

Coming Soon!

CUBE's Fall Concerts

■ Músicas Latinas:

Music of Latin-American
Women Composers

Sunday, November 18, 2007, 3PM
Gottlieb Hall, Merit School of Music
38 S. Peoria St., Chicago

■ ICE-CUBE

Sunday, December 9, 2007, 3PM
Gottlieb Hall, Merit School of Music
38 S. Peoria St., Chicago

CUBE's

Lineup for Fall

by Patricia and Philip Morehead

Músicas Latinas

Sunday, November 18, 2007, 3PM
Merit School of Music

CUBE has been invited to participate in the 2007 Fall Festival of Latin American New Music in collaboration with the International Latino Cultural Center and the MAVerick Ensemble. CUBE is one of five new music ensembles that has been asked to participate in the festival.

The mission of the International Latino Cultural Center is to bring to the Chicago Metro area the tremendous flavors and multifaceted experiences of the Latino culture, both from within the U.S. itself, and from each of the various Latin American countries.

The CUBE/MAVerick collaboration will feature the music of Latin American women composers from six different Latin American countries: Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Mexico, Uruguay and

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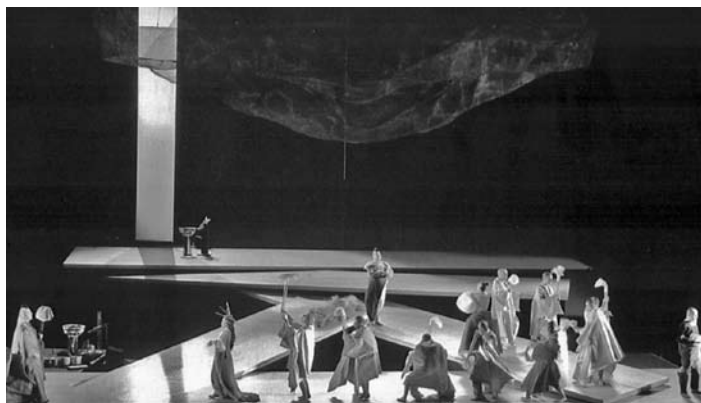
CUBE@Musicircus

Hear CUBE at "John Cage's **Musicircus**," a large-scale event from Chicago Composers Forum. Sunday afternoon, October 7, Chicago Cultural Center, 78 East Washington St. For more details, check: <http://musicircus.chicagocomposers.org/>

CUBE circuits

The Latest Buzz from CUBE
Contemporary Chamber Ensemble

Fall 2007



Made in China (even at the opera!)

by Lawrence Axelrod

As some of you know, I have the great pleasure each summer of teaching a week-long course in opera appreciation at Ghost Ranch Santa Fe. I teach the class each morning about what they will hear that evening. It is always a fun and rewarding time.

The new opera this year was Tan Dun's *Tea: a mirror of soul*. Tan Dun came to the consciousness of most people for the music of the movie *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. The original production of this opera was a joint venture between The Netherlands Opera and Suntory Hall in Tokyo in 2002. That original production is on a DVD and features a spare, ritualistic production with wild avant-garde costumes.

The production in Santa Fe, the American premiere of the opera, was conceived quite differently. The story concerns a Japanese prince who travels to China, falls in love with a princess, is confronted by her very jealous brother and goes on a quest for the *Book of Tea*. In Santa Fe, though the whole production team was Japanese, the effect was that of Chinese opulence. Bright colors, traditional costumes and much movement were key. The most stunning effect was a huge box that sat on stage in the first act (think room-sized version of the Chinese wooden boxes you see in the gift store). Its open latticework front in the shape of a Chinese character first served as a true shadow box for figures behind the screen. Then, the box rotated and opened, revealing a bright peony design with riser for playing space.

Kelly Kaduce sang the Princess Lan and Haijing Fu, the only singer from the original cast, sang Seikyo, the Japanese prince turned monk. Roger

Honeywell was Princess Lan's brother and Nancy Maultsby sang dual roles, as did Christian van Horn. Though Haijing Fu's voice showed significant wear in contrast to the four year old DVD, all the singers acquitted themselves well with Dun's challenging vocal writing, often requiring quasi-Asian effects. (In contrast, the orchestra parts, according to a friend in the pit, were not at all difficult.)

The music was relatively easy on the ears, Asian-influenced much of the times, now inspired by Stravinskian rhythm, now by minimalist textures. The most striking part of the music was the intersection of sound and actual notes. Tan Dun used large bowls of water, crinkling paper, hand-held stones, ceramic pots and long hanging sheets of paper to create a very striking sonic soundscape. Their visual presentation was highlighted with lighting and stage placement. Even the orchestra participated by humming, harmonic-style singing and rhythmic loud page-turning.

Perhaps the weakest part of the opera was its libretto. Intentionally telegraphic in style, the words often betrayed an awkwardness that I felt came from the fact that two non-native English speakers wrote them. Word choice and word emphasis in the vocal lines was often a bit odd. In addition, there was miscalculation of what might be suggestive and metaphoric vs. over the top and silly. One extended tea-related metaphor, speaking of "Oolong rising, Jasmine opening,

(continued on page 3)

Shout & Streetwise: OPERA IN LONDON

by Janice Misurell-Mitchell
This summer while in London I attended a most unusual theatrical concert, created by composer Orlando Gough of the vocal ensemble Shout and members of Streetwise Opera, an ensemble of homeless and formerly homeless people. The result was "*Critical Mass*", a performance event that used spoken texts on social and political issues intertwined with folk songs, resistance songs, and children's songs from around the world. The venue was the Almeida Theatre, known for its cutting edge performances.

An ensemble of about sixty people appeared onstage, dressed in tailored outfits that were reminiscent of business suits, carrying briefcases and taking their places in a choral arrangement, sitting on wooden stools and boxes. The briefcases also were used as sound sources, being rapped on and slammed onto surfaces, while other non-vocal sound sources included clapping, stomping and shuffling. Vocally the group was very mixed—styles included operatic, the musical, gospel, folk and spoken word, and there was a wide range of texture, from solo,

to small ensemble, to choral. Highly synchronized movement was used to dramatize various texts, and players assumed a variety of roles, from being supported by the group to being ostracized.

The "libretto" included spoken texts on social and political issues, usually from liberal politicians, writers such as George Orwell, and a scattering from talk shows and from demagogues such as Adolph Hitler. The sung texts were generally either folksongs that the singers had remembered from childhood, or labor and resistance songs sung during the first half of the twentieth century; texts were in their original languages, and Orlando Gough made a cappella arrangements of them.

The program describes the performance in the following manner:

"*Critical Mass* is about the emotional, playful, and subversive power of folk songs and the seductive music of political rhetoric. It is also about the individual within the crowd, getting swept away, getting whipped up, standing out, standing up, . . . fighting apathy, fighting to be heard, longing and belonging."

Some of the songs presented were "Take this Hammer", the African American work song; "Bella Ciao", an Italian partisan song from the second World War; "Vai Dudole", a Bulgarian song about the crops needing rain. There were many quotes from politicians about war, particularly about the war in Iraq, and one of the most heavily ironic songs was the famous ". . . there are known knowns. . . there are known unknowns. . ." etc. from former

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, performed in the most somber canon, with the singers snaking slowly around the stage. As you might expect, this received a lot of applause.

Notes from the program on the performing ensembles—

"The Shout was formed in 1998 by the composers Orlando Gough and Richard Chew. The singers come from very varied backgrounds—gospel, jazz, blues, contemporary classical, opera, early music—and include several accomplished improvisers. It has been called a 'vocal big band', a 'club choir', a 'vocal Stomp', a 'dangerous choir', a 'choir of Babel', a 'choral phenomenon'. It is, we hope, all of these things."

"In just five years Streetwise has grown into a national charity with

(continued on page 3)

CUBE's Fall Concerts (continued from page 1)

Venezuela. The free concert will take place in November in the acoustically wonderful Merit Music School Gottlieb Concert Hall on Sunday, November 18, 2007 at 3PM.

For this program CUBE has commissioned the young award-winning Brazilian composer Clarice Assad, now living in New York City. Her work is for piccolo, flute, clarinet, oboe, piano and percussion. The program also offers three charming piano works by the remarkable Chiquinha Gonzaga (1847-1935) — composer, pianist, and conductor — whose fascinating life story inspired a Brazilian miniseries in the late 1990s. Gonzaga composed over 70 stage works, one of which received over 1500 performances. Chiquinha was the first woman to conduct in Brazil.

Argentina is represented by Marcela Pavia, with *Solentiname*, a colorful

work for guitar and clarinet. From Mexico, *Epitafios y otras muertes*, a song cycle by Ana Lara, written for the Ravinia Festival in 2005, and *Metamorfosis* for guitar by Hilda Paredes. From Venezuelan composer Adina Izarra two miniatures in a medieval style for clarinet and piano.

Tania León, well-known composer from Cuba now residing in the US, is represented by her *A la Par* for piano and percussion, and Uruguayan composer Graciela Paraskevaïdis's *libres en el sonido presos en el sonido* for flute, clarinet, violin, cello and piano completes the program.

Performers include guest artists baritone Levi Hernandez, a graduate of the Lyric Opera Ryan Center, pianists Sebastian Huydts and Brent Funderburk, and Capoeira Chicago with Sharon Gopfert; CUBEists Janice

Misurell-Mitchell, Caroline Pittman, Patricia Morehead, Christie Miller, Douglas Brush, Dane Richeson, and Philip Morehead, and MAverick Ensemble members Andrea DiOrio, James Baur, Elizabeth Brausa Brathwaite, and William Jason Raynovich.

ICE-CUBE

On Sunday, December 9, 2007, at 3PM at the Merit School of Music, CUBE and ICE (International Contemporary Ensemble) collaborate in an exciting and varied program featuring the Chicago premier of *Iridule* by noted American composer Charles Wuorinen. The Wuorinen composition for oboe with chamber ensemble was funded in part by the Argosy Foundation in a joint commissioning project undertaken by six new music groups from across the United States. The new work will be performed by CUBE oboist Patricia Morehead.

In addition the program will feature

(continued on page 3)



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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>

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In the Mideast: Chicago Musical Connections

by Janice Misurell-Mitchell

In May, as part of a visit to Israel and Palestine I spent some time in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and the West Bank. My visit in the West Bank was to the town of Ramallah, where I was invited to present some of my flute music and contemporary techniques to a group of student flutists at the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music.

Some of our readers might remember the work of Daniel Barenboim and the late scholar, Edward Said in the establishment of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, which has musicians, ages 14 to 25, from Israel, the Palestinian territories, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, and Jordan. The organization was founded as a workshop in 1999 and has given numerous performances in Europe and the US, including Chicago. It takes its name from a poem by Goethe:

CUBE's Fall Concerts

(continued from page 1)

two world premieres by Chicago composers: Sebastian Huydts offers a new work for violin and piano, and Patricia Morehead premieres *Layers of Angles*, *The Cycle of Life* for flute, guitar and string trio, dedicated to Claire Chase of ICE.

Sebastian Huydts will perform *Adagissimo* for solo piano by Chicago composer Howard Sandroff. The concert also includes an arrangement of *Dmaathen* by Iannis Xanakis for flute and marimba and *Without Hands* for solo marimba by Keith Horn.

Featured guest performers are members of the ICE Ensemble, along with Sebastian Huydts, piano, and Vance Okraszewski, percussion. Tickets are \$20, \$10 for seniors and \$5 for students, available at the door. ■

West-Eastern Divan

*Who the song would understand,
Needs must seek the song's own land.
Who the minstrel understand,
Needs must seek the minstrel's land.*

—(trans. Bowring)

The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music, an affiliate of Birzeit University, was founded in 1993; it has branches in Ramallah, Jerusalem and Bethlehem, with over 600 students in all three. Approximately sixty percent of the music taught and performed is from Western repertoire and the remainder is from Arabic traditions, with additional classes in jazz and world music. The program prepares the students in areas of music theory as well; upon completion of the three levels of the program they will be qualified to pursue music education at any university or music academy of their choice. There is a joint orchestra made up of students from all three branches. Many of the faculty come from Europe, and funding for new instruments is coming from European countries as well.

At the suggestion of flutist Heather Bursheh (formerly of the UK), Deputy Director for Academic Affairs, I gave a workshop to about ten students, aged 9 to 13, on extended techniques, improvisation and composing. Much of what I played was new to them, and after the initial giggles at my singing and playing, many of them succeeded in creating the basic sounds. The students are being taught this year by American flutist Rhonda Larsen, who is well known to Chicago flutists—she performed in the Chicago Flute Club Flute Fair this past March. The visit proved to be illuminating for me as well as the students, and I look forward to returning. The world is growing smaller.

I also presented some music to an organization of Israeli women com-

posers in Tel Aviv. They hold monthly meetings at the home of Noa Blass, a composer, educator, pianist and percussionist, whose array of instruments provides an inspiring setting for the meetings. Among the many women there was Anat Pick a very inventive vocal artist who works in the area of sound poetry; Chen Wagner, president of the group; and Kiki Keren-Huss, my primary contact, a composer who works with feminist themes and creates concerts involving Israeli and Palestinian musicians and composers with former Chicagoan Amnon Wolman (who lives in Israel for part of each year).

With musicologist Ruth HaCohen, my host, who teaches at Hebrew University, I visited the Citadel, which houses the Tower of David Museum. The Citadel, a medieval fortress, has a temporary exhibition of outdoor sound sculptures by Roy Roth and Yaal Tevet, who built an entire robotic orchestra of huge flutes, a glass bells sculpture, a harp, thirty-foot high double basses, all of which were lit in colored lights in the evening and which produced a symphony of sorts, with each set of instruments featured alone and together. The style was very accessible, and there was a sense of celebration. The music for the installation was composed by Didi Fire in collaboration with Binya Rechtes. You can hear it and see all the sculptures at <http://www.roth-tevet.com/>. In the coming year Professor HaCohen will be working on another sound project which will feature music of all periods representing the history of Jerusalem, to be presented live and in recordings in the alcoves of the Museum.

I hope to travel back to both sides of the wall again in the coming years. ■



Made in China

(cont. from page 1)

Dragon pushing" sent two of my participants into fits of laughter.

Even with this pervasive weakness, the opera was a fulfilling theatrical experience. It garnered much more positive acclaim than Tan Dun's latest operatic effort, *The First Emperor*, which premiered at the Metropolitan Opera in New York last season. Everything in *Tea* worked together as a piece. My class and I felt that we had seen something truly worthwhile and engaging. ■

OPERA IN LONDON

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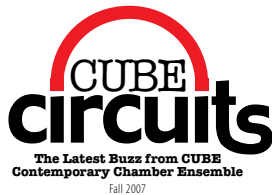
bases across the country and in Boston, USA working with 600 people who have experienced homelessness per year. We work in parallel with homeless agencies with a vision that arts interventions can and should be an integral part of the overall support of people who have experienced homelessness. We do this by running two programmes: a Workshop Programme . . . involving regular singing/acting sessions in homeless centres of all musical styles, performances, theatre trips, and work placements in arts organizations; and annual productions which give our performers the chance to star alongside some of the top professionals in the field."

A "Bravo!" from this CUBEist for an exciting and moving performance. ■

CUBE 20th Season 2007-2008

Concerts in a Nutshell

- **Músicas Latinas:
Music of Latin-American Women Composers**
Sunday, November 18, 2007, 3PM
Gottlieb Hall, Merit School of Music, 38 S. Peoria St., Chicago
- **ICE-CUBE**
Sunday, December 9, 2007, 3PM
Gottlieb Hall, Merit School of Music, 38 S. Peoria St., Chicago
- **Sounding the Sacred IV**
Sunday, February 3, 2008, 4PM
Augustana Chapel, Lutheran School of Theology, 1100 E. 55th St., Chicago
- **Commonwealth Connections:
CUBE Live on WFMT, 98.7FM**
Monday, February 4, 2008, 8 PM
- **Viola Fantasy**
Friday, March 28, 2008, 3PM
Gottlieb Hall, Merit School of Music, 38 S. Peoria St., Chicago
- **Groovin' High, Groovin' Low**
Sunday, May 11, 2008, 8PM
Ganz Hall, Roosevelt University, 430 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago



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