

CENTER FOR NEW MUSIC

David Gompper, Director

The Center for New Music is a performing organization devoted to 20th century repertoire and is the focus of contemporary composition and performance at the University of Iowa. The Center, like the internationally renowned Writers Workshop, embodies the institution's commitment to the vital role of the creative arts at the frontiers of human experience.

The Center functions as a laboratory and performance extension of the School's composition area, and as a repertory ensemble for the creation and presentation of new music in general. Depending on funding, the size of the core ensemble has varied from as many as 26 persons (including a vocal ensemble of 12) to as few as seven players. Extra players are hired on occasion in order to present larger-scale compositions. The Center also serves as the locus of activities for guest composers whose visits range from a few days to entire academic terms.

As the Center enters its 33th year, it remains an advocate of contemporary music performance. The Center's programming reflects the eclectic range of compositional styles currently being written, as well as what is considered classic repertoire from the 20th century. The quality of performance is based on working with a core ensemble, grounded in solid repertoire over an extended period of time. In addition, the Center will seek to build new and more diverse audiences through outreach concerts, and to establish a professional reputation through CD recordings as well as through the invitation of guest composers and performers nationally.

The Center was originally funded by a \$100,000 matching grant from the Rockefeller Foundation in 1966. From the start, the Center sparked the composition of new works expressly for the ensemble, and it brought exciting professional realizations of both local and international repertoires to the University community as well as to tour audiences throughout the state of Iowa and beyond.

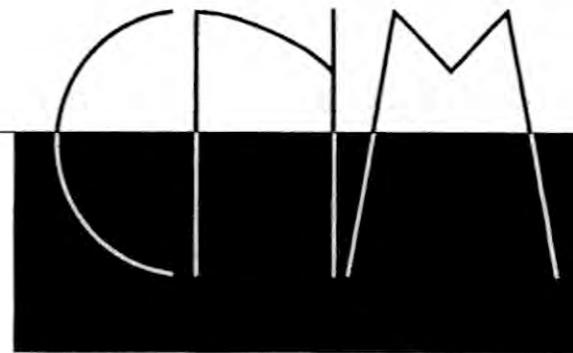
With the success of the Center, the same foundation granted \$456,000 (again to be matched by the University) for an interdisciplinary Center for New Performing Arts (1969-1975). Since this time, the Center for New Music has been continuously funded by the University through the School of Music.

Over virtually the entire span of its existence, the Center has enjoyed the guidance of its founding members, Richard Hervig and William Hibbard; its brilliant success is indeed a tribute to their imagination, wisdom and devotion. Hervig's recent retirement and Hibbard's death have passed on the administrative direction of the Center to D. Martin Jenni, a long-standing composer-participant of the organization, and most recently to David K. Gompper.

A large part of the Center's mission has been to bring new music to a wide and diverse public — for many to whom the Center occasions a first encounter with new music — in schools and colleges as well as at town forums and in farming communities. A grant from the National Endowment for the Arts made it possible, in 1973, for the Center to present new works from Iowa at the Guggenheim Museum in New York City. Shortly thereafter, Center personnel participated in the production of a CRI recording of New Music from The University of Iowa, including several works that had been composed for the ensemble.

The Center has directed much of its energies to the production of the work of composers in residence at Iowa (as staff, students and guests) — many of whom have since become leading figures in American music. It has also to its credit the first world or American performances of major works such as: *Traces* by Luciano Berio and *Songs, Drone and Refrains of Death* (1969) by George Crumb, *Couleurs De la Cite Celeste* (1973) by Olivier Messiaen and *Triple Duo* (1983) by Elliott Carter.

The Center for New Music's long and distinguished history of service has enjoyed a commensurate series of critical praise. Professional recognition has taken the form of the Laurel Leaf Award presented by the American Composers Alliance (1990), and a Commendation for Excellence awarded by BMI (1986). Fittingly, the representative of BMI who came to present the award at a public ceremony had himself been a resident composer at Iowa whose work was stimulated through association with the Center for New Music.



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Thirty-Third Season Concert VI

featuring guest saxophonist

Lawrence Gwozdz

University of Southern Mississippi

Wednesday, April 14, 1999

University of Iowa, School of Music, Clapp Recital Hall, 8:00 p.m.

The Center for New Music
Wednesday, April 14, 1999

Contemporary Saxophone Music

presenting

Lawrence Gwozdz, *guest saxophonist*

and assisted by

Miki Yuasa, *violin*

Mark Aronson, *tenor saxophone*

Thomas Loehrke, *piano*

program

Angels (1994)

Swing Low

Sweet Chariot

Stephen Suber

(b. 1950)

Lento drammatico (1994)

Zdenek Lukás

(b. 1928)

Contrasting Inventions (1998)

Slow and "bluesy"

Fast and wild

Samuel Adler

(b. 1928)

Transfluent Forms (1980)

violin, alto saxophone and piano

Armand Russell

(b. 1932)

Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano (1997)

Allegro molto moderato

Elegy (adagio)

Presto agitato

Stephen Dankner

(b. 1944)

All works have been dedicated to Lawrence Gwozdz

program notes

Angels

A native of Albuquerque, New Mexico, **Stephen Suber** received his musical training at Principia College, Mills College and Indiana University. His teachers were Frederick Fox, Terry Riley, Robert Ashley, and Reinhart Ross. He has served on the Indiana faculty, and currently teaches at Southeastern Louisiana University. Suber's awards include the 1982 Indianapolis Symphony Competition and the 1984 Louisville Orchestra Competition. His music has been recorded on the First Edition, Opus One, and MMC labels.

About his own work, the composer writes the following: "Since childhood I have been fascinated by the idea of angels. Their images appear throughout my house and office in paintings, posters, calendars, and objets d'art. I love the idea of their role as spiritual messengers and guardians. It was only natural to be attracted to a powerful painting that I saw in the St. Louis Museum of Art when I was in high school.

"This work, entitled *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*, was painted by John McCrady in 1937. It depicts a landscape of a cutaway of a slave cabin. Inside, an old man is on his death bed. Outside, loom thick, billowing, threatening clouds, out of which a chariot and a band of angels descend toward the cabin in a stream of light. The painting served as the inspiration for this piece.

"The first movement, 'Swing Low,' is built on the piano's chord pattern (in the manner of a chaconne) and a repeating 20-beat rhythmic pattern, which plays forward and backward. Over this I wrote the quasi-improvisatory saxophone part. I see a connection to the Blues (with its repeating chord progression and a 12-bar pattern, over which a line is sung or improvised) although these musical materials are a universe away from the Blues.

"The second movement, 'Sweet Chariot,' was conceived as a vocalise for the saxophone. I sought to attain some of the sublime qualities I hear in African-American spirituals."

Lento drammatico

Zdenek Lukas graduated from a teachers' college and worked as a teacher at first. From 1953 to 1963 he was a producer at the Czech Radio station in Pilsen

and chorus-master of the Ceska pisen Choir. Between 1962 and 1970 he had regular consultations in composition with Professor Miloslav Kabelac. He has been strongly influenced by folk music and throughout his career has concentrated on vocal music. From the 1960s on his approach to composition has been enriched by several elements culled from avant garde techniques.

His works, which include six symphonies, several operas, a number of oratorios and cantatas and dozens of choral works, have often received prizes abroad, e.g. his 'Parabolae Salomonis' in the 1965 Ernest Bloch Competition in the US, 'Versos d'amor I de comitat' in Barcelona in 1972, and his Fifth Symphony the 1973 Premio Citta di Trieste. Apart from his composition, he continues his work with choirs, both a home and abroad.

Tonight's work is the result of a request for a solo work for the alto saxophone for Gwozdz's New York debut in Weill Recital Hall. Its mournful character permeates throughout with a mysterious air, culminating with a surge into the extreme high range of the instrument. The New York press reviewer responded: "The work stood out for its harmonic originality and boldness of conception. Moreover, Lukas is not afraid to push the timbral and registral parameters of the saxophone to its limits, but always with subtlety and taste."

Transfluent Forms

Born in Seattle, Washington, **Armand Russell** holds degrees from the University of Washington and the Eastman School of Music. He is a double bassist who has taught at North Dakota State University, the Eastman School, and the University of Hawaii. He has since retired from full-time teaching, and resides in Santa Rosa, California. Saxophonists are likely to recognize his name from his first work for the instrument, *Particles*, composed in 1965 for Sigurd Raschèr.

While consisting of a single movement, *Transfluent Forms*, unites three forms or movements, which flow through each other by interweaving and alternating sections. These forms are a slow movement, a main fast movement, and a *scherzo*. The slow movement begins the work with an introduction in the piano, after which two sections, AB, present two themes and their variants. The main fast movement follows with an exposition and a development section only to be interrupted by a *scherzo* in ABA form. The primary theme of the *scherzo* first appeared as a series of fragments after the introduction and with section A of the

slow movement. The *scherzo* leads to an additional development section as the main fast movement is reinstated. This leads further to a recapitulation to conclude the material of the main movement. The sections of the slow movement return with the pattern BAB based on the original two themes. A coda concludes the work with a transformed version of the *scherzo* theme.

In addition to the interweaving of the forms, the material in all the sections is evolved from a basic set of tones that unites the whole in several different ways, appearing in the organization of scales, harmony, and serial techniques.

Sonata for Alto Saxophone and Piano

Stephen Dankner is a composer whose works encompass the breadth of scope and range of expression of the late-Romantic tradition. An emphasis on melody, rich textures, chromatic harmony amid contrapuntal devices characterize his style.

He attended New York University, Queens College, and the Juilliard School, where he received the DMA. His principal teachers were Roger Sessions, Paul Creston, and Vincent Persichetti. Trained within the framework of late twentieth-century atonal practice, in 1985 he returned to a more direct, late-Romantic idiom. Although tonal, much of Dankner's newer music seeks to consolidate the contemporary tradition with the inherited language from the 'classical' past.

Dr. Dankner is Chairman of the Music Department at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts, and is on the faculty of Loyola University's College of Music, where he teaches composition and electronic/computer music.

His Sonata for Saxophone and Piano is the direct result of electronic-mail communication with Lawrence Gwozdz. So enthused was Gwozdz upon receiving the score, that he programmed it for his European recital tour in September 1997, four months after its completion. Every audience resoundingly responded to this piece. Dankner had to wait until December to hear a live performance—the American premiere given in New Orleans. To this rendition, the critic for the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* wrote:

"Stephen Dankner creates intrigue: The audience can't quite tell what is coming next, but is delighted when it does come. Concise—it is only about 22

minutes long—but tightly filled with interesting musical ideas, it is a piece I hope to hear again soon.”

Lawrence Gwozdz

Born to Polish-American parents in Niagara Fall, New York, Lawrence Gwozdz has achieved an international reputation for his success in revealing the qualities inherent in the saxophone as intended originally by its inventor, Adolphe Sax.

Lawrence Gwozdz’s concerts have included major cities in Europe and North America: Chicago, Leipzig, London, Los Angeles, Manchester, New York, Prague, St. Louis, Zagreb, Zurich, and others. His festival appearances - the Menuhin Festival, the International Chamber Music Festival of le Touquet, Spoleto USA - have received critical acclaim.

His debut in New York’s Weill Recital Hall was described in Musical American as an “extraordinary performance of contemporary music” with “the kind of timbre Adolphe Sax most likely had in mind ... always with subtlety and taste” (The New York Concert Review).

His CD, “An American Tribute to Sigurd Rascher” has won high praise from critics. American Record Guide wrote, “The sound is first-class ... Lovers of the saxophone will be pleased;” the reviewer in Fanfare penned, “It would be impossible to praise the performers too highly. Lawrence Gwozdz is an extraordinary saxophonist, bringing out a tremendous range of colors and effects in his instrument. I absolutely guarantee that you will enjoy it.” Albany Records has just released his new CD, “Rascher International.”

Gwozdz is also known for his annotated translation of the German book, *Das Saxophon* by Jaap Kool (Egon Pub., Baldock, England). Various composers - Clarence Barber, Walter Hartley, Zdenek Lukas, Armand Russell, Robert Starer, Roger Vogel, John Worley, and others - have dedicated new works to him.

As Professor of Saxophone at the University of Southern Mississippi, he has established a studio that continues to receive worldwide attention. His student soloists, quartets, and saxophone chamber orchestra perform in major cities, and are frequent winners of competitions. Having been born with spina bifida, Gwozdz is also an advocate for arts for the handicapped and Very Special Arts.

Gwozdz has studied saxophone with Ronald Tyree, Robert Fought,

Laurence Wyman, and the renowned artists Sigurd Rascher and Jean-Marie Londeix. His degrees include the DMA from the University of Iowa, the MM from the University of Nebraska, and the BME from Fredonia State University College of New York.