

CUBE circuits

The Latest Buzz from CUBE
Contemporary Chamber Ensemble

Winter–Spring 2007



Mark your calendars for CUBE!

“Sounding the Sacred III”

Sunday, February 18, at 4:00 PM
Augustana Chapel
Lutheran School of Theology
1100 E. 55th St.
Chicago

Program

- Beverly Grigsby, *Fragments from Augustine the Saint* for tenor, oboe/English horn, harp, percussion
- Victoria Bond, *Sacred Sisters* for violin and harp
- Judith Shatin, *Fasting Heart* for solo flute
- Ruth Lomon, *Ceremonial Masks* for solo piano

Guest performers: Kenneth Gayle, tenor; Paul Hurst, harp; David Volfe, violin; Vance Okraszewski, percussion

Special free preview performance of

Fragments from Augustine the Saint and selected works for solo harp, Saturday, February 17, 2007, at 1pm, Columbia College Concert Hall, 1014 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago

Women and Minorities in the VPO

By William Osborne

DECEMBER 12, 2006 As is now well-known, the Vienna State Opera Orchestra/Vienna Philharmonic nominally ended its long tradition of excluding women on February 27, 1997. These changes were made one day before the orchestra traveled to Carnegie Hall, where it was facing large protests by the International Alliance for Women in Music, The National Organization of Women, and a great deal of negative negative press coverage. The orchestra began by allowing Anna Lelkes—their woman harpist who had already performed with them in an “associate status” for 26 years—to become an official member of the Vienna Philharmonic. Ms. Lelkes was forced into retirement four years later, even though she wanted to continue working.

There has been no change in the male/female ratios in the Vienna Philharmonic in the last ten years. They still have only one woman member. And she is still a harpist, Charlotte Balzerit. And the orchestra’s opera formation has fared little better. The m/f ratio for the Vienna Philharmonic is 136 to 1. The m/f ratio for regular contracts in the Vienna State Opera Orchestra is 141 to 4.

Women are not the only people who face exclusion in the Vienna State Opera Orchestra/Vienna Philharmonic. The ensemble’s traditions also include the exclusion of visible members of

racial minorities—though here too the orchestra is at least nominally addressing these practices. The policy of whites-only has been directed mostly toward Asians, since many study in Vienna where they have reached the highest professional standards. In the last ten years, the orchestra has hired its first two people of color, but one of them was fired, the tubist Yasuto Sugiyama. Mr. Sugiyama is a world-class musician who soon afterwards won the tuba position in the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra. This leaves serious questions about why he was fired in Vienna.

Seiji Ozawa is the General Music Director of the Vienna State Opera, but the conductors there are appointed by the house’s administration, not the orchestra. The Vienna Philharmonic is a private enterprise the musicians run on the side. (Ozawa has been bedridden in Japan for months fighting serious illness, so he has little or no knowledge of the situation.)

It should be mentioned that a screen is used during the orchestra’s auditions, but that it is removed during the last round. The ensemble believes it is important to see what musicians look like while they play. The visual criteria are very undefined.

The motives for these rather generalized criticisms might deserve closer examination. In an interview in 1996 with the West German State

Radio, the orchestra’s principal flutist, Dieter Flury, strongly defended the Vienna Philharmonic’s exclusion of women and people of color (these sentiments have been echoed by many of the string players as well). “From the beginning we have spoken of the special Viennese qualities, of the way music is made here. The way we make music here is not only a technical ability, but also something that has a lot to do with the soul. The soul does not let itself be separated from the cultural roots that we have here in central Europe.”

In November, 2006, a journalist working for *Der Spiegel* and a journalist working for a very large daily in Helsinki, contacted me because they were planning articles about women in orchestras. Both journalists began interviewing musicians and administrators in the Vienna State Opera. (Their stories have not yet appeared.)

NOTE

Composer William Osborne lives in Germany with his spouse, virtuosic trombonist Abbie Conant (both were featured on a CUBE concert in 2000.) He and Ms. Conant founded The Wasteland Company in 1984 to explore women’s roles in music theatre; they tour regularly in the US and Europe.

In 2000 MSNBC published a major article about his work on their new website, “Taking On the Vienna Philharmonic.” <http://www.osborne-conant.org/index.html>

The full-length article printed here and many others appear on their website: <http://www.osborne-conant.org/index.html>

CUBE Annual Spring Festival 2007

Sounding the Sacred

by Philip Morehead



Kenneth Gayle

On February 18 at the Lutheran School of Theology CUBE will present a concert of works by women composers, featuring a semi-staged performance of *Fragments from Augustine the Saint*, a monodrama by California composer Beverly Grigsby based on the writings of St. Augustine, with guest artists Kenneth Gayle, tenor, Paul Hurst, harp, and Vance Okraszewski, percussion. The text of the work is taken as fragments from nine major writings of the saint. The instrumentation employs the ancient doctrine of the trifold nature of man and, in the classic Greek tradition, employs the oboe, harp and percussion as secular, sacred and emotional forces (the body, the soul and the mind). The work will be conducted by Philip Morehead.



Paul Hurst

The program will also offer Ruth Lomon's *Ceremonial Masks* for solo piano, played by Lawrence Axelrod; Judith Shatin's *Fasting Heart* for solo flute, played by Janice Misurell-Mitchell; and



Beverly Grigsby

Victoria Bond's *Sacred Sisters* for harp and violin, played by guest artists Paul Hurst and David Volfe.

Grigsby's monodrama will have an open preview performance, along with solo harp works, in the Columbia College Concert Hall on Saturday, February 17, at 1PM. Admission to this performance is free.

Silk Road & Beyond

by Janice Misurell-Mitchell



Betti Xiang

On Monday, March 26 from 8:00–10:00pm on WFMT, 98.7 FM, CUBE will perform music from countries that

were part of the Silk Road and those beyond the famed route, including new works inspired by the theme of interconnections of East and West.

The program features *Moments of the East* for solo oboe by Agnes Bashir, an Iraqi composer and pianist living in Jordan, and a work for piano and electronics by Erdem Helvacoglu, an award-winning electronic music composer from Istanbul. An example of music based on relationships between the Eastern aesthetic and the Western is *Mandala #2* for solo piano by Lawrence Axelrod, which takes its name from the sacred circular artwork found throughout the Buddhist and Hindu worlds; the piece uses the image of concentric circles of symbols and colors as a basis for its construction. Bruce Saylor's *In Imitation of Ancient Songs* for erhu, flute, clarinet, and piano employs Western style writing in such a way as to evoke the scales and timbres of the East, with a virtuosic erhu part

for Betty Xiang, guest performer. Ms. Xiang will also perform Bruce Saylor's work for solo erhu, *Whispers*. Doug Brush will be premiering a new work, *Poem for Hafiz*, for reed flute, oud, cello and percussion. The work was created from his travels in India last year; the piece evokes music of "sama'i," classical music of Arabic origins, and elements of Indian music—thus moving along the Silk Road from West to East. *Tenderness of Cranes*, by Shirish Korde is based on the style of music of the Japanese shakuhachi, a bamboo flute, in its treatment of breath, rhythm, and elastic time. The composer is an Indian born in Uganda. Taiwanese composer Chihchun Chi-sun Lee will be represented by her work for flute and cello, *Politics: Struggles of Civility*; the piece references charges of election fraud in 2004 between the formerly dominant Chinese Nationalist party and the current party in power, the Democratic Progressive Party.

There will be interviews with the composers, stories of contemporary travel along the Silk Road and CUBist musical commentary.

High Winds of CUBE

by Patricia Morehead

This free program, presented in the Columbia College Concert Hall on March 27 at 12:30pm, features the high winds of CUBE—flutes, oboe, clarinet, and electronics—in the music of Mary Gardiner, Julian Harvey, Thea Musgrave and Ramon Zupko. Julian Harvey's new work *Reflecting* for two flutes will be premiered.

Point Counterpoint

by Patricia Morehead

On March 30 in the Columbia College Concert Hall CUBE will premiere Joe Cerqua's *Point* for flute, oboe, cello, bass clarinet and piano in collaboration with dancers from the Cerqua-Rivera Dance Theater, commissioned by CUBE. Other works on the program are a work for piano and electronics by Timothy Edwards, recent music by Erdem Helvacoglu, Chihchun Chi-Sun Lee, and Witold Lutoslawski, and Patricia Morehead's *The Handmaid's Tale* for two pianos based on the Margaret Atwood book of the same name.

CUBE Goes for Brecht

by Janice Misurell-Mitchell

"CUBE Goes for Brecht" will take place on Thursday, May 3, 2007 at 8:00pm in Fulton Recital Hall, Goodspeed



Sharon Quattrin

Hall, 1010 East 59th Street at the University of Chicago. The concert is co-sponsored by the Renaissance Society, Germanic Studies and the

Department of Music, University of Chicago and the Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation. Admission is free and open to the public. A reception at the Renaissance Society, also on campus, follows the concert.

The concert features eight North American premieres of the works written for the Brecht project that was created jointly by CUBE and Ensemble Junge-Musik in Berlin.

Readers may refer to the concert description in the Fall, 2006 issue of *Circuits* (www.cubeensemble.com/Circuits_Fall06web.pdf) which discussed the pieces, written in honor



Helmut Zapf

of the fiftieth anniversary of Brecht's death in 1956. Included on the May concert will be music by four American composers and four German composers: Lawrence Axelrod, John Eaton, Janice Misurell-Mitchell and Anna Rubin, from the US, and Johannes Hildebrandt, Ellen Hünigen, Sebastian Stier and Helmut Zapf, from Germany. Sharon Quattrin, will be the guest soprano, and Helmut Zapf the guest conductor, in addition to members of CUBE.

The compositions all use texts or ideas of Brecht: four of them are for soprano with instruments or electronics, three are instrumental, and one requires that the instrumentalists speak as well as play. Some of the writings used are: *Sang der Maschinen*, "Der Brennende Baum" "Everything Changes", and "The Legend of the Dead Soldier".

The concert will complement the Renaissance Society's exhibition of work by German artist Katarina Grosse (<http://renaissancesociety.org/site/Exhibitions>).

American Songbook IV

by Philip Morehead
On May 20, in the Merit School of Music's beautiful new Gottlieb Hall, 38 S. Peoria St., Chicago, at 3pm, CUBE will present the fourth instalment of its popular "American Songbook" series, showcasing important works by American composers for the voice. Outstanding mezzo-soprano Julia Bentley, who inaugurated the series, returns this year with pianist Philip Morehead and others to perform an exciting and demanding

program of recent vocal and instrumental works.

The program will include Laura Schwendinger's colorful setting of Sylvia Plath's poem *Lady Lazarus* (2005) for mezzo-soprano, flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano, and percussion; *Night of Stars* (1999) by CUBE's Lawrence Axelrod for mezzo-soprano and piano; *Fenton Songs* (1997) by Charles Wuorinen, settings of four poems by British poet James Fenton for voice, violin, cello, and piano; *Letters Found Near a Suicide* (1964) by Earl Kim on poetry by African-American poet Frank Horne; and *Statuesque* (2005) by Jake Heggie for voice, flute, alto sax, clarinet, violin, cello, bass, and piano, written for Joyce Castle. The program will also premiere a new work for ensemble by Patricia Morehead.

Schwendinger is Associate Pro-

fessor of Composition at the University of Wisconsin at Madison; her works have been widely performed in the US and Europe. Wuorinen in 1970 became the youngest composer to win the Pulitzer Prize for his work *Time's*



Julia Bentley

Encomium; he is an accomplished pianist and conductor as well. Earl Kim, who died in 1998, was especially known for his music theater works; of

Korean lineage, he studied and later taught at Harvard University. Jake Heggie, composer and pianist, was at one time composer-in-residence for the San Francisco Opera, for which he wrote his opera *Dead Man Walking*.

Accessible Contemporary Music

by Seth Boustead

Accessible Contemporary Music Ensemble will feature an evening of Patricia Morehead's chamber music. This program will feature a premiere by Patricia written especially for the ensemble. ACM is a non-profit organization whose mission is to bring the music of living composers to a wider audience through concerts in non-traditional venues, inter-disciplinary collaborations, community outreach and innovative web-based projects. We believe that the Classical tradition must look forward and accept innovation if it is to remain vital, and cannot simply revere the past with a blind eye to the future.

Music for a While

by Fiona Queen

The Music Institute of Chicago's contemporary music series, directed by noted pianist Abraham Stokman, offers engaging and thought provoking chamber music by living Chicago

composers. Music for a While presents the music of John Austin on February 3; the music of Janice Misurell-Mitchell on February 24, and the music of Mischa Zupko on March 17.

The concert series takes place at 7:30pm in Nichols Concert Hall, 1490 Chicago Avenue, Evanston. Music for a While is generously funded by the Argosy Foundation.

Saturday, February 3, 2007, 7:30pm—The Music of John Austin. A founding member of the Chicago Society of Composers, Austin's works have been performed throughout the country including such prestigious venues as the Tanglewood and Aspen festivals. Works performed on this concert include 12 Tones Descending Into Winter, Inventions for Two Flutes, Lamentations: Three America Love Songs, and Orpheus and the Maenads. Guest Artists Julia Bentley, John Concepcion, and Caroline Pittman will join MIC faculty performers.

Saturday, February 24, 2007, 7:30pm—The Music of Janice Misurell-Mitchell. Co-artistic director of CUBE and a faculty member at both the University of Chicago and the School of

the Art Institute of Chicago, Misurell-Mitchell is an extraordinary performance artist whose influences range



Janice Misurell-Mitchell

from the Second Viennese School to hip-hop. Featured works on this concert include *Scat/Rap Counterpoint*, *Speechscape*, *Una voce perduta*—in memoriam *Ted Shen*, and *String Quartet No. 1*. Misurell-Mitchell will perform with MIC faculty members and guest artists, Dane Richeson, Jan Berry Baker, Russell Clark, Caroline Pittman and Jeff Yang.

Saturday, March 17, 2007, 7:30pm—The Music of Mischa Zupko. Chicago-born Zupko has had works commissioned by prominent organizations such as the Minnesota Orchestra and the Gilmore International Keyboard Festival. His compositions, performed in acclaimed halls and at festivals throughout America, are championed by leading soloists and chamber ensembles.

Full Series Subscriptions are \$29 for adults and \$19 for students.

Single tickets are \$15 for adults and \$9 for students and can be purchased through Nichols Box Office at 847-905-1500, ext. 108.

WJT Mitchell: Chicago's Renaissance Man

CUBE Advisory Board member WJT Mitchell has been named a "Chicagoan of the Year" in Culture for 2006 by Julia Keller, cultural critic of the Chicago Tribune. Way to go, Tom!

(<http://www.chicagotribune.com/features/arts/chi-0612300217dec31.1.3385842.story>)



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CUBE 19th Season 2006-2007

Winter and Spring Concerts in a Nutshell

SOUNDING THE SACRED III

Sunday, February 18, 2007, 4 PM, \$15
Augustana Chapel, Lutheran School of Theology,
1100 E. 55th St., Chicago

Featuring a monodrama on St. Augustine by Beverly Grigsby
and works by Victoria Bond, Ruth Lomon, and Judith Shatin
Guest artists: Kenneth Gayle, tenor; Paul Hurst, harp; David Volfe, violin;
Vance Okraszewski, percussion

THE SILK ROAD AND BEYOND: CUBE live on WFMT 98.7 FM

Monday, March 26, 2007, 8 PM

Works by Agnes Bashir, Douglas Brush, Shirish Korde, Chihchun Chi-Sun Lee,
Erdem Helvacioğlu, Lawrence Axelrod, and Bruce Saylor.
Guest artists: Betti Xiang, erhu; Kinan Abou-Afach, cello/oud;
Kim Sopata, flute/ney (reed flute)

HIGH WINDS OF CUBE

Tuesday, March 27, 2007, 12:30 PM, Free
Columbia College Concert Hall, 1014 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago
Works by Julian Harvey, Ramon Zupko, Thea Musgrave, and Mary Gardiner



→ Circuits newsletter design and production by Eda Warren, 773/248-8211

POINT COUNTERPOINT

Friday, March 30, 2007, 7:30 PM, \$20 (\$10 stud/sen)
Columbia College Concert Hall, 1014 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago
Works by Joseph Cerqua, Timothy Edwards, Erdem Helvacioğlu, Chihchun Chi-Sun
Lee, Witold Lutoslawski, and Patricia Morehead.
Guest artists: Cerqua-Rivera Dancers; Sebastian Huydts & Jeffrey Jacob, piano

CUBE GOES FOR BRECHT

Thursday, May 3, 2007, 8 PM, Free. Reception follows the concert.
Fulton Recital Hall, Goodspeed Hall, U. of Chicago, 4th Fl.,
1010 E. 59th St., Chicago
Co-sponsored by the Renaissance Society and Germanic Studies,
The University of Chicago, and the Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation
Works by Lawrence Axelrod, John Eaton, Johannes Hildebrandt, Ellen Hünigen,
Janice Misurell-Mitchell, Anna Rubin, Sebastian Stier, Helmut Zapf.
Guest artists: Sharon Quattrin, soprano; Helmut Zapf, conductor

AMERICAN SONGBOOK IV

Sunday, May 20, 2007, 3 PM, \$20 (\$10 stud/sen)
Merit School of Music, 38 S. Peoria St., Chicago
Works by Charles Wuorinen, Jake Heggie, Laura Schwendinger,
Earl Kim, Patricia Morehead, and Lawrence Axelrod
Guest artist: Julia Bentley, mezzo-soprano



CUBE

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