

CNM Personnel
David Gompper - Director
Ching-chu Hu - Research Assistant

flute

Marcia Fuller, Kim Helton, Linda H. Pereksta

oboe

Mark Weiger*

clarinet

Christine M. Bellomy, Michele Mindt,
Michael Rowlett

bassoon

Dulane Aaberg

horn

Alise Oliver

trumpet

Michael Flynt, David Greenhoe*

trombone

David Johansen*, Tom Nelson, D. Paul Pollard

piano

Thomas Christensen*, Amy Nadel

organ

David Eaton

harp

Pam Weest-Carrasco

percussion

Lee Ferguson, Michael Geary, Edwin Hill,
Tony Oliver, Nick Petrella, James Romig

violin

Poppy Crum, Lisa Dondlinger,
Shinobu Saito^Δ

viola

Michelle Bennett, Deborah Dakin^Δ

violoncello

Dean Bachus, Hsien-Liang Lien^Δ

Double Bass

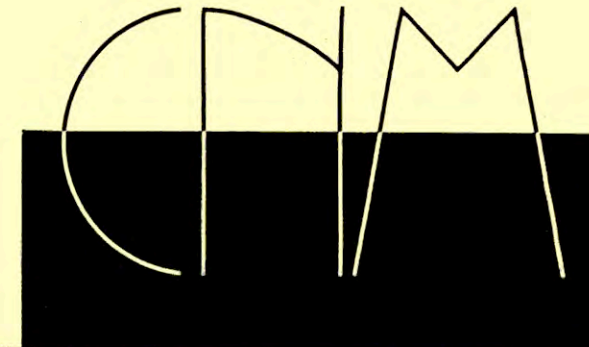
Paul Sharpe^Δ, Anthony Stoops

electronic support

Kirk Corey*, Eric Graham

^Δ= Research Assistant

*=faculty/staff



center for new music

David K. Gompper, Director

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28th Season, First Concert

featuring chamber works of

Fritts, Gompper, Ives, Westlake and Varèse

Sunday, September 18, 1994

Clapp Recital Hall

8:00 p.m.

The next **Center for New Music** concert is Sunday, December 4,
featuring Pierrot lunaire by A. Schoenberg.

program

Omphalo Centric Lecture

Michael Geary, Tony Oliver, James Romig, Edwin Hill, *percussion*

Nigel WESTLAKE

Trio

Kim Helton - *flute*
Donald Haines - *violin*
David Gompper - *piano*

David GOMPPER

Integrales

David Gompper - *conductor*

Edgard VARESE

intermission

Metra

computer-generated tape

Larry FRITTS

A Set of Pieces

for Theater or Chamber Orchestra

No. 1: In the Cage
No. 2: In the Inn [Potpourri]
No. 3: In the Night

David Gompper - *conductor*

Charles IVES

Program Notes

Omphalo Centric Lecture (1985)

"The title comes from the painting by Paul Klee, the direct and centered simplicity of which inspired the composer. The piece also owes much to the music of the African *balofon* (or xylophone), with its persistent ostinati, cross-rhythms and variations on simple melodic fragments. Like African music, it seeks, in the words of the composer, "to celebrate life through rhythm, energy and movement".

-NW

Nigel Westlake (b. 1958), Sydney, New South Wales, studied clarinet with his father. Having always had a fascination with a fusion of musical styles and ideas, he formed the *Magic Puddin' Band* in 1980; an 8-piece ensemble combining musicians with jazz, rock, classical and ethnic backgrounds. In 1984, he undertook further study in Amsterdam, and presently holds the position of clarinetist with the *Australia Ensemble*.

Trio

The tomb of Bethphage, spoken of in the New Testament, was the place the disciples prepared Jesus for his entrance into Jerusalem, celebrated as Palm Sunday. Today the area is covered by fields with indications of inhabitation in unearthed and excavated tombs and wine presses. On the walls of one tomb there is found early Jewish-Christian graffiti, in particular two symbols in Greek, υ (upsilon) and φ (phi), directly above an ossuary. It was believed that these two symbols represented the two angels Michael and Gabriel, whose purpose was to accompany the soul into the place of repose, to protect the soul from the demons of darkness. It is this idea of angels escorting the dead which is central to the imagery of this composition.

The pitches E (υ) and F (φ), musically representing the two Greek symbols, which play an important part in the **Trio**, formally made up of three sections. The motivic and rhythmic ideas of the flute and violin, at first distinct from the piano, become integrated into the texture of the piano. The reverse also holds true: the beginning material in the piano is found in the flute and violin at the end. The piece closes with the imagery of two angels and a soul vanishing from the confines of the tomb - first the piano (the soul), then the flute (Michael) and finally the violin (Gabriel). Tonight's performance includes a newly-composed section to balance out the strength of the finale.

-DKG

Intégrales

Few things irritated Edgard Varèse (1883 - 1965) more than to be labeled a composer of experimental music. It was a label that was attached to him frequently, since his compositions invariably forced audiences to listen to unfamiliar sounds and to new sound combinations, organized in a manner disconcertingly different from those to which they were accustomed. Even the new twelve-tone works of Schoenberg offered more of a handle to their first audiences than the new works of Varèse; Schoenberg, after all, continued to write in a texture and aesthetic derived from the German romantic tradition going back to Wagner and earlier, however complex his themes and harmonic material became. But Varèse had little interest in the linear structures of Schoenberg and his pupils. He seemed

to be composing music from an altogether different point of view. Hence the epithet "experimental"; the term, of course, is used pejoratively, implying that his music doesn't succeed in its aims. Varèse responded to this view in a letter of 1957:

Of course, like all composers who have something new to say, I experiment, and have always experimented. But when I finally present a work it is not an experiment—it is a finished product. My experiments go into the wastepaper basket. People are too apt to forget that in the long chain of tradition each link has been forged by a revolutionary, an experimenter of a previous period.

As early as 1917 (!) he anticipated the fusion of art and science to produce "instruments obedient to my thought" to create "a whole new world of unsuspected sounds." He experienced this fusion in the development of electronic synthesizers, and he was able to employ them in late works that carried out the plans he clearly had in mind in 1936, when he said in a lecture:

When new instruments will allow me to write music as I conceive it...the movement of sound-masses, in shifting planes, will be clearly perceived. When these sound-masses collide the phenomena of penetration or repulsion will seem to occur. Certain transmutations taking place on certain planes will seem to be projected onto other planes, moving at different speeds and at different angles. In the moving masses you will be conscious of their transmutations when they pass over different layers, when they penetrate certain opacities, or are dilated in certain rarefactions.

If he actually achieved this effect with his 1958 *Poème électronique*, composed for the Philips Radio Corporation's pavilion at the Brussels World's Fair, he accomplished something astonishingly close to that effect in 1924 using only existing acoustical instruments in *Intégrales*. The same interest in the colliding masses of sound and their motion through the range of pitches (though not through space, since the instruments stay put on the stage!) is evident here as in the *Poème électronique*. We might even say the Varèse had composed electronic music before there was such a thing! -S.L.

Metra begins with a loud clang-like sonority which decomposes first into a 12-note chromatic chord and then into single 3-note chord. As the piece progresses, this trichord is transformed and combined to create larger pitch structures which serve to delineate individual layers of musical activity. Eventually, these pitch structures begin evolving into the same structure, a process which unites the individual layers of the work and reverses the process of decomposition. After a cadence announces the unification of the work's material, another clang-like sound appears and the decomposition-composition premise is reiterated in a short coda.

Metra was composed in the University of Chicago Computer Music Studio on a Buchla analog synthesizer controlled by an IBM PC.

Lawrence Fritts studied with Shulamit Ran, John Eaton, and Ralph Shapey at the University of Chicago where he is completing his PhD in composition. His music has been performed in Chicago by the Contemporary Chamber Players, the University of Chicago New Music Ensemble, New Music DePaul, and New Music Chicago. His electronic works have been featured in a series of concerts at Columbia College and have been broadcast in the US and Europe. *Metra* was a US finalist in the 1987 ISCM World Music Days competition and was featured on Italian National Radio later that year. Mr. Fritts was interviewed recently on CBC and NPR about the history of electronic music and in January he presented a paper to the Annual Meeting of the American Mathematical Society on the mathematical structure of musical transformations in the music of Milton Babbitt. He teaches electronic music at DePaul University and is currently Visiting Assistant Professor in Composition at the University of Iowa.

A Set of Pieces for Theater or Chamber Orchestra

The *Theater or Chamber Orchestra Set* is a combination of separate things. The first is a result of taking a walk one hot summer afternoon in Central Park with Bart Yung (one-half Asian) and George Lewis (non-Asian), when we were all living together at 65 Central Park in 1906 (or before). Sitting on a bench near the meagerie, watching the leopard's cage and a little boy - this aroused Bart's Oriental fatalism - hence the text to the score. A drum is supposed to be the leopard's feet going pro and con. Technically the principal thing in this movement is to show that a song does not necessarily have to be in any one key to make musical sense. To make music in no particular key has a nice name nowadays - "atonality".

The second movement is one of the several ragtime dances which have been used in whole or part in several things. Some of them started as far back as George Felsberg's reign in "Poli's". George could read a newspaper and play the piano better than some pianist could play the piano without a newspaper at all. When I was in college, I used to go down there and "spell him" a little if he wanted to go out for five minutes and get a glass of beer, or a dozen glasses. If one gets the feeling, or shall I say the bad habit, of these shifts and lilting accents, it seems to offer other basic things not used now (or used very little) in music of even beats and accents - at least it seems to me.

The last part of the third movement, where the cello starts *Abide With Me*, was played in an evening service at Central Presbyterian Church, New York, some time before May 1902 (when I resigned as a nice organist and gave up music). In 1906, before we left 65 Central Park West, the first and last movements were completed and scored as they stand now. In doing so, the last movement was extended frontwards. In other words, a suggestion of the old minstrel tune, "I hear the owl a-hootin'" (sung in the travelling "Minstrel Shows" popular in the 1880s and '90s - a form of 'theatricals' that unfortunately has almost disappeared) was put in a horn melody over the same set of chords. As this ends, the *Abide With Me* with the "Down in the Cornfield" tunes start. Behind the music is a simpler picture - it is a quiet piece, a sort of reverie of an old man who has lost everything but his faith, and memories - the heart of an old dying alone in the night, sad, low in heart - then God comes to help him - bring him to his own loved ones. This is the main line, the substance. All around, the rest of the music is but the silence and these sounds of the night - bells tolling in the far distance, etc.

- Charles E. Ives, from *Memos*