

center for new music

D. Martin Jenni, *director*
David Gompper, *music director*

Sunday, February 14, 1993, 8:00 p.m.
Clapp Recital Hall
The University of Iowa School of Music

Program

Defying Gravity

Michael GEARY, Shawn LAFRENZ, Tony OLIVER, Edwin HILL
Percussion Ensemble

Carl VINE

Figura Circulorum*

Mark CHANG, Poppy CRUM, Marla FEENEY, Don HAINES†, Mitchell JOHNSON,
David NELSON†, Allen OHMES†, Jane SANDE, Thomas STIRLING, Yiwen XU, - violin
Mario CHIARELLO, Julie HOLST, Rob SHANNON, Rich WAGOR - contrabass
Michael GEARY, Edwin HILL, Shawn LAFRENZ, Lee FERGUSON - percussion
Steve GRISMORE† - tanpura
Sven HANSELL† - harpsichord

Martin JENNI†

David GOMPPER† - conductor

intermission

Sonatine

Karen BERGQUIST - flute
Robert FULLER - piano

Pierre BOULEZ

Little Firecracker

Laura KOENIG - flute/picc
Marla FEENEY - Bass Clarinet
Don HAINES† - violin
Emily GOSMA - violoncello
Michael GEARY - percussion
Mark MARTIN - piano
Mark WEIGER† - oboe solo
David GOMPPER - conductor

Michael DAUGHERTY

†=School of Music faculty
*premiere

Program Notes

Defying Gravity was commissioned with assistance from the Music Board of the Australia Council by the Sydney percussion group *Synergy*. This work develops a process of rhythmic polyphony, from the single performer to an ensemble:

I have always marveled at the co-ordination and finesse required for even a simple drum roll, while a skillful performance on multiple percussion instruments defies the laws of both probability and physics.

In writing for a single percussionist I have always concentrated on producing independent rhythmic lines across several different instruments. In *Defying Gravity*, I wanted to extend this approach so that these lines would appear not only within each part but also across the ensemble as a whole.

Much of the polyphony among the players is visible, and spatial effects such as the division of a rising series of pitches across the ensemble form an important part of the overall effect. The pitch relationships between the four units of percussion are a central and unifying part of the compositional process, with a movement from higher pitched instruments (player 1) to lower (player 4).

The choice of instrumentation helped to determine both the content and structure of the work. The first section used only tuned tom-toms, which are joined by timpani and anvils in the third and final section. Marimba, entering in the centre of the work, brings with it a new sound world that it eventually dominates as one by one the players explore the delights of this South American invention.

Among the comparatively random sounds which follow the climax of the first section is the new sound of the finger cymbal struck by a metal beater. This is, in fact, the beginning of a new accompanying figure for players 2, 3 and 4, while player 1 moves to the marimba to begin the central part of the piece. This accompaniment is so delicate that it retains its profile even after players 2 and 3 have joined player 1 in the stylistic explorations of the marimba music, though eventually the richly polyphonic writing for the three players becomes so dominant that player 4 falls silent. The marimba music is characterized by flowing 16th triplets and rapid tremolo chords and it is a massive tremolo chord that marks the end of the middle section, as player 4 re-enters the piece with a forceful drumming solo that serves as a bridge to the recapitulation of the opening section. The third section contains much that is familiar, though often transformed, and much that is new, notably the anvils and a greater use of beaters. The tempo is quick, and startling contrasts in dynamics and abrupt breaks in the texture bring the work to a satisfying end.

Brett Johnson

Carl Vine is one of Australia's most versatile and often-commissioned younger composers. He was born in Perth, Western Australia, where he studied piano with Stephen Doman and composition with John Exton at the University of Western Australia. Moving to Sydney in 1975, he worked as a freelance pianist and composer with a wide variety of ensemble, theatre and dance companies. He has been resident composer with the Sydney Dance Company (1978), the London Contemporary Dance Theatre (1979), the New South Wales State Conservatorium (1985), the Australian Chamber Orchestra (1987) and the Western Australian University (1989).

Among his most acclaimed scores are **Poppy** (1978) for the Sydney Dance Company, **Elegy** (1985) for Flederman, **Cafe Concertino** (1984) for the Australia Ensemble and **Legend** (1988) for the West Australian Ballet Company. His first three symphonies, performed by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, have been released on compact disc and a CD of his chamber music is available through Tall Poppies Records. **Piano Sonata** was presented by the Sydney Dance Company in 1992 and recorded by pianist Michael Harvey for Program Promotions.

In 1993, Vine's fourth symphony will be performed by the Sydney Youth Orchestra, while the fifth, entitled **Percussion Symphony**, will be presented by percussion ensemble *Synergy* with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. He has also been commissioned to write a number of smaller chamber works.

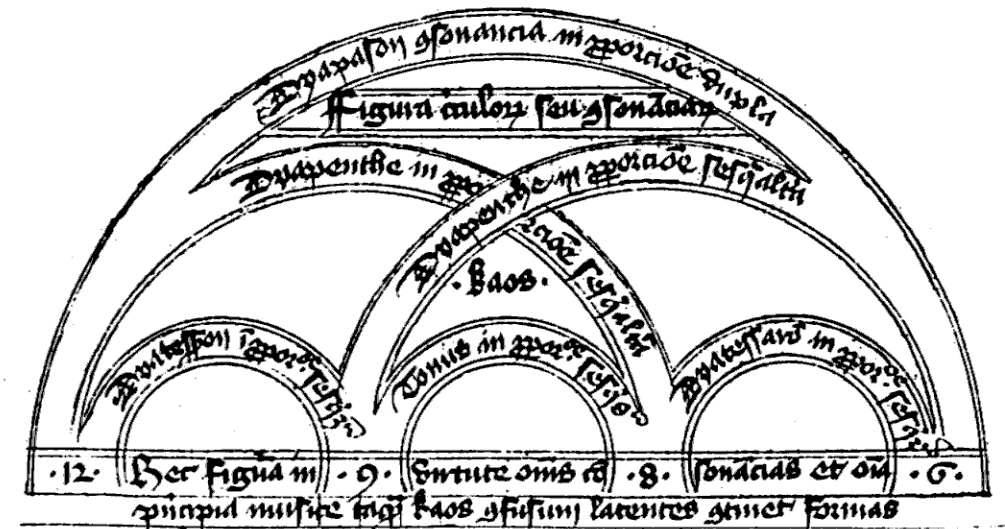
Figura Circulorum commemorates a quarter-century of my life as a member of the faculty of The University of Iowa. It is a work I have been contemplating for about ten years: I received a Composer's Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1982 to make a large piece, and this at last is it, though it bears rather little resemblance to the plan I proposed then. The title comes from the early 14th-c. treatise of Jehan de Murs called *Musica speculativa*, a compendium of the science and philosophy of music derived principally from Boethius. The figure appears in connection with Jehan's fourth petition. In his words,

hec figura consonanciarum in musica perfectarum omnia principia et omnes consonancias musicae continet in virtute que si essent exterius enodate tota pene musica nota foret. Quapropter hec figura quasi unum chaos in quo latent plures forme potest satis rationabiliter appellari.

[This figure of the perfect consonances of music virtually contains all the harmonies and principles of music. Were these to be brought forth unbound, they would make known nearly the whole of music. So it is reasonable enough to call the figure a kind of chaos in which many forms are hidden.]

In a way that would perhaps appeal to a mathematician like de Murs, my *Figura circulatorum* explores intervallic and temporal proportions over a structure (produced chiefly by the metal voices of bowls, gongs and tamtams) which notates annual cycles. (The work spans the years 1937-2010; the entrance to the Twenty-first Century is marked by an exchange of prolation between the metallophones and the strings.) The divisions of sound sources are also controlled by generations of the numbers 3, 7, 10 and 4. The seven bowls are Tibetan in origin, and possess wondrously rich harmonic properties; although they were acquired at different times and places (from Nepal to New Mexico), they are all members of a single harmonic series (roughly D). The forms hidden in chaos may refer to the complexes these apparently simple instruments release, to the harmonic complexities wrought against them by the company of violins, and to other relationships each auditor can discover; they are as well a paradigm of the work's makers.

M.J. 1193



Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, C. 241 Inf., f. 126a-132 (15 c.)

Martin Jenni, currently head of composition and theory in the School of Music, holds a doctorate in composition from Stanford University and an A.M. in medieval studies from the University of Chicago. Since joining the Iowa faculty in 1968 he has composed several works for the Center for New Music (*R-Music Asphodel*, *Cucumber Music*, *Per Elysios*), the University Symphony Orchestra (*Eulalia's Rounds*), and members of the faculty (*Musica dell'Autunno* for Delbert Disselhorst, *Musica dell'Estate* for William Hibbard, *Long Hill May* for Betty Mather, *Nightmusic* for Eldon Obrecht, *Pharos* for James Avery, *Ballfall* for Steven Schick, etc.); his *Tutto per Verdi* was premiered by the Iowa Brass Quintet last October. He also founded and directs a chant choir called the Cantores.

Sonatine - Boulez remarked in his essay "propositions" (1948) that 'music must be hysteria and collective spells, violently of the present.' The *Sonatine*, although written two years prior to that essay, certainly lives up to such a criterion. Although he patterned it after an early post-Romantic work of Schoenberg's, the *Chamber Symphony*, Op. 9, Boulez completely disregarded the harmonic and melodic facets of the *Chamber Symphony*, and instead proceeded to emulate 'Schoenberg's invention of a continuous form evolved from symphonic movements.' What occurs in this work, then, is the evolution, from one basic germinal idea of four movements (i.e., introduction/allegro - slow movement - scherzo - finale) which simultaneously constitute the four stanzas or developments of a single-movement sonata form. Boulez states, in reference to his emulation of the *Chamber Symphony*, that:

"Naturally I had no desire to copy Schoenberg's plan, but rather to pass through the same experience myself and see how far you would have to push this ambiguity of form for it to become something new...What interested me were the transformations of a single theme, and from that point of view the work is even more unified than the *Chamber Symphony* because there is less basic material."

Boulez never again took precisely this sort of backward glance - he quickly grew intolerant of references to older forms in his approach to composition - yet the matters of formal construction outside of the 'molds' or 'blueprints' of the past, such as motivic/thematic unification, and balance of different types of motion, have remained important to his creative processes.

compiled by Robert Fuller

Boulez, Pierre (b. 1925), a celebrated French composer and conductor, studied with Olivier Messiaen at the Paris Conservatory, graduating in 1945. After many engagements as a lecturer (Darmstadt, Harvard) and conductor (N.Y. Philharmonic, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Bayreuth), he has settled in Paris, where he founded, in 1974, the Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique (IRCAM), an research establishment subsidized by the French government.

Little Firecracker (1991) is a concerto for solo oboe and chamber ensemble. The concerto was inspired by the diabolically difficult oboe etudes of Antonino Pasculli (1842-1924), perhaps the greatest oboe virtuoso of his day. The musical fireworks are briefly interrupted by a playful tango interlude. **Little Firecracker** celebrates the rhythmic and explosive potential of the oboe and was written for award-winning oboist Alex Klein of Curitiba, Brazil, and the Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble.

Michael Daugherty (b. 1954, Cedar Rapids, Iowa) is a leader in composition using MIDI, microcomputers, synthesizers, and sampling machines. In addition to teaching composition at the University of Michigan, where he is an associate professor, he is active in composing works for acoustic instruments and performing his electronic music compositions. His music, a mixture of rock, jazz, and avant-garde sounds from the 20th century, has been described by *Musical America* as "eclecticism at its best."

As a Fulbright Scholar in Paris in 1979, he composed music using main-frame computers at IRCAM, and during 1981-82 he collaborated with jazz arranger Gil Evans in New York, and studied with composers Jacob Druckman, Bernard Rands, Earle Brown, and Roger Reynolds at Yale University. From 1982 to 1984 he worked with composer Georgy Ligeti in Hamburg, Germany, and while in Germany, Daugherty also formed an improvisational duo with trumpeter Markus Stockhausen.

Daugherty has received awards for his music from the National Endowment for the Arts, BMI, Tanglewood, ASCAP, Meet the Composer, and the Rockefeller Foundation. His **Boombxer** was performed last year in Hancher Auditorium by the Kronos String Quartet.