UNLV | Department of
College of Fine Arts

presents

NEXTET
The New Music Ensemble for the 21st Century

Virko Baley, music director and conductor
Stephen Hartke, Guest Composer-in-Residence

PROGRAM

Justin Marquis
(b. 1989)
Sofiane Merkouché
(b. 1989)

Strings in the Earth and Air (2012)
(Text by James Joyce)
Two Songs
Twilight (text by Matthew G. Galvin) (2011)
Spring (text by Sofiane Merkouché) (2012)

Isabella Ivy, soprano
Grace Haeun Kim, piano

Carlos Carrasco
(b. 1980)

Sonata for Solo Violin (2011-2012)
Offertorium
Monuments to the Gods

Marlo Zemartis, Violin

John Cage
(1912–1992)
transcribed by Jeremy Meronuck
Jeremy Meronuck, percussion

Dream (1948)

Greg Burr
(b. 1984)

from Twenty (2012)
for solo voice
for solo clarinet

Kathleen McVicker, alto
Tallyn Wesner, clarinet

Stephen Hartke
(b. 1952)

Inglesia abandonada (1982)
Text Baladade la Gran Guerra by Federico Garcia Lorca

Linda Lister, soprano
Weiwei Le, violin
Conlon Nancarrow (1912–1997)

Three Studies for Player Piano
Canon X
Study #40b for 2 Player Pianos
Study #25 for Player Piano

Nancarrow at 100: A Centennial Celebration

Stephen Hartke

Suite for Summer (2004)
Sonatina for George
Waltz for Lisa
Sonatina for Don

Christina McHugh, flute
Matt Guschl, oboe
Tallyn Wesner, clarinet
Yuri Cho, violin
Maren Quanbeck, cello

Tuesday, November 13, 2012 7:30 p.m. Dr. Arturo Rando-Grillot Recital Hall
Lee and Thomas Beam Music Center
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
GUEST COMPOSER-IN-RESIDENCE

Stephen Hartke is widely recognized as one of the leading composers of his generation, whose work has been hailed for both its singularity of voice and the inclusive breadth of its inspiration. Born in Orange, New Jersey, in 1952, Hartke grew up in Manhattan where he began his musical career as a professional boy chorister, performing with such organizations as the New York Pro Musica, the New York Philharmonic, the American Symphony Orchestra, and the Metropolitan Opera. Following studies at Yale, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of California at Santa Barbara, interrupted by stints as advertising manager for several major music publishers, Hartke taught in Brazil as Fulbright Professor at the Universidade de Sâ o Paulo, before joining the University of Southern California faculty in 1987.

Hartke's output is extremely varied, from the medieval-inspired piano quartet, The King of the Sun, and Wulfian at the Millennium, an abstract liturgy for ten instruments, the blues-inflected violin duo, Oh Them Rats Is Mean in My Kitchen, and the surreal trio, The Horse with the Lavender Eye, to the Biblical satire, Sons of Noah, for soprano, four flutes, four guitars and four bassoons, and his recent cycle of motets for chorus, oboe and strings, Precepts. He has composed concerti for renowned clarinetist, Richard Stoltzman, and violinist, Michele Makarski, and his collaboration with the internationally-celebrated Hilliard Ensemble has resulted in three substantial works, including his Symphony No. 3, commissioned by Lorin Maazel and the New York Philharmonic. Most recently his acclaimed full-length opera, The Greater Good, was premiered and recorded by Glimmerglass Opera. Other major commissions have come from the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall and the Harvard Musical Association, the IRIS Chamber Orchestra, the Kansas City Symphony, the Library of Congress, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the National Symphony Orchestra, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the Barlow Endowment, Chamber Music America, the Fromm Foundation, the Institute for American Music at the Eastman School of Music, Meet The Composer, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, among others.

Stephen Hartke has also won the Rome Prize from the American Academy in Rome, two Koussevitzky Music Foundation Commission Grants, a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Academy Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Stoeger Award from the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Charles Ives Living from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the Deutsche Bank Berlin Prize from the American Academy in Berlin. In 2008, Hartke's opera, The Greater Good, received the first Charles Ives Opera Prize from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Most of Hartke's music is available on commercial CDs released by Bridge, Chandos, CRI, EMI Classics, Naxos American Classics, and New World Records.

Stephen Hartke lives in Glendale, California, with his wife, Lisa Stidham, and son, Sandy, and is Distinguished Professor of Composition at the Thornton School of Music of the University of Southern California.

PROGRAM NOTES

IGLESIAS ABANDONADA (1982) for Soprano and Violin Text by Federico Garcia Lorca

A setting in Spanish of a poem from Federico Garcia Lorca's last book Poeta en Nueva York. (English translation by the composer.) Commissioned by the Jorge de Sena Center for Portuguese Studies and the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of California, Santa Barbara, for performance at their colloquium on "Modernismo and Vanguardia in the literatures of the Iberian Peninsula, Brazil and South America."

Translation of the poem by Lorca

I had a son named John. I had a son. He was lost through the arches one All Souls' Day. I saw him playing on the last steps of the mass and he tossed a little tin pail on the priest's heart. I pounded on the coffins. My son! My son! My son! I plucked a chicken's leg from behind the moon and then I understood that my little girl was a fish down by where the carts draw away. I had a sea. I had a little girl. I had a fish, dead under the ashes of the censers. I had a sea. What? My God! A sea! I went up to ring the bells but the fruit had maggots, and the extinguished tapers ate the spring wheat. I saw the transparent stork of alcohol trimming the dying soldiers' black heads, and saw the rubber huts where the cup of tears went around. In the anemones of the mass I shall find you, my heart! When the priest raises the mule and the ox with his strong arms to frighten away the nocturnal toads lurking around the icy landscape of the chalice. I had a son who was a giant, but the dead are stronger and can eat pieces of the heavens. If my son had been a bear, I would not fear the alligators' stealth, nor have seen the sea lashed to the trees to be ravished and wounded by the throng of the regiments. Had my son been a bear! I will wrap myself in this hard canvas so as not to feel the cold of the moss. I know very well that they will give me an arm-band or a necktie; But in the middle of the mass I will break the rudder, and then will come to the stone the madness of penguins and sea-gulls that will make those who sleep and those who sing on street-corners say: He had a son. A son! A son! A son!

SUITE FOR SUMMER (2004)

The composer writes: My Suite for Summer, commissioned by the Chamber Music Conference and Composers' Forum of the East, for performance in Bennington, Vermont in the Summer of 2004, is, in fact, a recomposition for a quintet of winds and strings of three piano pieces originally written as gifts for dear friends. The first, titled here "Sonatina for George," was composed in honor of George Rochberg's 70th birthday, and borrows some of its thematic material from the first movement of his first string quartet. The second, "Waltz for Lisa," was composed as a gift for my wife, and is a study in minor and major seventh chords. The last movement, "Sonatina for Don," was also a birthday present, in this case for Don Crockett's 40th.

NANCARROW: THREE STUDIES FOR PLAYER PIANO

Conlon Nancarrow (1912–1997) composed approximately fifty Studies for player piano, some of the most remarkable music of the 20th century.

"My essential concern, whether you can analyze it or not, is emotional; there's an impact that I try to achieve by these means." —Conlon Nancarrow

"This music is the greatest discovery since Webern and Ives... something great and important for all music history! His music is so utterly original, enjoyable, perfectly constructed but at the same time emotional...for me it's the best of any composer living today." —György Ligeti (in a letter to Charles Amirkhanian)
"Conlon's music has such an outrageous, original character that it is literally shocking. It confronts you. Like Emerson said of Thoreau, 'We have a new proposition.'" —John Cage (from Conlon Nancarrow, Eva Soltes)

"His music, almost all written for player piano, is the most rhythmically complex ever written." —Kyle Gann (The Music of Conlon Nancarrow)

"It doesn't seem possible that art like that could exist." —Roger Reynolds (from Conlon Nancarrow: Virtuoso of the Player Piano, James Greeson).

"The stuff is fantastic... You've got to hear it. It'll kill you." —Frank Zappa (from Musician, with Dan Forte).

"Every time Conlon punched a hole, the world got more interesting." —Robert Willey

Born in Texarkana, Arkansas in 1912, Nancarrow was active in his early years as a trumpeter, playing jazz and other types of popular music. He attended the Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music from 1929-32, and later studied composition and counterpoint in Boston with Nicolas Slonimsky, Walter Piston, and Roger Sessions (1933-36). He values most his work with Sessions: "The only formal studies I did that were important were the studies I had in strict counterpoint with Roger Sessions. That was the only formal training I ever had. And they were rigid! I'd do this strict counterpoint exercise, and then I'd take a piece of my music and say to him, 'What do you think of this?' 'Very interesting; where's your counterpoint exercise?'" Nancarrow also cites Bach and Stravinsky as seminal influences.

In 1937 Nancarrow enlisted in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade to fight against Franco in the Spanish Civil War. On his return to the United States in 1939 he became involved in the New York new music scene, contributing several reviews to Modern Music and associating with other composers such as Elliot Carter and Aaron Copland. Nancarrow was a dedicated socialist, which made him politically unacceptable in the United States. This was brought plainly home when he applied for a passport and was denied. Angry at such treatment, he moved to Mexico City in the early 1940s, becoming a Mexican citizen in 1956. He died there in 1997. Nancarrow returned to the player piano partly because of Mexico's extreme musical isolation. Another more compelling reason was his long-standing frustration at the inability of musicians to deal with even moderately difficult rhythms. He goes so far as to say that "As long as I've been writing music I've been dreaming of getting rid of the performers." With the advent of the phonograph, the player piano has been relegated to the status of an object of nostalgia. But not so for Nancarrow, who since the late 1940s has composed almost exclusively for the instrument. The recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship, Nancarrow's complete Studies for Player Piano have been released on compact disc by Wergo (Germany), produced by Charles Amirkhanian.

Excerpt from Study for Player Piano 40b (from Studies for Player Piano, Vol. II) by Wergo WER 6168-2 (c) & (p) 1991 Wergo©Schallplatten GmbH.

Dr. Linda Lister, a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Vassar College, Linda Lister received her M.M. from the Eastman School of Music and her DMA in Voice Performance from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The Durham Sun-Herald has described her singing as "gloriously suffused, with a brightly etched sound that enchanted," while the Buffalo News praised her "strong, shimmering soprano." Her solo credits include performances with the Washington Symphony Orchestra, Buffalo Philharmonic, Evansville Philharmonic, Piedmont Opera Theatre, Opera Theatre of Rochester, Long Leaf Opera, Greensboro Oratorio Society, Rome Bach Festival, Cambridge Gilbert and Sullivan Society, Clocktower Jazz, and Maine State Music Theatre. This fall she will sing Copland's Old American Songs with the Las Vegas Philharmonic. She created the role of Madge in the world premiere of Libby Larsen's opera Picnic (2009) and sang Savannah in the world premiere concert version of The Prince of Tides (2010) with the Carolina Master Chorale. Her favorite roles include Musetta in La Bohème, Adina in The Elixir of Love, Adele in Die Fledermaus, Maggie in A Chorus Line and Woman 1 in Songs for a New World. A featured soloist on the Albany Records CDs The American Soloist and Midnight Tolls, she has won awards from NATS, the Metropolitan Opera Council Auditions, and Greater Miami Opera in addition to winning the 1998 Dissertation Prize from the National Opera Association. Her writings have been featured in the Journal of Singing, American Music Teacher, Opera Journal, Classical Singer, Voice Prints and Popular Music and Society. A certified CorePower Yoga teacher, she is the author of the book Yoga for Singers: Freeing Your Voice and Spirit through Yoga (2011). She has done presentations on yoga for musicians at the University of Evansville, University of Tennessee-Knoxville, Campbell University, Ducitry City Opera Workshop, Taos Opera Institute, Big Yoga Houston and Bija Yoga NYC, as well as national conventions of the College Music Society, NOA and NATS. Also a composer, she has written a number of vocal works including Pleas to Famous Fairies, Blonde Coffee, and a chamber opera about the Bronte sisters entitled How Clear She Shines! Dr. Lister is Director of Opera Theater and Assistant Professor of Music at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. www.lindalister.com www.yogaforsingers.com

Assistant professor Wei-Wei Le, a native of Shanghai, graduated from Yehudi Menuhin School in England, and received her Bachelor of Music from Oberlin Conservatory of Music. After completing her bachelor degree, Le then went on and received her Masters of Music degree from Cleveland Institute of Music, and Graduate Diploma from New England Conservatory of Music. She won numerous competitions, including the Yehudi Menuhin International Violin Competition (England), the Kloster Schontal International Violin Competition (Germany), and the Starling International Violin Competition (USA).

Her studies have taken her to the renowned violin pedagogues, such as Yehudi Menuhin, Donald Weilerstein, Almita and Roland Vamos, Dorothy DeLay. As a solo performer, Le has given recitals and concerts all over the world, performing with noteworthy orchestras such as the Hong Kong Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (London), Queensland Symphony (Australia), and the Tianjin Symphony Orchestra (China). Many of her performances have been conducted by Lord Yehudi Menuhin himself, who described her as "one of the most talented young musicians he has ever seen."

As a devoted chamber musician, Le has collaborated with great musicians and quartets in North America, Europe, and Asia, including Richard Stoltzman, William Preucil, Sara Chang, and Eliot Fisk, as well as the Ying Quartet and St. Petersberg Quartet. Prior to her appointment at UNLV, Le served on the faculty at Emory University and Georgia State University in Atlanta.

The next NEXTET concert will be on December 7th. Our Guest Composer-in-Residence will be Sean Shepherd, called "a composer worth keeping an ear on" (Chicago Tribune), Two works by Sean Shepherd will be performed that evening.