UNLV
Department of Music
College of Fine Arts
presents

NEXTET

Frederick Lesemann, Composer-in-Residence
Virko Baley, Director and Conductor

PROGRAM

Valentin Silvestrov
(b. 1937)
Branding Bell, vibraphone  Chris Tusa, tubular bells  Anthony Barone, harpsichord

Travis Bernau
(b. 1989)
Sammi Ciarlo, violin  David Chavez, viola  Dominique Jackson, violoncello
Jae Ahn-Benton, piano  Travis Bernau, conductor

Joshua Sjoen
(b. 1989)
Carmella Cao, flute  Joshua Sjoen, violin  Eugenie Burkett, organ

Frederick Lesemann
(b. 1936)
Janis McKay, bassoon  Carmella Cao, alto flute  Jennifer Iles, bass clarinet
Brandon Bell, percussion  Samantha Ciarlo, violin  Hanna Suk, viola
David Warner, violoncello

Valentin Silvestrov
Mystery for Alto Flute and Six Percussion Groups
(1964)
Jennifer Grim, alto flute
Brandon Bell, Chris Tusa, A.J. Merlino,
Charlie Gott, Mike Smith, Jeremy Meronuck, percussion

Wednesday, December 7, 2011  7:30 p.m.  Dr. Arturo Rando-Grillot Recital Hall
Lee and Thomas Beam Music Center
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Frederick Lesemann has received grants and awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Rockefeller Foundation, Meet the Composer, Centrum Center for the Arts, the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund, ASCAP, and the USC Faculty Research and Innovation Fund. The Kronos Quartet, The Colonial Symphony, the Pasadena Chamber Orchestra, Southwest Chamber Music, USC, and numerous individuals have commissioned him. His compositions encompass media from orchestra to solo guitar, electronic tape to string quartet, and chorus to percussion ensemble. His works have been performed by such groups as the Kronos Quartet, the Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group, the Buffalo Philharmonic, the Southwest Chamber Music Society, and at such places as the Kennedy and Lincoln Centers, Carnegie Hall, the Tanglewood Music Center, the Ojai Music Festival, Walt Disney Concert Hall and the Arnold Schoenberg Institute. Recordings of his work are found on Town Hall, Cambria and Crystal records. He is Professor and Chair of the Composition department at the University of Southern California Flora L. Thornton School of Music and was for many years the Director of the Electronic Music Studios there.

Concertino for Bassoon and 6 Instruments (*A Day for Pierrot*) was written for Yūch 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 on 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 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.
Valentin Silvestrov is considered one of the most important contemporary composers writing today. Born in Kyiv (Kiev), Ukraine in 1937, Silvestrov began music studies at the age of 15, at first privately and then at the Stetsenko Adults' Evening Music School. In 1955 he left the school with a Gold Medal and entered the Kiev Institute of Construction Engineering. From 1958-64 he studied composition under Lyatoshynsky and harmony and counterpoint under Revutsky at the P. Tchaikovsky Conservatory. In Kiev, graduating in 1964, Silvestrov's debut as composer occurred in December 1961 during a plenum of younger composers of the Ukraine, at which time his first important work, the Piano Quintet (1961), created a sensation of sorts. The work is based on two conflicting concepts: diatonicism and chromaticism flirting boldly with atonality. With the Triada for piano (1961) and Trio for flute, trumpet, and celesta (1962) we are in Silvestrov's own particular world, where the still-evident influences are neutralized and assimilated into aphorismic statements of unromantic (but very expressive) mercurial gestures. In his first fully realized compositions, Mystery for alto flute and six percussion groups (written for Severino Gazzelloni), and graphically notated Projections (both works on tonight's concert) one finds for the first time a fully developed concept of both strife and dialogue between the "cultural" (precisely notated) and "mysterious" (improvisational) structures. The result is a rich and eloquent musical language that brings in the incantory and the magical as an aesthetic condition. The culmination of the first period in Silvestrov's stylistic development (and the beginning of his second) was the monumental Drama (1969-71), a three-movement work that is virtually a clinical study of an artistic crisis, more specifically, the avant-garde crisis. The work is a "thriller" of the mythical imagination. A genuinely significant piece, possibly a masterpiece, it is considered by many within the former Soviet Union to be his most important work from his "first period". The work is highly theatrical, full of conscious archaisms, and an attempt to bring together into a single text the various stages of historical development.

The first movement of Drama is a violin sonata; second movement, a cello sonata; third movement, a trio. The work is highly theatrical, full of conscious archaisms, and an attempt to bring together the various stages of historical development into a single text. This is not to be confused with collage, which is an attempt simply to use readymade material in new ways, often illogical and false. Drama is closer to the concept of parody, in that Thomas Mann's work is parody. The year 1973 saw the creation of a whole cycle of works written in "olden style" and a most remarkable (and unusual) collection of works they are. In them Silvestrov begins to rediscover diatonicism, but of an almost minimalistic (non-functional) kind. Music for Children (Books I and 2), 3 Pieces in Olden Style, etc. were followed by a Cantata for soprano and chamber orchestra. The style reached maturity with the String Quartet composed in 1974. It the quartet and works that followed, culminating in his most popular and most often performed large scale work, Symphony No. 5. Silvestrov has continued to move away from singleness of style, although at the same time consciously confined himself to traditional methods, but in an allegorical manner... Employing the genres and stylistic norms of the 17th to 19th centuries, these pieces exhibit the paradox of an intimate personal expression contained within fixed forms. The decades between 1974 and 2005, were very productive. It was during this period that the mystical and tragic tendencies found their most concrete expression in a series of works that further identified the "allegorical manner" as Silvestrov's terrain. In these works Silvestrov often explores the concept of memory as a dramatic device. One is, in a metaphorical way, experiencing the future of an event long gone. During its 2012-13 season NEXTET is planning on scheduling a number of Silvestrov's major chamber music compositions.
The two works on this evening’s program are his only compositions utilizing percussion instruments as the main source of sound. But each, the sextet of *Mystery* and the duo of *Projections*, has as a non-percussion visitor: the modern alto flute in *Mystery* and the ancient harpsichord in *Projections*.

**Travis Bernau: Agnus Dei** explores the whole tone scale, split chords, and bitonality. Other compositional techniques include pandiatonicism and chordal planing. Asymmetrical and mixed meters are prevalent throughout the piece. *Agnus Dei* is written for piano quartet and is dedicated to the memory of Juan Puga-Luevano.

Travis Bernau is majoring in music composition with an emphasis in piano. He is currently studying composition with Dr. Diego Vega and piano with Lisa Maresch.

**Joshua Sjoen** was born and raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He studied electronic composition at Duquesne University’s Mary Pappert School of Music. He is now perusing a graduate degree in composition here at UNLV. *Trio for Flute, Violin, and Organ* was originally written for the bayan accordion instead of organ. Since the bayan accordion is actually very hard to come by, it can be substituted with a standard piano style accordion or an organ.

The next NEXTET concert is on January 31, 2012

*** Composer-in-Residence Roshanne Etezady