



SUNDAY, November 30, 2008 1:00PM
Jan Hus Church,
351 East 74th St., New York

Concert Program

Crystallization

-Amy Berger, harp

L'aube enchantée: sur le raga Todi

-Amy Berger, flute; Wendy Stern, flute

pomme de terre

-Margaret Lancaster, piccolo, voice

Teen & Variation

-Martin Urbach, percussion, toys

Power in the ?

-Derin Oge, piano

Toneland Security

-Margaret Lancaster, bass flute, voice

Dolce Tormento

-Margaret Lancaster, piccolo, voice

May Tchi-Chen

Ravi Shankar

Paul Steenhuisen

Martin Urbach

Jordan McLean

Paul Steenhuisen

Kaija Saariaho

The ***Composer's Voice Concert Series*** is an opportunity for contemporary composers to express their musical aesthetic and personal "voice" created in their compositions.

Vox Novus collaborating with the ***Remarkable Theater Brigade*** and ***Jan Hus Church*** to produce a monthly concert series promoting the chamber works of contemporary composers. ***Vox Novus*** produces and promotes new music. They are dedicated to contemporary music, the musicians who perform, and the composers that write the music of today. Their mission is to cultivate a music community and make their work available to the greater public. ***Remarkable Theater Brigade*** founded by **Christian McLeer**, **Dan Jeselsohn** and **Monica Harte**, creates and produces new operas and musicals and takes children's versions out to special-needs and at-risk children.



Support from the ***Puffin Foundation***

"...continuing the dialogue between art and the lives of ordinary people."

Crystallization (May Tchi-Chen) Amy Berger, harp

Crystallization (2008) is dedicated to my harpist friend Amy Berger. The piece starts chromatically and moves progressively toward the tonality of F#, as in the crystallization process, the material gets more and more pure and glistens. I use an array of the harp gestures: glissandi, running scales, tremolos, at the same time transform the harp into a Chinese Zither, by using the trills and the bent notes, and the semi-pentatonic scales and chords. The piece is lyrical and mysterious, which suits Amy's personality.

L'aube enchantée: sur le raga Todi (Ravi Shankar) Amy Berger, flute; Wendy Stern, flute

L'aube enchantée was adopted from the raga Todi. Todi is a traditional morning melody that begins slowly and meditatively before moving on to a rhythmic section of variations that builds to a final crescendo. There is a heavy use of unisons, octaves and fifths in the interplay between the harp and flute. The harp part makes use of repeating modal drones that are interspersed with rapid scale passages, arpeggios and tremolos. *L'aube enchantée* manages to capture the spirit of a raga within the confines of the western twelve-tone scale.

pomme de terre (Paul Steenhuisen) Margaret Lancaster, piccolo, voice

pomme de terre ("potato", or literally "earth apple"), consists of segmented arborescences mapped using material selected from 3 parallel cipher-based pitch systems. The cryptographic sets are similar to those devised by Michael Haydn, Arthur Honneger, and Olivier Messiaen, and herein render statements of hunger.

Teen & Variation (Martin Urbach) Martin Urbach, percussion, toys

Theme, variation, percussion, toys, ????

Power in the ? (Jordan McLean) Derin Oge, piano

Composition of "Power in ?" was begun for pianist Derin Oge for her masters recital at SUNY Purchase in 2006, and is completed with this, its premier performance. It is composed in the spirit of a broken player piano, meant to highlight Derin's great technical facility and wide range of expression, character and humor. "?" is in 3 movements, beginning with an "abstract" where our pianist makes choices about length and tempo of phrase. The second movement is a "mechanico", meant to conjure the sounds of a large machine somewhere down a long hallway. The break in the piece comes at the third movement, a setting of an original "lament", titled "The Wayfarer", inspired by the mystic poet Kahlil Gibran.

Toneland Security (Paul Steenhuisen) Margaret Lancaster, bass flute, voice

Taking as its juxta/superposed sources fragments of several protest songs combined with tectonic layerings of duplicate rhythmic templates appropriated from an Ewe war song (Ghana), the embedded counterpoint of this brief quodlibet may or may not correspond with appropriate protective or sanctioned musical responses to international crises. Though severe, frankly, it is imagined that one day the highly pointed coagulation of such disparate materials will no longer be required in any guarded arena, and that authorities will take proactive steps to reduce the currently necessary low-level vulnerability of pitch and rhythmic materials to such nonspecific threats.

Dolce Tormento (Kaija Saariaho) Margaret Lancaster, piccolo, voice

Written for Camilla Hoitenga, *Dolce Tormento* is inspired by and contains fragments from Francesco Petrarca's heartbreaking Canzoniere 132 (rough translation below).

*If it is not love, then what's that I feel?
But if it's love, God, what is and what is it?
If it is good, how can it seem so deadly?
If it is evil, then why is torment so sweet?*

*If I voluntarily glow, why do I deplore it? If it is unwilling, then what use are the complaints? O death alive, full of mischief
to worry about what you dispose me, I will receive?*

*But if I want to complain, I am wrong.
When I drift adverse winds on the high seas
in a rotten boat, rudderless,
so empty of knowledge and so full of mistakes,
that I do not know what I want:
I shiver in the summer and in winter am on fire!*

Harpist **Amy Berger** received her B.A. degree from SUNY Stony Brook and M.M. from the Yale School of Music. She has performed internationally and across the U.S. including orchestral music, chamber music, opera, ballet, Broadway shows, film scores, and television commercials. She has worked with the New York Symphonic Ensemble, American Symphony, The New York City Opera and was principal harpist with the Spoleto Festival Orchestra in both South Carolina and Spoleto, Italy. She has appeared as a harpist in movies, including the recently released August Rush. She has recorded with Tony Bennett, Cy Coleman, Van Dyke Parks, and Juan Luis Guerra. She has also recorded with the String Orchestra of the Rockies, the Orchestra of the State of Mexico, and the Spoleto Festival Orchestra. Her solo CD, *On Golden Harp* was used in the soundtrack of the documentary, *One Hundred Years of Baseball*. Amy has been performing with the Stamford Symphony as Principal Harpist since 1987. She continues to teach privately in the New York area.

Born in Taipei, composer **May-Tchi Chen** received a BA degree from Soochow University, Taiwan and Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Composition from the College-Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati. His main teachers were Ma Shuei-Long and Jonathan Kramer. She was an International Nadia and Lili Boulanger Fellow in 1998-89 in Paris. Then she was a Visiting Scholar at Columbia University in New York City. In 1997-98, she led the Program-Planning Division of the National Theater/Concert Hall in Taipei. Chen was a nominee for the 1997 Music Composition Award of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Ms. Chen continues to collaborate with excellent musicians for new works and have had performances in major American, European and Asian cities. She receives commissions and grants from international foundations and institutions. Her works are in the collection of the Contemporary Music Documentation Center (CDMC) in Paris, the music library of the University of Cincinnati, and of Ohio State University. Chen's most renowned work is a new opera, *The Firmiana Rain*, based on a ninth century royal love tragedy of the T'ang Dynasty. The New York City Opera selected *The Firmiana Rain* for their *Vox 2002: Showcasing American Composers*. A full production was premiered at National Theater, Taipei, Taiwan, in November 2007. About four thousand people in the audience packed the house in three performances.

Noted for her interdisciplinary collaborations and hailed as "our leading exponent of the avant-garde flute" (Kyle Gann, *Village Voice*), **Margaret Lancaster** has built a large repertoire of new works that employ extended techniques, dance, drama, multi-media and electronics. Performance highlights include Lincoln Center Festival, Spoleto Festival USA, Santa Fe New Music, Whitney Museum, Edinburgh Festival and Festival D'Automne. She has recorded on OO Discs, New World Records, Innova, Naxos and Tzadik, and was selected for Meet the Composer's New Works for Soloist Champions project. An amateur furniture designer and avid tap dancer, Lancaster performs solo and chamber music concerts worldwide and acts in Lee Breuer's OBIE-winning *Mabou Mines Dollhouse*.

Composer **Jordan McLean** (b. 1974) has been active as a band leader and trumpeter for over 15 years, and has collaborated with a diverse multitude of musicians, ensembles and performance organizations at home and abroad. Jordan is an active member of the composer's consortium *Vox Novus*, to whom he has contributed multiple instrumental works. He works as associate musical director for TONY winning choreographer Bill T. Jones on the production of *FELA!*, and has served as associate conductor for the Grammy winning Orchestra of Our Time. Jordan graduated *summa cum laude* in composition at SUNY Purchase where he is currently adjunct professor of musicology. This is his tenth year as a visiting artist in NYC public schools. the *Ars Brunensis* Chorus and the *Langroise Trio*. Jordan has released two albums as a leader with his group *Fire Of Space* and his first with the *Piano Music & Song Trio*; he is co-founder of the electro-acoustic group *DROID*; his up-coming lp and cd, "*World Gone Mad*" is for trumpet and electronics, a sound developed and performed in venues throughout NYC. As lead trumpeter and charter member of *Antibalas* he has collaborated with Angelique Kidjo (on her Grammy winning *Djin Djin*) Medeski Martin and Wood, and TV on the Radio. He has performed in major music festivals in 20 countries and 40 States, and has appeared numerous times on National Public Radio.

Pianist **Derin Oge** was born in Turkey and began her piano studies at age nine, winning her first competition when she was 11. In 2004, she recorded Mozart's Sonata in B flat major for the European Broadcast Union. She has studied in Salzburg, Austria and Groningen, Holland. She is a graduate of the MSGSU State Conservatory and received her master of music degree from State University of New York, Purchase in May. She also received her Artist Diploma degree and is a piano teacher at the same university.

Ravi Shankar, (b.1920) the legendary sitarist and composer is India's most esteemed musical Ambassador and a singular phenomenon in the classical music worlds of East and West. As a performer, composer, teacher and writer, he has done more for Indian music than any other musician. He is well known for his pioneering work in bringing Indian music to the West. This however, he did only after long years of dedicated study under his illustrious guru Baba Allaudin Khan and after making a name for himself in India. Always ahead of his time, Ravi Shankar has written two concertos for sitar and orchestra, violin-sitar compositions for Yehudi Menuhin and himself, music for flute virtuoso Jean Pierre Rampal, music for Hosan Yamamoto, master of the Shakuhachi and Musumi Miyashita - Koto virtuoso, and collaborated with Phillip Glass (Passages). George Harrison produced and participated in two record albums, "Shankar Family & Friends" and "Festival of India" composed by Ravi Shankar. He has composed extensively for films and Ballets in India, Canada, Europe and the United States, including Charly, Gandhi and Apu Trilogy. Ravi Shankar is an honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and is a member of the United Nations International Rostrum of composers.

Born in 1952 in Finland, Composer **Kaija Saariaho** lived a childhood embedded in music, playing several instruments. In parallel to musical studies, she started art studies, at the Fine Arts School of Helsinki, that she quickly quit to concentrate on music. At the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, she received the composition teachings of Paavo Heininen, before to follow, in Darmstadt then in Fribourg, the courses of Brian Ferneyhough and Klaus Huber. She confirms her international notoriety with works such as Verblendungen for orchestra and tape (1982-84), Lichtbogen for chamber ensemble and live-electronics (1985-86), Nymphéa (1987) commission of the Lincoln Center for the Kronos Quartet. Her principle works include a violin concerto, Graal théâtre, written for Gidon Kremer in 1995 ; two works dedicated to Dawn Upshaw : Château de l'âme premiered at the Salzburg Festival in 1996, and Lonh, a cycle of melodies for soprano and electronics premiered at the Wien Modern Festival in 1996 ; Oltra mar for orchestra and mixed choir, premiered in 1999 by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra ; a flute concerto.

Composer **Paul Steenhuisen** (b.1965) studied composition with Keith Hamel (DMA, UBC) Louis Andriessen (Amsterdam/Royal Conservatory. The Hague), Michael Finnissy, and Tristan Murail (IRCAM, Paris). His work Between Lips and Lips appeared at the 1994 Gaudeamus Music Week. As a student, his music received more than a dozen national and international awards appeared at the 1994 Gaudeamus Music Week, and he was also awarded the Governor General of Canada Gold Medal as the outstanding student in all faculties at the University of British Columbia. Steenhuisen held the position of Composer in Residence with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra 1998 – 2000. He has taught at the University of Alberta, most recently has been President of the Canadian Section of the International Society of Contemporary Music.

Flutist **Wendy Stern** is a member of the dynamic and innovative group, Flute Force, winner of the Artists International Competition and recipient of numerous grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Chamber Music America, and the New York Council of the Arts. With Flute Force, Wendy has performed and coached chamber music in Australia, Canada and throughout the United States. As a freelance flutist in New York, Wendy has played in the flute sections of many prestigious organizations, including the New York Philharmonic, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the Orchestra of St. Luke's, and the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra. Wendy received her Master of Music Degree from the Juilliard School, where she was a scholarship student of Julius Baker.

Drummer **Martin Urbach** juxtaposes his Bolivian and Jewish roots with his experience as an immigrant in the United States, to add color to his sophisticated jazz grooves. Born on August 4th, 1982 in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, Martin discovered the drums at age 12. Shortly after, he began performing in the country's top music venues and festivals. Upon finishing high school, Martin moved to New Orleans, LA to attend the music program at The University of New Orleans. During his five-year stint in the "Big Easy", Martin performed with a "Who's Who" of the music industry. He holds a bachelors degree in jazz performance from the University of New Orleans and a masters degree in jazz performance from the Manhattan School of Music. Currently, Martin lives in Astoria , NY where he relocated after Hurricane Katrina destroyed his home in New Orleans. Martin divides his time between playing concerts and touring the world as a sideman and bandleader, composing music, and teaching drums and music to young children. Martin recently released his first recording entitled "Free Will", which showcases his talents as a performer, composer and bandleader. Through performing and teaching, Martin spreads the joy that music brings him in his life.