Dedicated to new music, he has performed as pianist in some of the most prestigious concert halls in the United States, including Carnegie Hall. Brian's Second Piano Sonata has received both national and international recognition, winning the 2008 National Federation of Music Clubs Emil and Ruth Beyer Composition Award and the 2011 American Liszt Society's Bicentennial Composition Competition. Also a composer of electronic music, his work Waterclock was selected for a performance at the 2009 SEAMUS (Society for Electroacoustic Music in the United States) National Conference.

Mike D'AMBROSIO
Super Groove
was commissioned by my former colleague at Oklahoma State University, Celeste Johnson Frehner. It represents, for me, an attempt to merge some of the fun theory topics I get to teach (set theory, chromatic mediants, sonata form, etc.) with a driving and energetic rhythmic texture. Performing the piece demands a certain amount of comfort with polyrhythms, but the result is extremely rewarding.

Mike D'Ambrsio has been assistant professor of theory and composition at Murray State University in Kentucky since fall 2008. He has held previous teaching positions at Jacksonville State University (Al), Oklahoma State University, University of Dayton, and Cincinnati’s College-Conservatory of Music (CCM). He received his D.M.A. and M.M. degrees in music composition from CCM where he studied with Joel Hoffman and Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon (now at Eastman). Originally from Long Island, New York, Mike did his undergraduate work at Lehigh University where he double-majored in music and accounting.

Mike’s music has been performed by the Philadelphia Brass, Monarch Brass, Shepherd School Brass Choir (Rice University), Cincinnati Camerata, Indiana University Brass Choir, Oklahoma State University Concert Ensemble, Cincinnati Symphony Youth Orchestra, the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM) Symphony Band, CCM Brass Choir, University of South Carolina Concert Choir, Louisiana State University Schola Cantorum, and by soloists and chamber musicians throughout the United States. His Wind on the Island won both the 2009 CCM Camerata Composition Competition and 2007 University of South Carolina Choral Composition Contest and was performed in June 2008 at the Cultural Prelude to the Olympics at the Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing. Its predecessor In You The Earth, also a Pablo Neruda setting, won the 2006 Arant Choral Composition Prize (University of Georgia) and has received several performances in the United States and Italy. Mike has also received ASCAP PLUS Awards for the past six years and has music published with Dorm Publications, Triple Press, and C. Alan Publications.
Center for New Music Concert

September 22, 2013, 7:30 p.m. RIVERSIDE RECITAL HALL.

David Gompper, CNM director
Zachary Stanton, guest conductor

PROGRAM

  Thiago Ancelmo de Souza, clarinet
  Tom Maples, violin/violoncello
  Casey Rafin, piano
  Tyler Swick, Aaron Ziegler & Wannapha Yannavut, percussion
  Zachary Stanton, conductor

II. Broken Love, from Third Sonata for piano (2012)  Brian CIACH (b. 1977)
  Brian Ciach, piano

pierced (2007)  David LANG
  Anthony Arrone, solo cello
  Casey Rafin, piano
  Andrew Thierauf, percussion
  CNM ensemble
  David Gompper, conductor

INTERMISSION

  Elliot Czaplewski, oboe
  Casey Rafin, piano

Increase (2002)  David LANG
  CNM ensemble
  Emily Duncan, flute
  Allison Offerman, oboe
  Thiago Ancelmo de Souza, clarinet
  Fabio Benites Felipe da Silva, bassoon
  Russ Lenth, horn
  Dee Bienschek & Laura Saylor, trumpet
  Nathaniel Lea, trombone
  Andrew Thierauf, Tyler Swick, Aaron Ziegler & Wannapha Yannavut, percussion
  Casey Rafin, piano
  Andrew Gentzsch & Rebecca Malina, violins
  Manuel Tabora Deras, viola
  Tom Maples, violoncello
  Michael White, double bass
  David Gompper, conductor

NOTES & COMPOSER BIOGRAPHIES

David LANG

Cheating, Lying, Stealing
A couple of years ago, I started thinking about how so often when classical composers write a piece of music, they are trying to tell you something that they are proud of and like about themselves. Here’s this big gushing melody, see how emotional I am. Or, here’s this abstract, hard-to-figure-out piece, see how complicated I am, see my really big brain. I am more noble, more sensitive, I am so happy. The composer really believes he or she is exemplary in this or that area. It’s interesting, but it’s not very humble. So I thought, “What would it be like if composers based pieces on what they thought was wrong with them?” Like, here’s a piece that shows you how miserable I am. Or, here’s a piece that shows you what a liar I am, what a cheater I am. I wanted to make a piece that was about something disreputable. It’s a hard line to cross. You have to work against all your training. You are not taught to find the dirty seams in music. You are not taught to be low-down, clumsy, sly and underhanded. In Cheating, Lying, Stealing — although phrased in a comic way — I am trying to look at something dark. There is a swagger, but it is not trustworthy. In fact, the instruction in the score for how to play it says: Ominous funk.

-David LANG

pierced

was commissioned by the ensemble Real Quiet — Felix Fan, cello, David Coslin, percussion and Andy Russo, piano — as a concerto for their ensemble and string orchestra. I was trying to imagine a way that the soloists and the orchestra could relate to each other that would not be old fashioned. I liked the idea of an opposition between them, but I didn’t want the kind of competition that traditional concerti generate, where the soloists try to struggle with the orchestra for the supremacy of their ideas. What would it be like to make two almost completely separate musical worlds, in which the musical material from one world was needed in order to decode the meaning of the material of the other? I imagined, for example, a dissonant, chromatic line in one ensemble and a tonal chord progression in the other. Maybe we would perceive the two as related and necessary to each other, but the material in each world would remain distinct. There would be a wall between them; they wouldn’t hear or influence each other but we could hear their separate contributions mixed together. (And it goes without saying that the combination of materials that we hear would have to sound whole.)

The idea I came up with was to imagine a wall that wasn’t completely solid, but was more of a permeable membrane, a kind of filter or fabric between the soloists and the ensemble — most sounds and notes and tunes would stay in their respective worlds, but some sounds might be able to pass through easily and virtually unchanged. Because of this image of a fabric separating the musicians, I had the idea that the fabric could be pierced at some points, or maybe even ripped as part of the material moves from one musical grouping to the other.
Lang is the recipient of numerous honors and awards, including the Pulitzer Prize, Musical America’s Composer of the Year, Carnegie Hall’s Debs Composer’s Chair, the Rome Prize, the BMWW Music-Theater Prize (Munich), and grants from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York Foundation for the Arts, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 1999, he received a Bessie Award for his music in choreographer Susan Marshall’s The Most Dangerous Room in the House, performed live by the Bang on a Can All-Stars at the Next Wave Festival of the Brooklyn Academy of Music. The Carbon Copy Building won the 2000 Village Voice OBIE Award for Best New American Work. The recording of the music’s movements on Cantaloupe Records was named one of the best CDs of 2001 by The New Yorker. His CD recorded on Naxos was praised both on the rock music site Pitchfork and in the classical magazine Gramophone, and was called his “most exciting new work in years” by the San Francisco Chronicle. The recording of the little match girl passion released on Harmonia Mundi, received the 2010 Grammy Award for Best Small Ensemble Performance.

Lang is co-founder and co-artistic director of New York’s legendary music collective Bang on a Can. His work has been recorded on the Sony Classical, Harmonia Mundi, Teldec, BMG, Point, Chandos, Argo/Decca, and Cantaloupe labels, among others. His music is published by Red Poppy Music (ASCAP) and is distributed worldwide by G. Schirmer, Inc.

Brian CIACH  
Third Sonata  
This piece is the second movement from my Third Sonata (2012) for piano. It is a love song broken up by an extended set of free variations on independent material.

Brian Ciach (pronounced “SIGH-ack”) is a composer and pianist from Philadelphia currently teaching music theory, composition, and electronic music as an assistant professor of music at Murray State University (Murray, Kentucky). His music is evocative and attractive in its imagery, often using intrepid instrumentiation and imaginative formal concepts woven from a free and accessible tonal language. Brian has written a Vegetable Requiem (2012) for hand-made vegetable ocarinas, a Second Piano Sonata (2007) that runs out of notes, and Road Trip (2010) for soprano and chamber orchestra, presenting original poetry set in two ways, as if written by two different composers. “Collective Uncommon: Seven Orchestral Studies on Medical Oddities” (2012), his Indiana University dissertation inspired by curiosities found in the Mütter museum, received this review: “Ciach was the composer most intent upon letting his imagination run wild all over the music (hence the cabbages and dollys), but he also had the strongest sense of how to create layers of sounds...” (Hubbard, St. Paul Pioneer Press).

This program is supported in part by The Elizabeth M. Stanley Performing Arts Endowment.