

**Coming Soon!**

## CUBE's Spring Season in a Nutshell

### ■ **Sounding the Sacred IV**

Sunday, February 3, 4pm  
Augustana Chapel  
Lutheran School of Theology  
1100 E. 55th St., Chicago

### ■ **Commonwealth Connections:**

**CUBE Live on WFMT, 98.7FM**  
Monday, February 4, 8pm

### ■ **Viola Fantasy**

Friday, March 28, 7:30pm  
Gottlieb Hall,  
Merit School of Music  
38 S. Peoria St., Chicago

### ■ **Chicago Connections**

Thursday, April 3, Noon  
Music Center Concert Hall  
Columbia College  
1014 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago

### ■ **Groovin' High, Groovin' Low**

Sunday, May 11, 8pm  
Ganz Hall  
Roosevelt University,  
430 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago  
(see pg. 3 for description)



**Chantelle Grant** as Winnie Mandela in an opera project by Bongani Ndodana-Breen

# CUBE circuits

**The Latest Buzz from CUBE  
Contemporary Chamber Ensemble**

Winter 2008

## CUBE's 2008 Spring Season

### Sounding the Sacred IV

Sounding the Sacred IV, on Sunday, February 3rd, features 20<sup>th</sup> century sacred and secular music for violin, flute, oboe, trumpet, piano, and voice.

Daniel Schwandt, featured guest artist and organist with the Lutheran School of Theology, will perform three chorale preludes by Helmut Walcha. Canadian mezzo-soprano Chantelle Grant will sing Hugo Distler's *Geistliche Konzerte*, op. 17 for voice and organ and "A Jazz Song" by Bongani Ndodana Breen from his opera *Orange Clouds*. Ms. Grant is a graduate of the Glenn Gould School at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, a student of Roxolana Roslak. Oboist Patricia Morehead is featured in Flor Peeters's *Arioso for Oboe and Organ*, op. 74b and Daniel Pinkham's *Variations for Oboe and Organ*. Guest trumpeter Jon Weber is featured in the Harald Genzmer *Sonata for Trumpet and Organ* and Jan Bender's *Wedding Sonata*, Op 49, no. 2. The concert also includes *Le Merle Noir* by Olivier Messiaen performed by flutist Janice Misurell-Mitchell and Larry Axelrod, piano, and Hermann Schroeder's *Concertino* for oboe, violin and organ.

### Commonwealth Connections

Our WFMT program on Monday, February 4th, will feature Canadian mezzo-soprano Chantelle Grant as guest vocal soloist. She will perform works by Canadian composers — Pierre Mercure *Dissidence*, John Beckwith "Mrs. Brown's soliloquy" from *Night Blooming Cereus*, Jack Behrens "Looking Back", and Patricia Morehead *It's Dangerous to Read Newspapers* — and an aria from South African composer Bongani Ndodana Breen's *Orange Clouds*.

CUBE's Caroline Pittman performs *Two poems* for solo flute/alto flute by Rick Baitz, who lived for a time in South Africa, and Canadian composer Mary Gardiner's *A Resonance in Time* for flute, clarinet and piano with Rose Sperrazza, clarinet and Larry Axelrod, piano. The Avalon String Quartet will perform *Apologia at Umzimvubu* by Bongani Ndodana Breen and *Ladders of Anxiety* by Patricia Morehead. Larry Axelrod will perform a solo piano work by New Zealand composer Jack Body.

### Viola Fantasy

The Viola Fantasy concert, on Friday, March 28, features four virtuoso viola players in chamber music that highlights the beautiful, dark silken voice of the viola. The program includes world premieres by New York composer Eleanor Cory; Sam Cole, former composition student of Patricia Morehead, now studying at Oberlin; and Hungarian composer Gyula Fekete, professor of composition at the Liszt Academy in Budapest. The program also features works for viola and piano by Lawrence Axelrod and Sebastian Huydts.

Guest violists are Frank Babbitt of the Lyric Opera of Chicago Orchestra; Daniel Golden formerly of the London, Ontario Symphony; and Claudia Lasareff-Mironoff, member of Pinotage and the Santa Fe Opera Orchestra.

### Chicago Connections

In this free noon-time concert on April 3rd CUBE performs *Two Poems* for solo flute/alto flute by Rick Baitz, *Gymel* for two oboes by Robert Ceely, *Found on the Street* for clarinet and piano by Sebastian Huydts, *Slipstream* for solo flute and electronics by Kotoka Suzuki and a world premiere for oboe, percussion and piano by Marybeth Bradfish.

Performers are CUBists Caroline Pittman, Christie Miller, and Patricia Morehead, with guest artists Sebastian Huydts, piano, and Alicia Cordoba Tait, oboe. A round table discussion with the composers moderated by Rick Baitz will follow the concert.

(continued on p. 3)

# Cuba Sí

## Music for social activism

by Janice Misurell-Mitchell

I traveled to Cuba for six days this past September with several colleagues as part of a conference on "Useful Art", or art that includes aspects of social activism. Sponsored by Cátedra de Arte Conducta, an arts program hosted by the Instituto Superior de Arte in Havana, the project was conceived by Cuban visual artist and University of Chicago faculty member Tania Bruguera. My colleagues were Chicagoans Tom Mitchell, Bernadine Dohrn and Bill Ayers; our group, "Team Havana" thus included a scholar, two political activists and an artist. Our work was to present lectures and informal sessions, films and videos, and performances.

While Tom, Bernadine and Bill met with visual art students at the offices of the journal *Criteria*, I presented three sessions to music students at the Instituto Superior de Arte. Founded in 1976, the Instituto has curricula at the university level in music, visual arts, theatre arts, dance and audiovisual communication. My sessions involved the interrelations of music and politics, particularly how they intersect in the US; it was also my hope that the ses-

sions would encourage dialog about our two cultures and also that I would learn more about classical music in Cuba.

With the aid of a translator, I spoke about how music may reinforce, illuminate or undermine particular political concepts. We discussed various aspects of national anthems, and how a particular performance may be a flash point for political discussion. They loved watching a DVD of Jimi Hendrix performing the *Star Spangled Banner* at Woodstock, and they eagerly gave many interpretations of his guitar-playing in relation to the war in Vietnam; we also had a detailed discussion (and many points of view) of "Nuestro Himno" (our national anthem in Spanish), which had caused so much controversy in 2006.

Other sessions involved text and music, and how a particular way of writing may be understood as political within a given genre; examples included *Pierrot Lunaire* (which they were completely familiar with) and Ruth Crawford Seeger's "Chinaman, Laundryman" (which presented *Sprechstimme* in a political text). Other connections were with social and political movements in the US: "When the Revolution Comes" by the Last Poets, and an excerpt including Abbey Lincoln's musical scream from the *Freedom Now Suite*, by Max Roach and Oscar Brown, Jr. (shown in Ken Burns' documentary, *Jazz*). They were thrilled to make the connection between the Last Poets and hip-hop—they have a very substantial hip-hop movement of their own; the relationship of the civil rights movement to avant garde jazz was new to them. I performed my own work, *Blooz Man/Poet Woman*, for flute/voice, and when I finished, the whole class jumped up excitedly to see how it was notated and to discuss the meaning of the poetry.

Initially there had been some reticence among the students—only a few spoke at the first session, but by the second they felt more comfortable, particularly when I found myself sans translator (he had to leave to translate for the rest of our team) and several students helped out, creating a real dialog. At the third session, which was mostly about contemporary flute music and extended techniques, I was pleased to see that their repertoire included recent works by Takemitsu, and that they were very open to new sounds and improvisatory works that used them.

The US embargo of Cuba prevents us from sending written or recorded music via mail; several of the students have friends in Canada and Europe who send them materials (I donated a lot of music to their library), and some of the more advanced students travel to Europe and the UK to study with major performers.

It was interesting to speak with some of the women composition students; there were a substantial number of them, but they said that they didn't get as many performances as the male students did. We talked about how to improve the situation, and I gave them information on the International Alliance for Women in Music (although since most of the members are in the US, contact beyond email is still a problem).

Other music that we heard included numerous small bands in bars and cafes in Havana, and a terrific jazz group called Yasek Manzano & su Banda. They averaged about 26 years old, and played some bebop tunes and some new pieces with a great sensitivity to each other and complete clarity despite the presence of three percussionists! ■

## It truly is amazing...

by Lawrence Axelrod

As many of my friends in and around CUBE know, I adore travel. In my travels, when possible, I try to find composers or performance opportunities to link my love of travel with my love of music. In thinking about when I would have time for a more lengthy trip this year, I decided that South Africa would be a very interesting place to visit. I also know some musicians now residing in the U.S. who are from there, and have heard about various aspects of music life in the country.

And here is where the internet becomes an incredible tool and blessing: I did a search for music schools in various cities in South Africa and tried to find email addresses of the most likely person to respond to a "blind" request from me. So I wrote a nice generic letter saying who I was and what I might like to do and hit the "send" button about seven times.

I assumed I would get one or maybe two people who would ask me to send further information and a CD. Instead, I got an invitation from the National School of the Arts in Johannesburg (similar to the Music Institute of Chicago in Evanston) to come and play on a festival in May! I was happily stunned! I then was able to write back to some of the other people and tell them that I would definitely be there. Subsequently, I got a second invitation to play on a series of lunchtime concerts that are hosted in a lovely auditorium at the University of Cape Town. I will also be doing presentations to composers and perhaps master classes for the pianists on contemporary piano techniques.

Between and after the concerts, I will travel and see a bit of the country as well. I have applied for a Global Connections grant to help defray costs of the trip. Keep your fingers crossed!!!! ■



Published two times a year by

CUBE Contemporary Chamber Ensemble  
600 S. Dearborn St. #2016, Chicago, IL 60605  
Voice 312/554-1133; Fax 312/803-2186  
Email: [cube@cubeensemble.com](mailto:cube@cubeensemble.com)

For CUBE news, information, CUBE Circuits, forms for ticket purchase, and the CUBE Store, please join CUBE on the Internet at:  
<http://www.cubeensemble.com>

Design/Production: Eda Warren, Desktop Publishing Services, Inc.

CUBE is partially supported by grants from the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, the NIB Foundation, the Argosy Foundation, and the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, and by a CityArts Program I Grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs.



by Philip Seward

Following in the tradition of *Nixon in China* and *Death of Klinghoffer*, Peter Sellars and John Adams have collaborated on *Doctor Atomic*, playing at Lyric Opera of Chicago until January 19. The collaborators did not work this time with librettist Alice Goodman; rather Sellars culled source material from the Manhattan project, as well as earlier poetry and religious texts, to create a richly layered text. Combined with Adams' score, the opera presents a thought-provoking, artistic portrayal of a complex moment in history.

Due to the nature of the libretto, the characters are drawn more as symbolic positions in a larger argument than as flesh and blood people — although they move through the opera unaware of what is to come. In contrast, the scoring for the orchestra suggests an omniscient presence, commenting upon, foreshadowing, and offering subtextual commentary to the ideas presented on the stage. Adams accomplishes this effect through the use of sampled recordings from the period, sampled sounds, and live instruments. The varied sound palette provides a soundscape for the whole experience as opposed to the traditional role of music in the opera house — the entire experience of the opera is greater than an operatic realization of the score alone.

The chorus functions as a purveyor of information, setting a scene with a recitative narration in near homophonic chords. The characters occasionally offer

# Dr. Atomic

## Lyric Opera Premiere

conversation in the manner of a traditional operatic scene, but more often they will quote a poetic perspective on events at play. One example is the *Holy Sonnet XIV* of John Donne (1672-1631), sung by Oppenheimer as he contemplates the bomb on the night of the test. He sings, "Batter my heart, three person'd God, for you as yet but knocke, breathe, shine and seeke to mend. . ."

The idea of trinity is central to the religious perspective offered. The name of the test site was taken from the John Donne poem, the evocation of Christian trinity within this and other poems, and the extensive quotes from the Bhagavad Gita (a Hindu religious text). Additionally, the chorus refers to the Hindu concept of trinity, which consists of the Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva (respectively, the creator, preserver, and destroyer of the universe).

John Adams utilizes a mix of rhythmic impulses from the minimalist style and harmonic structures from a tonal idiom, interwoven with post-modern orchestral colors that fluctuate to portray the ideas presented in the libretto. The repetition often associated with minimalism works well to portray the anxiousness of the characters and ensemble as they anticipate the test of the bomb. In the initial aria of Kitty Oppenheimer, the colors of the orchestra create a juxtaposition between the overwhelming events playing out around them and the care of the Oppenheimer children within the home. The Oppenheimer maid Pasqualita is accompanied by orchestral colors that suggest the breadth of landscape and history to be found in the southwest United States. The entire history of the Native American population is about to be altered with the advent of the nuclear age. The orchestra, in particular,

captures her perspective.

The overall effect in the opera house is a new kind of experience. Narrative storytelling in both libretto and score is replaced by a stripping away of the events to invite contemplation of the experience. In other words, what happens in the opera is less important than the audience's perception of the opera. The events of the story could be related more succinctly in other media — narrative film or television, historical novel, magazine or newspaper article. But within the creation of Adams and Sellars, the observer is invited to consider not merely events at the time, but the subsequent historical choices brought about by those events and each individual's role in this world-changing moment. Opera has not previously served such a role.

With Sellars as director, Lyric's production faithfully serves the intentions of its creators. Several contrasting elements — recorded sound with live instruments, naturalistic scenes with symbolic language, dance (representing the purity of science) with everyday human movement — create an environment of juxtaposition. Ultimately, the need to end the war is posed against the sanctity of life: Do we or did we the people have the right to unleash such destructive power? The answer is not clear. The names Hiroshima and Nagasaki are mentioned only once in the entire opera. Rather than focus on the horrific events of world war, the more pervasive question is, What have we wrought in this new, nuclear age?

All in all, *Doctor Atomic* succeeds in raising some powerful questions in a multi-media experience. ■

(continued from p. 1)

## Groovin' High, Groovin' Low

On Sunday, May 11, members of the CSO, AACM (Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians) and CUBE join forces for a grand finale to CUBE's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary season. Taking a cue from Dizzy Gillespie's jazz tune "Groovin' High", CUBE will feature voices, flutes and bass clarinets in a concert that combines classical contemporary music and jazz in new and intriguing ways.

The concert features the world premiere of *Bottom Dog*, for two bass clarinets and one contrabass clarinet by Jody Rockmaker, (who says it will have "growling virtuosity"); and the Chicago premiere of *Shevet Achim*, for two bass clarinets, by Meira Warshauer. Other works include a piece by the newly-anointed Girl Group (voices and flutes) who will create a work based on a commissioned poem by Chicago poet, novelist and composer Regina Harris Baiocchi; a new graphic notation piece commissioned by the X-tet, the University of Chicago's jazz ensemble, *X-Marks*, by Janice Misurell-Mitchell; and a new work by members of the AACM.

Featured guests include Barbara Ann Martin and Joanie Pallatto, voice, and Ann Ward, voice and piano; Nicole Mitchell, flute; J. Lawrie Bloom, John Bruce Yeh, Richard Nunemaker, Mwata Bowden, and Edward Wilkerson, bass and contrabass clarinets. ■



"Untitled Welded Steel #5"  
Howard Sandroff

"Music for a While", a new music program directed by pianist Abraham Stokman, is presenting the Four Score Festival: a four-day program of concerts, lectures, film, art exhibits, and workshops highlighting the work of four influential composers and their significant lifetime achievements. The events will take place from March 6 through March 9.

On Thursday, March 6, the MIC will present Chicago composer "Robert Lombardo at 75" in a concert of music for voice and strings. Featured are the ensemble Pinotage with Julia Bentley, mezzo-soprano, Dimitris Marinos, mandolin and Philip Morehead, conductor. A display of artworks by Robert Lombardo will be on display in the lobby. There will be a panel discussion with members of Pinotage preceding the concert at 6:30pm.

The concert on March 7 will feature the music of the late Olivier Messiaen in a centenary concert performed

by the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE) and members of the faculty at the MIC, including the Lincoln Trio with pianist Abraham Stokman, whose artwork will be on display in the lobby.

Preceding the Saturday evening concert there will be the "Generation Next Composition Contest 2008": Awards and Concert, at 6:30pm, featuring works by the winners of MIC's composition contest for young composers.

"The Music of Howard Sandroff", on Saturday, March 8, will honor the Chicago composer in a concert given by MIC faculty and guests. An exhibition of sculpture by Sandroff will be on display in the lobby (see above photo). Earlier that day, at 10am, there will be a composers' workshop with Sandroff. (The concert will be repeated in the University of Chicago's Fulton Recital Hall at 7:30PM on March 11.)

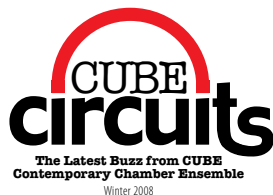
CUBE's Caroline Pittman interviewed Sandroff; the interview can be seen online at:

[www.cubeensemble.com/currentcalendar.html](http://www.cubeensemble.com/currentcalendar.html).

"Elliott Carter at 100: A Birthday Celebration" will take place on Sunday, March 9 at 3pm. Preceding the concert at 1pm there will be a film screening of *A Labyrinth of Time*, Frank Scheffer's unique portrait of Carter and modernism in the twentieth century (90 minutes). Performers include Barbara Ann Martin, soprano; Caroline Pittman and Claire Chase, flutes; Abraham Stokman and Winston Choi, piano; Farid Haque, guitar; Paula Kosower, cello.

All concerts will take place in Nichols Concert Hall at the Music Institute's campus at 1490 E. Chicago Ave., Evanston; concerts begin at 7:30pm.

See [www.musicinstituteofchicago.org/events](http://www.musicinstituteofchicago.org/events) or call 847.905.1500. ■



## CUBE

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