Department of Music
College of Fine Arts
presents

NEXTET

Jed Distler, Composer-in-Residence
Virko Baley, music director and conductor

Nextet String Quartet
James Harvey, violin
Crystal Yuan, violin
Hanna Suk, viola
David Warner, violincello

Timothy Bonenfant, bass clarinet
Janis McKay, bassoon
Jennifer Grim, alto flute
Brandon Bell, percussion
Wei-Wei Le, violin
Andrew Smith, violincello

PROGRAM

Carlos G. Carrasco
(b. 1980)
Rebellious (2011-12)

Travis Bernau
(b. 1989)
Arcane Terrene (2012)

Kristen Evans
(b. 1990)
String Quartet (2012)

Virko Baley
(b. 1938)
Treny-Laments II (1996)

Greg Burr
(b. 1984)
String Quartet No. 1 (2012)
Movement II

Alexander Cornwell
(b. 1988)
Through, It Opens (2012)

Joshua Sjoen
(b. 1989)
Quartet No. 1 (2012)
Allegro
Largo
Vivace

INTERMISSION
Frederick Lesemann  
(b. 1989)  
Janis McKay, bassoon

Anton Oxenuk  
(b. 1992)

Bryan Curt Kosters  
(b. 1979)

Richard Belgard  
(b. 1971)

Jed Distler  
(b. 1956)

Concertino for Bassoon and Six Instruments  
(2006; rev. 2009)

String Quartet, Rebellion (2012)  
I. In Firm Grasp

Five Variations on Loss and Isolations (2012)

String Quartet, Ancient Tones (2012)  
I. Appalachia  
II. Bells

String Quartet, No. 1 – Mister Softee Variations (1999)

Monday, April 9, 2012  
7:30 p.m.  
Dr. Arturo Rando-Grillot Recital Hall  
Lee and Thomas Beam Music Center  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

The next and final NEXTET concert of the 2011-12 season will be on Monday, April 16 at 7:30 PM and will be our inaugural annual concert featuring music of UNLV’s composition graduates. Don’t miss it!
About our Composer-in-Residence:

If you're into music, you've probably encountered Jed Distler. He's all around you. You may remember Jed's scores to such airline boarding videos as *Spring Flowers in Appalachia*, music for holiday bargain CDs like *Baby's First Christmas*, or mini-operas like *The Three Minute Saga of Rudolfo* premiered at Lincoln Center. Perhaps you've played his published Bill Evans and Art Tatum transcriptions, or read his record reviews in *Gramophone* or on *Classictoday.com*. Or caught him playing Beethoven with the Bill T.Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company at BAM, or knew about his 2006 recital tour of Italy. Maybe in February 2007 you saw Jed's name all over the newspapers when he helped uncover one of the great scandals in the history of classical recording. Or else you've heard such compositions as *Three Landscapes for Peter Wyer* (for toy piano, recorded by Margaret Leng Tan on Point Records), the String Quartet No. 1 -- *Mister Softee Variations*, premiered in 1999 by the Flux Quartet and broadcast every summer on John Schaefer's *New Sounds*), or Jed's tour-de-force piano theater extravaganza *The Gold Standard* - a collaboration with playwright Ed Schmidt. On recitals and on disc, he has premiered works by Frederic Rzewski, Lois V Vierk, Virko Baley, Wendy MacChambers, Andrew Thomas, Virgil Thomson, David Maslanka, Douglas Geers, William Schimmel, Kitty Brazelton, Alvin Curran, Eleanor Hovda, Bob Windbiel, and others. You might remember such press clips about Jed as *"an altogether extraordinary pianist"* (Newark Star-Ledger), or *"a musician with smoke coming out of his ears"* (alternative radio station WFMU). As ComposersCollaborative's co-founder and Artistic Director, Jed has created and programmed such innovative festivals as Solo Flights, Non Sequitur, and, most recently, *Serial Underground* at the Cornelia Street Café. He's received grants from ASCAP, Meet the Composer, American Composers Forum, and a Macdowell Colony residency in the fall of 2001. As CCL's 20th anniversary year unfolds, Jed continues to beat new music's vibrant, ever changing, boundary blurring drum.

9+9 = *Nine String Quartets* by nine UNLV student composers is the second such event (the 1st occurred the previous season), which has been established as an annual one. The string quartet is one of the most challenging and rewarding genres in music and shows better than anything else how well the composer knows his/her craft.

Program Notes

*Treny-Laments II* (1996) for bassoon or bass clarinet solo

The Polish poet Jan Kochanowski (1530-84) was one of the greatest the Slavic letters produced up to the 19th century.

"All is in vain! We play at blindman's buff
Until hard edges break into our path.
Man's life is error. Where, then, is relief?
In shedding tears or wrestling down my grief?"

Tren-Lament 1

"Where is that gate for grief which, long ago,
Let Orpheus enter the dark realm below."

Tren-Lament 14

Kochanowski wrote his Treny as a way of coming to terms with the grief caused by the death of his young daughter. In the poems he treats the tragic event as if the girl had reached different stages of childhood, when in reality she died in infancy. When I began to write this work, originally only for contrabassoon, I found the poetry very moving, and began to use various parts as a foundation for musical lines. As it expanded into a
work for violoncello and, soon after, for bassoon, my mother died on July 20, 1996. I completed the first draft of the three versions on August 14, 1996 and dedicated them to the memory of my mother, Lidia Baley, nee Metelsky. By the time the project was completed, in 2002, the work expanded to four parts, Treny I - IV, for 2 violoncelli and soprano, lasting over an hour. The expanded cello version of this piece is titled Treny III, and was completed in 1998.

— Virko Baley

Lesemann: Concertino for Bassoon and 6 Instruments (A Day for Pierrot) was written for Yúeh Chou, Anna Marsh and Sara Schoenbeck. I thank them all for the inspiration of their playing and their friendship. It was first performed by Sara Schoenbeck and Ensemble Green an April 21, 2007, Mark Lowenstein conducting. It is the third of three Concertinos for solo woodwind instruments and an ensemble derived from Schoenberg’s masterpiece, Pierrot Lunaire. The first features oboe and was premiered by Paul Sherman with both the USC Thornton Contemporary Music Ensemble directed by Donald Crockett. The second features flute and was premiered by Julie Long, also with Ensemble Green.

The structure of this Concertino is a roughly ABCBA with a somewhat extended transition between the first AB pair. One of its features is the contrast of articulation characteristic of the bassoon and the variety of colors available in its different ranges and, indeed between adjacent notes. To highlight this the instruments chosen for the ensemble contrast with the basic sound of the bassoon: alto flute, bass clarinet, muted string trio, orchestra bells and small shaker. It was composed in 2006 and revised in 2009.

The subtitle carries a certain intentional ambiguity. Whatever image it and the music bring to mind is your own image, and that is as it must be.

— Frederick Lesemann

Distler: String Quartet No. 1 – Mister Softee Variations (1999)

In 1999 I received a commission from the American Music Center to write a work for the New York-based Flux Quartet, whose adventurous approach to new music and new music programming appealed to me, along with the fact that each member of the group at the time was a composer in his own right. For years I had wanted to compose a set of variations on the Mister Softee Ice Cream Truck Theme Song. This song was the bane of New Yorkers, who had to put up with it every summer when the truck pulled up on neighborhood blocks all over the city, and the theme played over and over again on a tape loop. It turned out that the theme had lyrics, and was in copyright, and I obtained permission and rights to use the theme for my quartet, providing that a) the piece is not used to promote another ice cream company besides Mister Softee, and b) the piece may not be used to promote recreational drug use. Fair enough!

The theme is introduced with a slow, driving accompaniment that the Flux Quartet violinist Tom Chiu likened to the truck’s motor revving up, followed by a rather grandiose, over-the-top rendition of the theme itself. The first variation uses the theme’s coda as its melodic frame of reference, Variation 2 continues to explore, reharmonize and reshuffle the theme. Variation 3 is a blatant imitation of a late 1950s movie theme, while Variation 4 consists of recitatives. Variation 5 is a hoedown: Copland meets Shostakovich perhaps? Variations 6 and 7 further deconstruct the theme in more jagged, dissonant terms. Variation 8 is a minuet, Variation 9 transforms the theme and displaces its rhythms in a minor key, supported by a constant undulating accompaniment. It ends with soft, dissonant sustained chords, over which the actual theme played by the truck is heard in the distance. This dovetails into a slow variation where the theme is stated in reverse, followed by a joyful triple fugue that mercifully lasts less than two minutes, and combines the Mister Softee theme, the theme from the 1960s television sit-com Mr. Ed (a horse is a horse, of course, of course, etc.) and fragments from Beethoven’s Grosse Fuge.

— Jed Distler