
Email: cube@cubeensemble.com

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<http://www.cubeensemble.com>

Editors: Janice Misurell-Mitchell and Larry Axelrod
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CUBE's Sonic Impact @ MCA

by Larry Axelrod
CUBE, along with almost twenty of Chicago's new music organizations, will be participating in *Sonic Impact*, a weekend-long new music marathon at the Museum of Contemporary Art that has been created to compliment the exhibition, *Massive Change*. Scheduled for October 28 and 29, hour-long programs in both the theater and an upstairs gallery will feature every kind of newly-written concert music. Mark Anthony Turnage, Chicago Symphony Orchestra Composer in Residence, will be an honored guest.

CUBE's program will be at 5 PM on Sunday, October 29 in the theater. The Tetras Quartet and soprano Sharon Quattrin will perform *Triptych* by Patricia Morehead. The quartet will also perform *Rituals 4a and 4b* by Canadian/South African composer Bongani Ndodana. CUBE performers Janice Misurell-Mitchell, voice/flute and Dane Richeson, percussion will perform Misurell-Mitchell's *Rush Life Rush*.

Bongani Ndodana says of his works, "The two string quartets are part of my chamber music cycle, *Rituals For Forgotten Faces*. The cycle was inspired by things that went on in South Africa that people had to do in the 90s after the fall of apartheid, whether it was acknowledging the sins of the past, reconciling with their past or their present." He says that he thinks of this as very earthy African music.

Patricia Morehead describes her work: "*Triptych* is a setting of poems by three poets very close to my heart—my friend, John Shreffler, and my two sons, James and Ian Morehead. Written for soprano Maria Tegzes, the songs explore three different facets of my compositional activity. 'Night Thoughts' is an abstract, atonal movement which tries to capture the distorted and

disjointed dream state of the restless interface between consciousness and sleep. 'Sipping tea in Samarkand' is a nostalgic poem that tries to evoke the feeling of distant and exotic lands by means of a more modal setting. 'Brass Rail Blues' is an urban poem set to capture the feeling of an old Chicago blues.

Janice Misurell Mitchell's *Rush Life Rush* is about Jackson Pollock and the transformation of the painter from a vibrant figure in the art world to an icon. The work derives its inspiration from a painting by Jackson Pollack, *Monument Dead Monument*, *Rush Life Rush*, showing Pollock creating one of his famed splatter paintings. Using a description of the painting by art theorist WJT Mitchell, the composer has created music based on ideas from the text, quotes by Pollock and the shape of his gestures in painting. The piece uses voice/flute, mallet percussion, gongs, and assorted art implements.

Sharon Quattrin has brought her beautiful soprano to many CUBE concerts in the past. Her performances last season of Ralph Shapey's *O Jerusalem* on the radio and in concert were remarkable. The Tetras String Quartet played wonderfully on CUBE's concert at the Lutheran Theological Seminary last fall. The quartet was founded in 2005 by four Juilliard students seeking to explore the boundaries of contemporary music. The string quartet provides compelling performances of works in a variety of styles and genres composed from the 20th century to the present. Their performances place contemporary music within a broad spectrum of classical music by linking the traditions of the past with the music of the future and today.

Larry Axelrod will also have one short work, *Love's Start*, presented on

the Chicago Composers' Consortium's concert at noon on Sunday in the gallery. Pinotage will be the featured performers.

CUBE will also be involved in a program called Making Art Sound, a fun interactive event for children where artwork created on the spot will then be improvised musically. This event will take place on Sunday, October 29 at 3pm in the Kaplan Room, outside the auditorium on the first floor.

We hope that many of you will attend this amazing weekend of music. This collaborative effort among all off Chicago's new music organizations is unique in the nation and will be filled with many memorable performances. ■

Facing Human Conflict

(cont. from page 2)

days and this setting deals with my own personal dread of coming to terms with our current reality." The poet and composer contrast the ideas of childhood innocence and adult awareness of the horrors of war; Atwood cites specifically the war in Vietnam, as seen in the daily newspapers.

Janice Misurell-Mitchell's musical theatre piece for voice/flute and percussion, *After the History*, is based on the poetry of former Chicago poet, John Shreffler. Taking its imagery from Brecht's "The Ballad of the Dead Soldier", the poem is a series of geometric variations on the subject of war without end. Misurell-Mitchell's piece views war from many different points of view, from the serious to the comic, the sincere to the ironic. The work was inspired by the War in the Persian Gulf (1991), but it continues to resonate during this period of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. ■

Roving CUBIST: RANDSPIELE XIV



**Carolina Eyck playing
the Theramin**



Katia Guedes



Rico Gubler

by Janice Misurell-Mitchell

The Randspiele Festival of contemporary music, held annually in the town of Zepernick on the outskirts of Berlin, is now in its 14th year. “Randspiele”, meaning “playing on the edge,” presents cutting edge new music and runs for four days, with three concerts a day. The Festival features pieces for small ensembles written by composers from northern Europe and the US, giving special attention to composers who spent much of their careers in East Germany. It also highlights the compositions and performances of musicians in their 20s and 30s.

The Festival is the creation of composer Helmut Zapf and his wife Karin, a choral conductor. The Zapfs organize the Festival, do all the fundraising and programming and perform as well. There are two venues: Sankte Annen Kirche (St. Ann’s Church) and its nearby parish house, which are open to audiences of about seventy people each night. During each evening the venues alternate—while one is being setup the other hosts a concert. In between concerts there is Greek food, desserts, beer and wine, tables outside and one or two sound installations. Many of the audience members go to the Festival on an annual basis,

This year’s festival featured several remarkable performers and ensembles. The Sonar Quartet, a string quartet, performed works by Helmut Lachenman (dean of German composers, performed in Chicago a few years ago by Northwestern University ensembles at the MCA and on campus) and Georg Katzer, a well-respected composer who had studied with Hanns Eisler, as well as several pieces by younger composers for string quartet and saxophone. Rico

Gubler, a young saxophone player, also performed intriguing solo works for alto and tenor saxophone, and ended the concert with a riotous performance piece by Dieter Schnebel called *Nostalgie* where he conducted three different imaginary ensembles, employing typical but highly exaggerated conducting gestures, with utmost seriousness.

A vocal ensemble, Maulwerkens (“mouthworkers”) put on a dazzling display of a cappella works for voice by the German composer Michael Hirsch and American composer Emmett Williams, formerly of Fluxus, who has lived a large part of his professional life in Berlin.

Eva Zöllner, an accordion player from Denmark, and Kristján Sigurleifsson, a bassist from Iceland, presented new music for their duo at the opening of the Festival. Pieces using accordion (both sides had buttons—there were no keys) often dealt with abstract sounds, varied tone combinations, tapping on the instrument and keys, and producing a variety of air rushes. The duo has performed recently in Seattle and is interested in coming to Chicago.

The most unusual soloist was nineteen-year old Carolina Eyck (www.carolina-eyck.de), who is a virtuoso on the Theramin. She was featured in *du silence*, a work for soprano, speaker, Theramin and piano by Lothar Voigtländer. Based on a text collage of poetry by Eugène Guillevic (French, twentieth century) the piece created subtle lines between the voice and Theramin as the words described different states of silence.

The exciting Brazilian soprano, Katia Guedes performed in *Liebeslieder*, a concert with eight world premieres of pieces based on works or ideas of

Bertolt Brecht, in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of his death. The project is a joint creation of Ensemble Junge-Musik and CUBE. Composers known to CUBE audiences were John Eaton, Larry Axelrod, Anna Rubin, Helmut Zapf and Janice Misurell-Mitchell.

Four of the Brecht pieces used soprano, two of them with soprano and electronics. Zapf’s piece was a constructed as a welcome, both to the audience and in the words of Brecht: “Hallo, wir wollen mit Amerika sprechen.” (Hello, we want to speak with America.) John Eaton’s work, for soprano and ensemble, was full of colorful textures using microtonality, with expressive, angular vocal lines. Larry Axelrod’s *Drei Ostinati* were three songs without words, elegantly evoking the images of their related Brechtian poems. Anna Rubin’s *Tschindrara*, for soprano and electronics, was based on Brecht’s *The Ballad of the Dead Soldier*, and it used the soprano voice against a male speaker and electronics very powerfully. My own work, *Alles wandelt sich*, used words in German and English spoken by all the performers and creating a texture of voices and instruments, within a larger dialog about the possibility/impossibility of humans being able to bring about positive change.

All eight works will be given their American premieres by CUBE next May at the University of Chicago under the auspices of the Renaissance Society, with Sharon Quattrin as the soprano soloist. The concert will compliment the Society’s exhibition of work by German artist Katarina Grosse. Details on the event will appear in the next issue of *Circuits*. ■

CUBE 19th Season 2006-2007

Fall Concerts in a Nutshell

"American Chamber Music", Friday, October 6, 12 noon

McGuire Hall, St. Xavier University, 3700 W. 103rd St., Chicago. Tickets: \$6, \$5. Music by Poulenc, Morehead, Saylor, Rodney Sharman, and Malcolm Arnold.

"Extreme Piano", Saturday, October 7, 3 PM

PianoForte Chicago, Room 825, 410 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago. Tickets: \$10. Celebrated contemporary music pianist David Holzman performs works by Sessions, Shapey and Wolpe.

CUBE at the MCA, Sunday, October 29, 5 PM

Theater, Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 E. Chicago Ave., Chicago. Part of the MCA and New Music Chicago program "Sonic Impact." Tickets for theater events are \$15 for the first event, \$5 for each additional event on the same day. CUBE performs works by Bongani Ndodana, Janice Misurell-Mitchell and Patricia Morehead. Guest artists: Sharon Quattrin, soprano; Tetras String Quartet.

CUBE at the Chicago Humanities Festival

Sunday, November 12, 1 PM

Ganz Hall, Roosevelt University, 430 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago. Tickets: \$10. Music of Ives, Levinson, Misurell-Mitchell, and Morehead. Guest artist: Barbara Ann Martin.

CUBE live on WFMT 98.7, Friday, November 24, 12:15 PM

PianoForte Chicago, Room 825, 410 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago. Tickets: \$10. Works by Sebastian Huydts, Patricia Morehead, and Witold Lutoslawski. With pianists Jeffrey Jacob, Sebastian Huydts and Philip Morehead.

See articles in this issue for further information on these concerts.



CUBE

600 S. Dearborn St.—suite 2016
Chicago, IL 60605-1835