

Thursday, May 8, 2008, 7:30 p.m.

LLOYD ULTAN RECITAL HALL

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA SCHOOL OF MUSIC CENTER FOR NEW MUSIC

DAVID GOMPPER, director and conductor
CHRISTOPHER GAINEY, research assistant

Curtis Curtis-Smith
(b. 1941)

Tulips (2007)
MICHELLE CROUCH, SOPRANO
SAM STAPLETON, VIOLIN I
ANNA DRAPER, VIOLIN II
PETER CALHOUN, VIOLA
LAURA SHAW, VIOLON CELLO
SUNG-HEE LEE, PIANO

Anton Webern
(1883-1945)

Two Songs (1918-1919)
Vallorbe
Vision des Erblindeten
MICHELLE CROUCH, SOPRANO
LISA BOST, FLUTE
YASMINE FLORES, CLARINET
KEVIN PEARCE, BASS CLARINET
PHIL RUNKEL, HORN
JOSH THOMPSON, TRUMPET
BONNIE VARGA, TROMBONE
SUNG-HEE LEE, CELESTA
CHRIS SANDE, PERCUSSION
PAMELA WEEST-CARRASCO, HARP
SAM STAPLETON, VIOLIN
PETER CALHOUN, VIOLA
LAURA SHAW, VIOLON CELLO
ASLI MEDIHA YETISENER, DOUBLE BASS

John Griffin
(b. 1979)

Concertino for piano and chamber ensemble (2008)
I. Florid
II. Mysteriously
III. Lively
SUNG-HEE LEE, PIANO
EMILY FENTON, FLUTE
STUART BREZINSKI, OBOE
YASMINE FLORES, CLARINET
JEFF TILGHMAN, BASSOON
PHIL RUNKEL, HORN
CHRIS SANDE, PERCUSSION
MEGHAN AUBE, PERCUSSION
SAM STAPLETON, VIOLIN I
ANNA DRAPER, VIOLIN II
PETER CALHOUN, VIOLA
LAURA SHAW, VIOLON CELLO
ASLI MEDIHA YETISENER, DOUBLE BASS

Noel Zahler
(b. 1951)

Joseph Dangerfield
(b. 1977)

INTERMISSION

Concerto for clarinet and chamber orchestra (2003)
MICHAEL NORSWORTHY, CLARINET
JEFF TILGHMAN, BASSOON
STUART BREZINSKI, OBOE
SUNG-HEE LEE, PIANO
CHRIS SANDE, PERCUSSION
MEGHAN AUBE, PERCUSSION
GINNY ARMSTRONG, PERCUSSION
PAM CARRASCO, HARP
MATT GELBAND, ALTO SAXOPHONE
LISA BOST, FLUTE
PHIL RUNKEL, HORN
JOSH THOMPSON, TRUMPET
ART HAECKEL, TROMBONE
SAM STAPLETON, VIOLIN I
ANNA DRAPER, VIOLIN II
PETER CALHOUN, VIOLA
LAURA SHAW, VIOLON CELLO
ASLI MEDIHA YETISENER, DOUBLE BASS

Winter Rites for violoncello and chamber ensemble (2008)

I. Oak and Feather
II. Solstice
III. Birth of the New Sun
ANTHONY ARNONE, VIOLON CELLO
EMILY FENTON, FLUTE/PICCOLO
LISSA STOLZ, OBOE
YASMINE FLORES, CLARINET
JEFF TILGHMAN, BASSOON
SUNG-HEE LEE, PIANO
CHRIS SANDE, PERCUSSION
MEGHAN AUBE, PERCUSSION
SAM STAPLETON, VIOLIN I
ANNA DRAPER, VIOLIN II
PETER CALHOUN, VIOLA
LAURA SHAW, VIOLON CELLO
ASLI MEDIHA YETISENER, DOUBLE BASS

For information about attending the University of Minnesota School of Music or participating in School of Music ensembles, call (612) 624-5740 or email mus-adm@umn.edu.

PROGRAM NOTES

Tulips—Sylvia Plath

The tulips are too excitable, it is winter here.
Look how white everything is, how quiet, how snowed-in.
I am learning peacefulness, lying by myself quietly
As the light lies on these white walls, this bed, these hands.
I am nobody; I have nothing to do with explosions.
I have given my name and my day-clothes up to the nurses
And my history to the anesthetist and my body to surgeons.

They have propped my head between the pillow and the sheet-cuff

Like an eye between two white lids that will not shut.

Stupid pupil, it has to take everything in.

The nurses pass and pass, they are no trouble,
They pass the way gulls pass inland in their white caps,
Doing things with their hands, one just the same as another,
So it is impossible to tell how many there are.

My body is a pebble to them, they tend it as water
Tends to the pebbles it must run over, smoothing them gently.
They bring me numbness in their bright needles, they bring me sleep.

Now I have lost myself I am sick of baggage---

My patent leather overnight case like a black pillbox,
My husband and child smiling out of the family photo;
Their smiles catch onto my skin, little smiling hooks.

I have let things slip, a thirty-year-old cargo boat
Stubbornly hanging on to my name and address.
They have swabbed me clear of my loving associations.
Scared and bare on the green plastic-pillowed trolley
I watched my taset, my bureaus of linen, my books
Sink out of sight, and the water went over my head.
I am a nun now, I have never been so pure.

I didn't want any flowers, I only wanted
To lie with my hands turned up and be utterly empty.
How free it is, you have no idea how free---
The peacefulness is so big it dazes you,
And it asks nothing, a name tag, a few trinkets.
It is what the dead close on, finally; I imagine them
Shutting their mouths on it, like a Communion tablet.

The tulips are too red in the first place, they hurt me.
Even through the gift paper I could hear them breathe
Lightly, through their white swaddlings, like an awful baby.
Their redness talks to my wound, it corresponds.
They are subtle: they seem to float, though they weigh me down,
Upsetting me with their sudden tongues and their color,
A dozen red lead sinkers round my neck.

Nobody watched me before, now I am watched.
The tulips turn to me, and the window behind me

Where once a day the light slowly widens and slowly thins,
And I see myself, flat, ridiculous, a cut-paper shadow
Between the eye of the sun and the eyes of the tulips,
And I have no face, I have wanted to efface myself.
The vivid tulips eat my oxygen.

Before they came the air was calm enough,
Coming and going, breath by breath, without any fuss.
Then the tulips filled it up like a loud noise.
Now the air snags and eddies round them the way a river
Snags and eddies round a sunken rust-red engine.
They concentrate my attention, that was happy
Playing and resting without committing itself.

The walls, also, seem to be warming themselves.
The tulips should be behind bars like dangerous animals;
They are opening like the mouth of some great African cat,
And I am aware of my heart: it opens and closes
Its bowl of red blooms out of sheer love of me.
The water I taste is warm and salt, like the sea,
And comes from a country far away as health.

An internationally recognized composer, **C. Curtis-Smith** is the recipient of over 100 grants, awards, and commissions, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Koussevitzky Prize at Tanglewood, the Prix du Salabert, and grants from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, the Rockefeller Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council for the Arts, and most recently, commissions from the Barlow Endowment and the Harvard University Fromm Foundation.

In 2001, his *Twelve Etudes* for Piano were selected for the repertoire list for the Eleventh Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. Leon Fleisher has performed his Concerto for Left Hand and Orchestra on the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's subscription series, (Neemi Jarvi conducting), with the New Japan Philharmonic Orchestra, and with the American Composers Orchestra in Carnegie Hall.

In 1972, he "invented" the technique of bowing the piano using bows made of nylon line. This novel technique has been widely imitated by other composers, including George Crumb and Stephen Scott. His music is published by Theodore Presser, Marks Music, Mel Bay Publications, and Editions Salabert (Paris).

As a pianist, Curtis-Smith has appeared as a solo pianist in recitals at the National Gallery and the Phillips Collection in Washington DC. Orchestral appearances include performances with the Indianapolis Symphony, the Seattle Symphony, the Spokane Symphony, and the Kalamazoo Symphony. In 1986, he premiered the last three etudes of William Bolcom's Pulitzer Prize winning *Twelve New Etudes*, and *Knockstück* from Bolcom's *Three Dance Portraits*. Recently he collaborated with Bolcom to write *Collusions*, a piece in which each composer took turns writing successive phrases of the music.

Two Songs: "Vallorbe" and "Vision des Erblindeten" *Vallorbe*—Mai 1917

Du himmlisches Geflecht, du Glockenblumenkorb,
Ursprung der Orbe, der Welt, du unversehrtes Ziel,
du Wonneort Vallorbe, das in den Mai mir fiel,
du Thal der Thäler du, traumtiefes Thal der Orbe!

Du Sonntag der Natur, hier seitab war die Ruh.
Ursprung der Zeit! So hat, da alles war geglückt,
der Schöpfer diesen Kuß der Schöpfung aufgedrückt,
hier saß der Gott am Weg zum guten lac de Joux.

Du Gnade, die verweht den niebesiegten Wahn,
wie anders war es da, und da entstand die Zeit,
dieweil sie staunend still stand vor der Ewigkeit.
Wie blau ist doch die Welt vom Schöpfer aufgethan!

Vision des Erblindeten

So, Mutter, Dank! So fühl' ich deine Hand.
Oh, sie befreit von Nacht und Vaterland!
Ich athme Wald und heimatliches Glück.
Wie führst du mich in deinen Schoß zurück.

Nun ist der Donner dieser Nacht verrollt.
Ich weiß es nicht, was sie von mir gewollt.
O Mutter, wie dein guter Morgen thaut!
Schon bin ich da, wo Gottes Auge blaut.

Tonight's performance includes the world premiere of two works by the eminent Viennese composer **Anton Webern** (1883-1945): "Vallorbe" and "Vision des Erblindeten," both songs for soprano and a nearly identical chamber ensemble of thirteen instruments. Justly celebrated for the austere abstraction of his instrumental works and lauded as a visionary by later generations of avant-garde artists, Webern was also an ardent song composer, and songs comprise nearly half of his published works. Like his teacher, Arnold Schoenberg, Webern described his own music as the inevitable continuation of the revered Romantic tradition of Schubert, Brahms, Wolf and Mahler, who were all likewise prolific composers of song. In Webern's oeuvre, this venerated tradition of German Lieder is translated into the modernist atonal idiom.

Among the numerous song projects that Webern sketched and abandoned, the drafts of "Vallorbe" and "Vision des Erblindeten" provide poetic settings that are nearly complete, except for numerous details of expression, dynamics and instrumentation, which have required extensive editorial interpretation. Created in 1918 and 1919 respectively, both songs set poems by Karl Kraus (1874-1936), the enigmatic Viennese journalist, playwright and sardonic social critic, whose journal *Die Fackel* Webern and his associates read avidly. The composer seems to have originally conceived these pieces as the middle pair in a cycle of four songs based on Kraus

Vallorbe—May 1917

You heavenly tangle, you basket of bluebells,
origin of the orb, of the world, you unspoiled goal,
you blissful word Vallorbe, that was revealed to me in May,
you valley of valleys, dream-deep valley of the Orbe!

You Sunday of nature, here remote was rest.
Origin of time! There, after everything was accomplished,
the creator pressed this kiss on the creation,
here sat God on the way to good Lake Joux.

You grace, which disperses the never-defeated delusion,
how different it was there, and there time began,
standing in astonished silence before eternity.
How blue the creator made the world!

Vision of the Blinded One

So, mother, thanks! Thus I feel your hand.
Oh, it frees me from night and the fatherland!
I breathe forest and home's happiness.
How you guide me back to your bosom.

Now the thunder of this night is rolled away.
I do not know what they wanted from me.
Oh mother, how your good morning dewes!
Already I am there, where God's eye blues.

texts, along with "Wiese im Park," ultimately published as the first of Four Songs, op. 13, and a similarly orchestrated setting of the poem "Flieder" (Lilac), of which Webern sketched multiple incomplete versions in 1920.

Kraus's "Vallorbe" (Valley of the Orbe) was inspired by the poet's sojourn in the Franco-Swiss border town of that name, where the River Orbe flows through the 1000 meter high Vallée de Joux. "Vision des Erblindeten" (Vision of the Blinded), on the other hand, is one of Kraus's numerous anti-war essays, and the poem no doubt resonated with Webern's despair, revealed by his letters in the final years of World War I. Both songs project dissonant harmonic languages, yet their pictorially descriptive content reveals an essentially Romantic inheritance. In "Vallorbe," rising and falling melodic contours trace a dramatic Alpine landscape, most strikingly in the soprano's downward leaps on "Vallorbe" and "Ursprung der Orbe" (origin of the world), and in the final plunge to the lowest pitch of the double bass. Likewise, the repeated staccato chords that open "Vision des Erblindeten" are programmatically suggestive of gunfire or some other mechanization of war. This agitated rhythmic figure recurs at formal divisions within the work, but is ultimately transformed into the celestial music of the final measures, where a vision of the Virgin Mary provides comfort and final rest.

Jerry Cain (b. 1963) joined the musicology faculty at the University of Iowa in 2005, where he teaches graduate courses in twentieth-century and American music, and undergraduate music appreciation. He specializes in sketch studies and the Second Viennese School. His current projects investigate Anton Webern's autograph manuscripts, focusing on the many unpublished song sketches created between 1914 and 1924. Cain's critical editions of two such songs, "Vallorbe" and "Vision des Erblindeten," will be published by Universal Edition Vienna later this year. The original manuscripts that are the basis of these editions are the property of the Paul Sacher Stiftung in Basel, Switzerland, with whose kind permission this project and performance are possible.

Concertino for Piano and Chamber Ensemble is scored for piano and a small instrumental force of twelve musicians. The most prevalent intervals in the work are the minor second and its inversion, the major seventh. In selecting the pitch material, care was taken to include pitch-class sets that featured those intervals prominently. The piece is divided into three movements. Movement I, the longest of the three, follows a ternary form. Part A transforms one primary motivic idea through a series of harmonic and rhythmic developments. Part B distributes a secondary theme throughout the ensemble using pointillistic textures. After a brief piano cadenza, the A section returns. The movement ends with a coda. Movement II begins with the percussion articulating a series of delicate unpitched gestures. A sudden interruption by the rest of the ensemble signals the first of three passages highlighting solo wind instruments. Then the piano, which has assumed a more accompanimental role up to this point, enters with its own solo passage before being overtaken by the percussion. The last movement is the fastest and most vibrant of the three. After an introductory passage by solo woodwinds, the piano assumes the prominent role before the other instruments reenter. Finally, the piano executes its longest cadenza, punctuated by unpitched percussion. A sudden flourish from the piano leads to a rousing conclusion.

John Griffin is currently pursuing his Ph.D. in music composition at The University of Iowa, where he studies with David Gompper. He received both his B.M. (2002) and M.M. (2004) from Western Michigan University. While at WMU, he studied piano with Lori Sims and composition with Richard Adams, C. Curtis-Smith, and Robert Ricci. His pieces have been performed at the Imagine 2 Electroacoustic Music Festival, the Electroacoustic Juke Joint, and the Midwest Composers Symposium. At UI, Griffin is a teaching assistant in music theory and serves as the president of the Society of Composers, Inc. University of Iowa chapter. More information can be found at www.johngriffin.com.

Concerto for clarinet, chamber orchestra and interactive computer was completed in January 2003. This evening's performance marks the premiere of a new version without the computer part. Its forces comprise solo clarinet, flute, oboe, alto saxophone, bassoon, horn in F, Bb trumpet, trombone, piano, harp, 3 percussionists, 2 violins, viola, violoncello and contrabass.

The work grows from an extended solo passage in which a single note is reiterated over and over while changing timbrally and

rhythmically. This rhythmic motive is then reinterpreted through a series of transformations calling on the forces of the chamber orchestra. The clarinet part and its associated shadowing in the ensemble changes the fundamental character of the concerto and the perception of both the rhythmic and harmonic content of the clarinet part. The composition requires the utmost attention to detail of all its performers, asking them to stretch their abilities in every dimension. Extended instrumental techniques are used in every instrument to bring about a tapestry of color that is unusual, but crucial to the elements of this work. The composition is divided into 14 contrasting sections, during which timbre and rhythmic content are sifted, diffused and recombined. It is a work that twists and turns through contrasting textures where the ensemble and the soloist wrestle with each other and the language that, though derived from the acoustical essence of their instruments, is thrust upon them.

Noel Zahler's compositions include a wide range of vocal and instrumental works, as well as electroacoustic, interactive and multimedia works. His compositions are published by Associated Music Publishers (G. Schirmer, Inc.), American Composers Edition and APNM music publishers. Recordings of his music include: *Regions I, Four Songs of Departure*, and *Harlequin* (OPUS ONE); *Agarthia* (Capstone); *Trio and for violin and piano* (Albany). *L'espace entre nous*, for flute and guitar will be forthcoming on SIMAX recordings. A frequent collaborator with mathematicians, engineers and computer scientists, Dr. Zahler is the co-author of three computer software programs including the *Artificially Intelligent Computer Performer*, *Score Follow* and *Music Matrix*.

Currently, Zahler is Head of the Carnegie Mellon University School of Music, where he also teaches composition. 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 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. In addition, Dr. Zahler is Vice President of the American Composers Alliance, a national organization founded by Aaron Copland and Roger Sessions in 1937, and a member of the Board of Directors of the American Composers Forum and the Manhattan Sinfonietta. He is listed in *Who's Who in Music*, *Who's Who in the United States* and *Who's Who in the World*.

Zahler was born in New York City. He has earned degrees from Columbia University (DMA), Princeton University (MFA), L'Accademia Musicale Chigiana (Certificato di Perfezionamento), Siena, Italy, and C.U.N.Y. Queens College (BA/MA).

Clarinetist **Michael Norsworthy**, is acclaimed as both a soloist and sought-after chamber musician. He has collaborated with musicians and groups including Klangforum Wien, the Borromeo Quartet, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Marilyn Nonken, John Zorn, Stephen Drury, Tony Arnold, Aleck Karis and Patrick Demenga. Mr. Norsworthy has been featured at concerts at Carnegie Hall, the Casals Festival (Puerto Rico), the Hot House (Chicago), Old First

Concerts (San Francisco), Jordan Hall, St. Louis Pro Musica, the FestiVal Gardena (Italy), Vienna's Musikverein, Moscow's Tchaikovsky Hall and the Aspen Music Festival and worked with conductors Knussen, Ozawa, Robertson, DePriest, and Muti, among others. His recordings are available on the Mode, Canteloupe, Cauchemar and Gasparo labels. He is a member of Ensemble 21 (NY), the Manhattan Sinfonietta, and the Boston Modern Orchestra Project. Mr. Norsworthy holds advanced degrees from the New England Conservatory and Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, where his teachers included Richard Stoltzman, Kalmen Opperman, Elsa Ludwig-Verdehr, and Eric Mandat. He is artist in residence at Harvard University with the ensemble White Rabbit and the Harvard Group for New Music and serves on the faculties of The Boston Conservatory and Columbia University. Michael Norsworthy performs on mouthpieces by Bradford Behn and plays exclusively on Buffet Clarinets and Rico Reserve reeds. He is a performing artist for Buffet Crampon, the Parisian firm that is the world's oldest and most distinguished clarinet maker and Rico International, the world's largest and most popular manufacturer of reeds.

Winter Rites (2008) was written during a 2007 – 2008 winter residency in the Leighton Studios at the Banff Arts Centre, in Alberta, Canada. All of the melodic and harmonic material of the work is derived from a single melodic cell, heard in its entirety only in the middle movement in the solo cello part. Each movement receives its title from a Druid ritual performed during the festival of mid-winter. The three-movement work is performed without pause.

Joseph Dangerfield's creative voice has been garnering much attention over the past several years with performances of his works throughout the United States and abroad. Born in 1977, he began his composition studies at Marshall University (BFA 1999) with Michael Golden. He completed his master's degree at Bowling Green State University in Ohio, working with Marilyn Shrude and Mikel Kuehn, and received a doctorate in 2005 from the University of Iowa.

Dangerfield is the recipient of many awards and recognitions, including The Young and Emerging Composers Award (2002), ASCAP Standard Awards, and the Henry and Parker Pelzer Prize for Excellence in Composition (2005). Twice he was a top-ranked finalist for the Student Fulbright Competition for study at the famed Moscow Conservatory. Most recently, he was selected for a three-week independent residency in the Leighton Studios of the prestigious Banff Centre in Alberta, Canada, which he will complete in December 2007. Recordings of his works are available on the Albany Records label, and many are published by European American Music and PIP Press Music Publications.

He currently resides in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where he is Assistant Professor of music composition and theory, as well as the director of orchestral activities at Coe College.

