College of Fine Arts

presents

NEXTET
The New Music Ensemble for the 21st Century
Virko Baley, music director

PROGRAM

Nolan Stolz
(b. 1981–)
Princess Ka’iulani
Jennifer Grim, flute

Virko Baley
(b. 1938–)
Partita No. 5 (2009; 2012)
Cante Hondo
Persona III (Luisa Triana)
Jennifer Grim, flute
Virko Baley, piano

Diego Vega
(b. 1968–)
Wild Beasts (2012)
Duo Bel Canto – Clare Birmingham and Emma Pearse-Byron, flutes

Oliver Knussen
(b. 1952–)
Timothy Hoft, piano

John Cage
(1912–1992)
Happy Birthday, John Cage!*
Credo in Us (1942)
Christopher Tusa, percussion
Timothy Jones, percussion
Timothy Hoft, piano
Jennifer Grim, stereo player
Nathan Tanouye (b. 1974–)

Flutissimo! (2012)

Bonnie Buhler-Tanouye, piccolo
Alexander Viazovtsev, flute
Emma Pease-Byron, flute
Clare Birmingham, flute
Jennifer Kuk-Bonora, alto flute
Jennifer Grim, bass flute

*Nextet is planning on performing a number of works by John Cage during the current season.

The next NEXTET concert will be on October 21, 2012 and our composer-in-residence will be Jorge Grossmann with guest pianist Carolyn Grossmann. The concert will include a performance of Grossmann’s complete Siray.

Thursday, September 27, 2012  7:30 p.m.  Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall
Performing Arts Center
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Program Notes

Nolan Stolz's Princess Ka'iulani: Princess Ka'iulani was the last princess of the Kingdom of Hawai'i, as her royal status was revoked by the overthrow of 1893. The Princess composed music and was said to have had a lovely soprano voice. The meaning of the text may be understood as a reflection of her love for her kingdom (ʻāina) and people (kānaka), the anxiety and uncertainty (hopohopo) she may have felt when her kingdom was being overtaken, and the feeling of love she may have felt towards the young men she met during her time in Europe. The text may also be understood as a general expression of love or longing (nipo), and emotions that can sometimes coincide [such as anxiety and uncertainty (hopohopo)], and therefore it is subtitled “a love song” (he mele ho 'oipoipo). The music reflects these emotions; although the piece may not sound “Hawaiian” to many, there are elements of Hawaiian music embedded within (such as a short motif which uses the pitches of the ukelele's open strings).

The text of the vocalisations (Hawaiian with English translation) next to it:

ho'oheno- expression of affection, to love, to cherish
Ka'iulani maka- beloved one, favorite person
Ka'iulani makamaka- intimate person with whom is on open terms
Makalapua- beautiful
maka, makalapua nipo- to be in love with, to love, to long for
mele ho'ipoipo- love song
ho'ohopohopo- to produce anxiety
nipo, hopohopo- anxiety, uncertainty
ho'oheno, Ka'iulani, nipo, ho'ohenoʻaina- land
kānaka- people

Virko Baley's Partita No. 5, subtitled “Triana,” is a five-movement virtuoso work for flutes (C flute, piccolo and alto-flute, one performer) and piano that is firmly rooted in the rich flamenco tradition of the Iberian Peninsula. At the same time, it is not a traditional work that attempts to mimic the flamenco style, but rather uses the internal structures of the alegrias, farrucas, siguiriyas, cante hondas, sabicas and other flamenco forms as melodic, harmonic and rhythmic progressions that weave in and out throughout the movements of the piece freely. The flutist is an active physical presence not in only purely musical matters, but in certain gestures that closely resemble a dancer. The work’s other characteristic is that it will exist in being able to have other elements added to it ad libitum: (a) percussion (performing Iberian percussion instruments), (b) flamenco dancers, (c) flamenco guitarist. The two movements being performed tonight are the opening, Cante Hondo, which reflects the style of café cantante (tavern performances in urban settings) and Persona III, a musical portrait of the great classical flamenco dancer and choreographer, Luisa Triana. The premiere of the complete Partita will occur in New York on February 2, 2013.

Wild Beasts: Diego Vega composed Wild Beasts for the flute duo of Clare Birmingham and Emma Pease-Byron, Duo Bel Vento, to world premiere at the National Flute Association 40th Annual Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada. The duet opens with a slow dialogue between the flutes, which Vega describes as “mysterious... like an awakening of the wild music that will follow.” The music that follows the introduction is indeed wild and energetic. The composer uses widely contrasting dynamics and articulations to create energy in two different ways, which he explains as such: “These wild energies are expressed sometimes in an extroverted manner, and some other times in a more contained manner, like potential energy, waiting to explode at any moment.” Some extended techniques for the flute are used, such as tongue pizzicato and key clicks, for percussive effects. In addition, the composer occasionally calls for a breathy tone, similar to a whoosh of air. This effect is used for several bars at a time, and also in short bursts to emphasize accents at key points. In performance, the two flutists are to stand onstage at least six feet apart from each other. In this way the two are playing at each other, rather than in traditional
adjacent positions. This creates a striking spatial effect for the audience, as well as gives an added dimension to certain moments of call-and-response in the duo.

Oliver Knussen was born in Glasgow, Scotland. His father, Stuart Knussen, was principal double bass of the London Symphony Orchestra, and also participated in a number of premieres of Benjamin Britten's music. Oliver Knussen studied composition with John Lambert between 1963 and 1969, and also received encouragement from Britten. He spent several summers studying with Gunther Schuller at Tanglewood in Massachusetts and in Boston. He later became the Head of Contemporary Music Activities at Tanglewood between 1986 and 1993.

The following notes are taken from a doctoral dissertation on THE SOLO PIANO MUSIC OF OLIVER KNUSSEN by Laurie A. Middaugh: "Variations for Piano, Op. 24 is dedicated to Peter and Regina Serkin. The piece was composed for Mr. Serkin and has been recorded by him for both Virgin Records and BMG Records. In the liner notes for the 1993 Virgin Classics recording Knussen states "the variations of Stravinsky, Copland and Webern provided intimidating models for richness of design and character in extreme concision." In my telephone conversation with Serkin he said that in preparation for the composition of Variations for Piano he studied Beethoven's Diabelli Variations, Bach's Art of the Fugue, and Goldberg Variations, Webern's Piano Variations and Copland's Piano Variations. Knussen's are a set of twelve variations on a theme of six notes in a three-part formal design. The first five are character variations, followed by four variations with a passacaglia, then three more "etude-like" variations which serve as a coda to the piece. The variations move seamlessly from one to the next during which Knussen explores the timbral possibilities of the piano. Each variation has its own rhythmic pattern, but the movement of each variation into the next is facilitated with extensive use of metric modulation. This creates a sense of fluidity considered to be a characteristic of the continuous variation form. This fluidity makes it difficult to hear the division between individual variations on first and even subsequent hearings, as there is no audible definite point of transition in several of the variations."

John Cage was born September 5, 1912, in Los Angeles, California and died in New York on August 12, 1992 from complications due to a mugging. By 1939 he had begun to experiment with increasingly unorthodox instruments such as the "prepared piano." He also experimented with tape recorders, record players, and radios. His 1943 percussion ensemble concert at the Museum of Modern Art marked the first step in his emergence as a leader of the American musical avant-garde. John Cage's influence can be measured not only in the area of music, but in dance, theater, and literature and in any discussion on modernism and post-modernism. Credo in Us (1942) was composed in the phraseology of the dance by Cunningham and Erdman. For the first time Cage uses records or radios, incorporating music of other composers in his own works. He suggests music by Dvorak, Beethoven, Sibelius or Shostakovich. Cage describes the work as a suite with a satirical character. Jean Erdman recalls that for the first performance a 'tack-piano' was used (a piano with thumbtacks inserted onto the felt of the hammers). The pianist mutes the strings at times or plays the piano body (as a percussionist).

As composer, Nathan Tanouye (b. 1974) has written works for many different sizes of ensembles, ranging from jazz trio to concert band. Flutissimo! was completed July 2, 2012, and explores different styles of music within the jazz idiom, including Afro-Cuban jazz and blues, and mixes that with a more modern classical element. The harmonic structure of the piece is influenced greatly by jazz chord progressions and harmony, which is indicative of the composer's diverse background. The first segment of the piece utilizes the rhythms of Afro-Cuban salsa music, and is rhythmically the most challenging part of the piece. This dance-like section eventually winds down into a slower, more mysterious segment, which ends with a cadenza in the 1st flute and piccolo. After a flurry of a transition, the piece evolves into a bluesy, 12/8 feel, featuring the bass flute and piccolo. After a brief interlude, the ensemble works into an up tempo recapitulation of the original tune, this time re-harmonized. The sextet is the first of its kind to be written by the composer, and surely won't be the last.