

The Center for New Music

David K. Gompper, *director*
Steve Willard, *research assistant*

The *Center for New Music* at the University of Iowa 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 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.

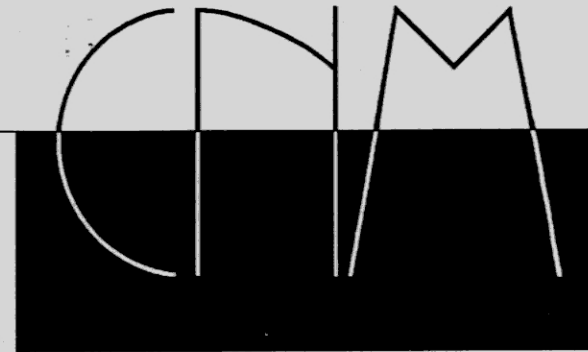
Over virtually the entire span of its existence, the Center has enjoyed the guidance of its founding members, Richard Hervig and William Hibbard. Its brilliant success is indeed a tribute to their imagination, wisdom and devotion. Hervig's retirement and Hibbard's death have passed on the administrative direction of the Center 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 of 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.

While 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) — composers of whom many 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: Luciano Berio's *Traces* and George Crumb's *Songs, Drone and Refrains of Death* (both 1969), Olivier Messiaen's *Couleurs De la Cite Celeste* (1973) and Elliott Carter's *Triple Duo* (1983).

The Center for New Music's long and distinguished history of service has enjoyed a commensurate series of critical praise. Professional recognition took the form of a Commendation for Excellence awarded by BMI (1986). Most recently, the Center hosted the National Society of Composers, Inc. Conference last April, and it is planning a second CD in time for its 30th anniversary (a 25th anniversary CD is currently available).

Next concert: Sunday, February 11, 1996, Clapp Recital Hall



center for new music

David K. Gompper, *director*

Twenty-Ninth Season, Second Concert

Todd Seelye, *guest performer*

Sunday, December 3, 1995

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

program

An Elder's Hocket (1988)

Marcia Fuller, *flute*
Michelle Mindt, *clarinet*
Michael Geary, Joe Rebik, *marimbas*

Jo KONDO

Guitar Variations (1994)

Todd Seelye, *guitar*

Charles WUORINEN

Last Contrabass in Las Vegas

Luciano Silva, *contrabass*
Jennifer Masada, *voice*

Eugene KURTZ

- intermission -

Quartet, op. 22 (1930)

Andrew Carlson, *violin*
Christine Bellomy, *clarinet*
Bill Ford, *alto saxophone*
Richard Gloss, *piano*

Anton WEBERN

Memorialé (1985)
(...EXPLOSANTE-FIXE...)
ORIGINEL

Kim Helton, *flute*
Daren Robbins, Abigail Pack, *horns*
Lisa Dondlinger, Andrew Carlson, Spencer Howard, *violins*
Janse H. Vincent, Rachel McGuire, *violas*
Carey Bostian III, *violoncello*
David Gompper, *conductor*

Pierre BOULEZ

program notes

Jo KONDO (b. Tokyo, 1947) graduated in 1972 from Tokyo University of Arts and Music. He was a grantee of the Rockefeller Fund in 1977-78, and lived in London as a British Council Senior Fellow in 1986. In 1987 he was composer-in-residence at Hartt School of Music in Connecticut and also taught at Dartington International Summer School in England. In 1980, Kondo founded the chamber orchestra, *Musica Practica*.

His music has been widely performed in Japan, Europe and the US, and he has received commissions from London Sinfonietta, Ensemble 2E2M (Paris), National Theater (Japan), NHK Symphony Orchestra, and Japan Broadcasting Corporation, among others.

His book, *Sen no Ongaku*, (about his own compositional ideas) was published in 1979, and he has written extensively on musical matters. Kondo is associate editor of *Contemporary Music Review* and teaches at the Tokyo University of Fine Arts and Music. He lives in Kamakura with his wife Masako, artist and weaver, and their dog Riverrun.

An Elder's Hocket, scored for a quartet of two winds and two percussion, establishes the principal idea of a musical echo (call-and-response), compressed in time, and by pairs: the winds initiating the sound, and the marimbas echoing and responding accordingly. While the rhythmic consistency is minimalist in nature, the winds tend to halt or sustain the constant eighth-note pulse, and the percussion functions as the natural resonance of the sound heard, in part the echo of the hall, and in a sense even the echo in our minds.

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Charles WUORINEN (b. 1938) is one of America's most celebrated composers. His early style combined serial (after both Babbitt and Webern) note-generation with the rhythmic intensities (after most notably, Igor Stravinsky) and interest which serve as a through-line in his output, with few departures. Recognized early in his career, Wuorinen was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1970 for *Time's Encomium*, an electronic work (later rescored for orchestra) which explores the timbral boundaries between synthesized sound and "traditional instruments." Other important works include two early concertos (for flute and cello, both with chamber orchestra) in the classic 1960's American version of the serial disjunct style, two early piano concer-

tos, *Blue Bamboula* for piano solo, and *A Reliquary for Igor Stravinsky* and *Bearbeitungen uber das Glogauer liederbuch*, both of which incorporate found musical material. In recent years Wuorinen's style has tended toward less pitch turnover, while keeping his characteristic drive, allowing change of texture to become prominent, motivating and meditated upon in pieces such as *New York Notes* and in his *Third Piano Concerto*. Born and currently residing in New York City, Wuorinen has taught at Columbia, Princeton, Yale and Rutgers Universities, and at the Manhattan School of Music, and co-founded the Group for Contemporary Music (heard on Nonesuch records) with Harvey Sollberger.

Guitar Variations (1994) exemplifies his style in its concerns with performer virtuosity, classical proportion and symmetry, abruptions in mood and continuity, and a sophisticated harmonic technique coupled with an elastic rhythmic vocabulary.

The single movement work divides into four large sections, each marked by a pause. The opening measures present two types of music—single line and chordal (ac-

/...explosante—fixe.../

à fin „d'évoquer Igor Stravinsky
- de conjurer son absence

Transitoire VI

Transitoire III

Originel (Début ou fin)

Transitoire IV

Transitoire V

Transitoire II

Transitoire VII

tually, different ways of disposing related material) upon which the piece is based. The work can be heard in the large as a continuation of this process of juxtaposition. Each new section spawns a variety of figures evolving from older material; these assume motivic significance, reappearing in new contexts, from which further new figures arise.

The harmonic organization of the work can be heard to reflect the actual "sound" of the guitar's open strings and their natural harmonics. The lowest sounding pitch on the guitar, E, delineates boundaries within the piece as well, both as a pitch and pitch class.

Guitar Variations was written for Todd Seelye, who premiered the work in Phoenix in March, 1995.

Todd Seelye regularly performs throughout the United States with programs that feature the music of our time. His performances during the next few months include recitals in Boise, Winston-Salem, and an appearance as soloist with the New York New Music Consort. He teaches guitar at Grinnell College.

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Eugene KURTZ (b. Atlanta, Georgia) studied composition with Bernard Rogers at The Eastman School

of Music where he received the diploma of Master of Arts in Music in 1949. In the same year, he went to Paris to continue his studies with Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud and subsequently with Max Deutsch, a former Viennese pupil of Arnold Schoenberg. Serial technique and the discovery of the music of Charles Ives proved to be the two most important influences on the composer's musical thought during these formative years. Kurtz has always maintained residence in Paris but has returned to the United States on different occasions to teach at The University of Michigan, The Eastman School of Music, The University of Illinois at Urbana, The University of Texas at Austin and the Hartt School of Music. Kurtz teaches privately in Paris and is a consultant for the music publishing house, Edition-Jobert.

The Last Contrabass in Las Vegas was commissioned by The University of Nevada, Las Vegas, for the Fourth Annual Festival of Contemporary Music to be held in that city. The work was written for and is dedicated to Bertram Turetzky and was first performed by Judith Vaccaro and Mr. Turetzky on February 5, 1974. The piece may be characterized as a "theater piece" for two people, and is cast in the form of a dialogue between a woman and a contrabass, although the contrabass and the contrabass player may well be mere figments of the woman's imagination. The woman's part should be thought of as a theatrical role, because she has a psychological problem: for reasons unknown — a Freudian transfer, perhaps? — the contrabass has become a fixation, a veritable obsession, and the piece itself constitutes the progressive revelation of the woman's peculiar type of madness. EK

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Anton WEBERN (b. 3 December, 1883, d. 1945) is one of the three great composers of the so-called "Second Viennese School," the others being Alban Berg and Arnold Schoenberg (the teacher of both Berg and Webern, and the first recognized formulator of twelve-tone serialism). Webern's music is the most aurally accessible of all three, due both to his generally un-busy texture, preference for classical techniques such as canon, and his 'open' sonorities. His music shows the language of early serialism in its purest and most classical form.

His *Quartet for violin, clarinet, tenor saxophone and piano* (op. 22) seems at times almost a burlesque of his characteristic refined and restrained gestures, but retains a strong measure of formal rigor. The first movement sets the two woodwinds and violin against an interruptive piano, while the second uses a 'rondo with variations'

form, and the rather obvious imitative procedures carried over from the first movement abruptly give way to a melodic legato section and subsequent recapitulation.

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Pierre BOULEZ (b. 1925) is the most renowned living French musician—both as composer and international conductor—of his day. Former conductor of both the BBC and New York Philharmonic Orchestras, Boulez currently directs the French National Center for Music and Sound Research (IRCAM, at the Centre Georges Pompidou) which he conceived and gained financial support for from the French government. But Boulez' most important legacy remains the body of compositions of uncompromising interest and harmonic integrity which he continues to create and revise.

Memoriale for solo flute and eight instruments is a small, polished extraction and re-scoring of material from the larger work '...explosante-fixe...', which in turn is a response to a commission from *Tempo* magazine to write a brief piece to the memory of Igor Stravinsky on the anniversary of his death. A scanned and cleaned-up version directly from the magazine appears on the previous page. (Thanks to D.M.J. for "cracking" the coded memorial in the right corner, which reads: "to conjure up Igor Stravinsky and exorcise his absence.") Instead of creating a short, fully realized work, Boulez created a matrix of compositional possibilities/variations based on a set of seven pitches. He has realized a series of vastly different pieces from this set of materials, including the massive *Rituel (in memoriam Bruno Maderna)* which stands in direct contrast to the more meditative and smaller-scaled six-minute *Memoriale*. In addition to sharing harmonic and rhythmic elements, all the 'in memoriam' pieces (*Memoriale* is dedicated to the memory of longtime IRCAM and Ensemble InterContemporain flautist Lawrence Beauregard) share and develop in different ways the idea of repetition. In *Memoriale*, this idea of repetition takes the form of a series of pitches *fixed* in register, together with the return of a cadential-like homophonic ritornello always ending on E-flat. Timbral resources are explored here, primarily because pitch is fixed and anchored, all instruments are muted save the flute, and dynamics are kept to a minimum.

The sub-title "...explosante-fixe..." is part of a quotation from André Breton which, freely translated into musical terms, describes the 'explosion' of an instrumental statement and the 'fixed' nature of the ensuing variations.

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