

The Center for New Music

David K. Gompper, *director*

Vatchara Vichaikul, *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.

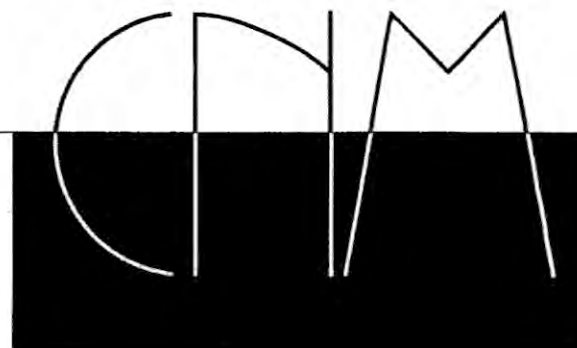
While the Center has directed much of its energies to the production of the work of composers in residence at Iowa (as staff, students and guests) — composers of whom many have since become leading figures in American music — it has also to its credit the first world or American performances of major 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 in April of 1995, and it is planning a festival of contemporary Greek music on April 5, 1998, with guest composer **Theodore Antoniou**.

CENTER FOR NEW MUSIC — FORTHCOMING CONCERTS

Sunday, February 15, 1998 - featuring Berio's *Folk Songs*

Sunday, February 22, 1998 - with the Minnesota Contemporary Ensemble,
featuring Peter Maxwell Davies' *Eight Songs for a Mad King*.



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Thirty-Second Season Concert III

Featuring the works of Noel ZAHLER
with guest pianist Andrew Infanti

Sunday, December 7, 1997
University of Iowa School of Music,
Clapp Recital Hall, 8:00 p.m.

program

Sonata for Horn and Piano 1996

Hymn

Riding to Higher Clouds

Kristin Thelander*, *horn*

Rene Lecuona*, *piano*

Études pour piano

Étude no. 1, *Désordre (Disorder)*

Étude no. 2, *Cordes à Vide (Open Strings)*

Étude no. 12, *Entrelacs (Loops)*

Étude no. 13, *L'Escalier du diable (The Devil's staircase)*

Étude no. 5, *Arc-en-ciel (Rainbow)*

Étude no. 6, *Automne à Varsovie (Autumn in Warsaw)*

Anthony Infanti, *piano*

intermission

Trio, for violin, cello and piano

Andrew Carlson, *violin*

Jacqueline Emery, *violoncello*

Jonathan Kramer, *piano*

Harlequin, for piano and chamber orchestra

Sergey Schepkin*, *piano*

David Gompper*, *conductor*

*=denotes School of Music faculty

Margaret BROUWER

György LIGETI

Noel ZAHLER

Noel ZAHLER

Program Notes and Biographies

Sonata for Horn and Piano 1996

At the turn of a new century, and after a century of atonality, I am eager to find paths in new harmonic directions. Sonata for Horn and Piano is representative of recent explorations of mine toward a personal expression in that new direction. It is also a very personal expression of searching prompted by the deaths of two loved ones within a year's time. Hymn, straightforward and melodic, expresses grief and faith. Riding to Higher Clouds deals with the complex struggle between the conflicting emotions of loss, hope, memories, and understanding.

Recently appointed as Head of the Composition Department of the Cleveland Institute of Music, **Margaret Brouwer** continues as the Roanoke (VA) Symphony Composer-in-Residence. She founded and directed until 1996 the Virginia new music series, Sonoklect. Among her honors is an NEA grant made to the Symphony for her residency. 1996 premieres of Brouwer's music included *Remembrances* (Roanoke Symphony), and *Prelude and Vivace* Duquesne University, David Stock, conductor. Other major events included a full evening of her chamber music at Greenwich House and *Skyriding* performed by the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, both in New York City. New York Times reviewer Alex Ross noted, "*Skyriding* ... caught my ear... made no obvious concessions toward styles of the day and inhabited its own peculiarly bewitching harmonic world... Despite its complexity, ... strong, fluid rhythms gave it life. The first movement, in particular, achieved a marvelous, mercurial lyric flow." A recording by Gerard Schwarz and the Seattle Symphony of her *Concerto For Clarinet and Orchestra* with Richard Stolzman as soloist was released in January, 1997.

In 1995, Ms. Brouwer was Composer-in Residence at the Second International Festival of Women Composers in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The Chestnut Brass Company, which took her brass quintet *Timespan* on their recent U.S. Tour, also premiered her second brass quintet *Tolling The Spirits*. Brouwer's second string quartet, *Crosswinds*, was premiered in New York City by the Chester String Quartet and taken on tour by the Cassatt String Quartet. The Poznan Philharmonic in Poland gave the European premiere of *Third From the Sun*.

Margaret Brouwer has also been commissioned and/or performed by the Saint Louis, Juilliard Symphony Orchestras, the Bay Area Women's Philharmonic, Dale Warland Singers, 20th Century Consort, Chestnut Brass Company, Christine Schadeberg, and Kathleen Supove, among others. Brouwer's honors include residencies at the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Center, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Charles Ives Center for American Music, and grants from Meet the Composer, and the Virginia Commission for the Arts. Her compositions have received the Lee Ettleson Award, and awards from the International Women's Brass Conference, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, and the Carmichael Competition, among others. She has also received Virginia's Council of Higher Education's Outstanding Faculty in Virginia Award for 1994. Brouwer's music is published exclusively by Carl Fischer and recorded on Opus One, Crystal, Centaur and MMC labels.

Gyorgy Ligeti: Etudes pour piano

Ligeti began writing his series of piano studies in 1985 as a birthday gift for Pierre Boulez. He received the prestigious Grawemeyer Award (music's "Nobel Prize") in 1986 for the *Premier Livre* (études 1-6). *Études Deuxième Livre* (nos. 7-14) were composed between 1988-1994. At present Ligeti has completed sixteen études. His chief inspiration for the studies arose from his respect for Conlon Nancarrow's music for player piano, whose polyrhythmic complexities Ligeti wanted to make possible for human performers. Other admitted influences included sub-Saharan African drumming, patterns in fractal geometry, and the great tradition of pianistic studies from Scarlatti to Chopin and Debussy.

Étude no. 1, "Désordre," is a product of human fascination with the mechanical. Ligeti's plan is severe—the right hand plays on only white keys, the left hand on only black. From this saturated situation, each hand develops a separate musical object more like a vector than a melody. These similar, but non-identical shapes derail, creating a perceptually intense "disorder." Ironically, this is a result of extreme control exercised by the composer, who carefully steers the "automatic" processes in the work to reach timed crises and renewal points which heighten the musical drama. For Ligeti, these cries are often purely physical limitations—the ends of the instrument are reached. Ligeti has given us a finite and symmetrical object out of a process which is, in concept, infinite and chaotic. Also paradoxical is the way such a stern construction radiates joy and verse.

In Étude no. 2, "Cordes à Vide," Ligeti's uses the piano as an orchestra of real and imaginary stringed instruments tuning up on their "open strings"—a constant stream of perfect fifths played in various speeds and registers. The composer exploits the unusual formal structures of the piece as a source of subtle poetry.

Ligeti vacillated over the title of the enigmatic Étude no. 12, finally choosing "Entrelacs"—translated as "Loops." Again, the hands are given mutually exclusive sets of pitches in a manner similar to Désordre, here allowing the piano to radiate iridescent ambiguity. Rhythmically, this étude is built on a "scaffold" polyrhythm of 13:17, under which five more (!) layers are added with metric values 11, 7, 5, 4 & 3. The complexity of these metric "loops" creates a web of rhythm often beyond individual perception. Intertwined with the loops themselves are passionate melodies, themselves the products of the polyrhythmic net. The tension between an abstract structure and the resonant arcs which pull away from it provides the fascination of this elaborate study.

The flamboyant Thirteenth Étude, "L'Escalier du diable," is based on a simple, obvious progression, which becomes radically complicated. The basic motive of the piece is a rising chromatic figure locked into a quasi-Balkan palindromic rhythm. This sinister figure experiences a number of frustrated attempts to attain the top of the piano; it inevitably plateaus or falls back and joins another voice in the climb. Eventually, as many as six voices struggle upward at different rates. Ligeti's signature keyboard crisis reaches a harrowing extreme in this étude. He unites high-tech notions like fractal graphs (the perplexing "Devil's staircase") with a "Romantic" concept of sound and drama.

The Fifth Étude, "Arc-en-ciel" (Rainbow), is a tender, intimate piece, exploring the subtle rhythmic tension inherent in "hemiola"—simultaneous division into duple and triple meters. The mellow harmonies achieve some acerbic edges as the hands slightly diverge in the middle of the bar.

The piece develops freely, and its effect is jazzy and crystalline. Off the record, Mr. Ligeti mentioned that he conceived this étude along the lines of "Bill Evans playing a Chopin Nocturne at 4 a.m."

"Autumn in Warsaw," Étude no. 6, dedicated to Ligeti's Polish friends, acts as a finale. This study projects a music of weeping and defiance. The basic motive is a descending line, reminiscent of Magyar-Romanian "professional mourners" who weep and sing at funerals. The music progresses in gasps and sighs intensifying by a "legion" effect—an ever-growing number of voices, all moving at different metronomic speeds. The mathematical ratios of 3:5 and 5:7, rather unusual for European music, rule the melodic interaction, placing a strain on perception of individual lines. The collective grief becomes too much for the music to bear, and it literally collapses at the end of the study.

A native of Detroit, **Andrew Infanti** began his musical training at age 10. In Tampa, Florida he studied with Robert Helps and received the Bachelor of Music degree, summa cum laude, from the University of South Florida. He recently earned the Master of Music degree with distinction in performance at the New England Conservatory in Boston, where he studied with Stephen Drury.

An ardent proponent of new music, Mr. Infanti has participated in numerous international festivals in France, Hungary, and the United States. Along with Robert Helps, he founded the *Sensua Ensemble*, a group which performs unusual repertoire for multiple pianos.

His work at the New England Conservatory's festivals garnered critical acclaim in *The New York Times* and the *Boston Globe*: "...poetry and brilliance...", "...brilliant, flowing, wonderfully pianistic performance..."

The recording of his 1996 performance of Gershwin's original *Rhapsody in Blue* with NEC's Wind Ensemble was selected by National Public Radio for their European broadcast "Art of the States."

Mr. Infanti's repertoire favors twentieth century masterworks by Ravel, Schoenberg, Boulez, and American composers. He performs regularly in solo and chamber venues in Boston and abroad.

He is currently recording the complete Ligeti *Piano Etudes* for Neuma Records.

Trio

Trio, was commissioned by the National Endowment for the Arts for the Arden, Florestan, and Aspen Soloists piano trios as part of their Consortium Commissioning Program. It is dedicated to the members of the Arden Trio: Suzanne Ornstein, violin; Clay Ruede, violoncello; and Thomas Schmidt, piano. It was through performances by the Arden Trio's that I became inspired by the expressive power and versatility of this ensemble. After intensely studying the piano trios of Haydn, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Brahms, and Ravel I decided that I would in fact take up the challenge to write in this medium.

My composition is in the form of an introduction, three sections and a coda. Each of the sections is signaled by a solo passage for one of the instruments: first the cello, then the violin, and finally the piano. It was a concern of mine to highlight the solo capabilities of each player as well as

the virtuoso capability of the trio acting as a super performer. To this end, there are sharp contrasts in texture and a conscious attempt to pit independent contrapuntal lines against each other and opposing textures. Time too, is treated contrapuntally and the players find that their parts are not only different in terms of pitches and rhythms but that the actual tempo at which they each play is, at times, different.

Composing has always been a balance between the intellectual and emotional for me and this is a difficult work to hear once. In its nine minutes it does a great many things which require a rigorous attention on the part of those who would listen to it. Ultimately, what I've tried to do is compose a work which is challenging for its players and intriguing for others. As with all my works, *Trio* is a window to my imagination. A window in which the performer is as much on view as the composer.

Harlequin, for piano and chamber orchestra

Harlequin, for piano and chamber orchestra, was written during the summer of 1981. It is a one movement work, written at the request of pianist Rebecca LaBreque, lasting approximately 9 minutes. The 19th century figure of Harlequin conjures up an individual whose actions, be they romantic or otherwise, were rarely requited. So it goes with my composition. In one sense it is a search for the "lost chord"—a harmonic experiment which thrashes about looking for, but never really finding a path to rest. On the other hand it is a struggle between grand gestures of the 19th century and a language which is every bit a part of the 20th century. The opening timpani solo points to transformations which permeate the entire work. Temporal and registral spaces are opened and filled as we progress from instrument to instrument and section to section. "Windows" open and close, allowing the piano to assert itself as both soloist and member of the ensemble. A segmented arch-like form arises as the composition progresses. At the apogee of the arch each member of the ensemble competes for the role of "soloist" in a simultaneous effort to overpower the piano. The keyboard prevails, as signaled by the solo cadenza, and the composition progresses toward its close. It ends with a distant reminder of the opening timpani solo.

Harlequin is dedicated to my wife Clara and my son Mathieu.

Noel Zahler was born in New York City. He has studied music composition with Milton Babbitt, Jack Beeson, Chou Wen-chung, Franco Donatoni, and Henry Weinberg. Dr. Zahler has earned degrees from Columbia University, Princeton University, L'Accademia Musicale Chigiana (Siena, Italy), and C.U.N.Y. Queens College. His awards and prizes include a National Endowment for the Arts Consortium Commission, a Fulbright/Hayes Fellowship to Italy, two McDowell Colony Fellowships, a Connecticut Commission on the Arts Individual Artists Grant, and a Connecticut Public Television (CPTV) prize for the sound score to the computer-realized video Gothic Tempest. He is a fellow of the Associated Kyoto Program, the recipient of an Italian National Research Council Award, a New York State Council for the Arts grant in support of recordings, and a National Endowment for the Humanities Scholarship.

Dr. Zahler's compositions include a wide range of vocal and instrumental works as well as

electro-acoustic and multi-media works. His compositions are published by Associated Music Publishers (G. Schirmer, Inc.), APNM music publishers, and American Composers Edition. Recordings of his music: *Regions I*, *Four Songs of Departure*, and *Harlequin* are available on the Opus One record label. Recordings of his *Trio* for piano, violin, and violoncello and *reCollections*, for guitar can be found on Neuma Recordings (Harmonia Mundi). His compositions are played throughout this country and in Europe. In addition, Dr. Zahler is the co-author of two computer software programs, the Artificially Intelligent Computer Performer and Music Matrix.

During the Fall semester 1997 Professor Zahler will lecture on his music and supervise performances of his compositions at Texas Christian University, MIT, Stanford University, and The University of Iowa Center for New Music, Iowa City as Visiting Composer in Residence.

Dr. Zahler is presently Professor of Music and Director of the Cummings Electronic and Digital Sound Studio (CEDS) at Connecticut College, New London, CT. His writings on and about music include three articles in the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, six articles in the New Grove Dictionary of Music in the United States, a new critical edition of Charles Ives' *The Unanswered Question* (Peer Southern Music Publishers, 1986), and numerous articles on music theory and composition, artificial intelligence and music, and computer music.

ENSEMBLE

Sonja Feig, *flute*
Megan D. Weiss, *oboe*
Michelle Fox, *clarinet*
Krista S. Van De Velde, *bassoon*
Amy McBeth, *horn*
Jamie Kent, *trumpet*
Todd Lippert, *trumpet*
Tim Shane, *timpani*
Miki Yuasa, *violin I*
Quentin Arnold, *violin II*
Nathalie Cruden, *viola*
James Ellis, *violin*
Kyle D. Gassiot, *double bass*