



College of Fine Arts

presents

NEXTET

The New Music Ensemble for the 21st Century

Virko Baley, music director and conductor

Daniel Asia, composer-in-residence

PROGRAM

Daniel Asia *A Lament* (1997) for violoncello and piano
(b. 1953)

Maren Quanbeck, violoncello
Timothy Hoft, piano

Virko Baley *Pajarillo* (1998)
(b. 1938)

Timothy Hoft, piano

Daniel Asia *The Jane Set* (2011) for solo alto saxophone
Misterioso
Murmuring, ghostly, flexibly
Vivace
Misterioso

Mark McArthur, alto saxophone

Elliot Carter *Scrivo in Vento* (1991)
(1908–2012)

Anastasia Petanova, flute

Franco Donatoni *Nidi* for solo piccolo (1979)
(1927–2000)

Jamie Leigh O'Neil, piccolo

Alvin Etler *Sonata for bassoon and piano* (1951)
(1913–1973)

Moderately slow
Fast
Slow
Fast

Janis McKay, bassoon
Timothy Hoft, piano

Daniel Asia

Breath in a Ram's Horn (2003)

Songs for my Father

What do We Know

Old Medals, Prayer Shawls

Job Longed for the Grave

Rosh Hashana/Yom Kippur

My Father's Name Was...

Daniel Hunter, tenor

Carmella Cao, flute

Erin Vander Wyst, clarinet

Samantha Ciarlo, violin

Maren Quanbeck, violoncello

Timothy Hoft, piano

Anthony Pateras

Transmutations (2002) for percussion ensemble

(b. 1979)

Timothy Jones, Conductor

Manny Gamazo

Ryan Harrison

Caleb Pickering

Adam Steff

Alex Tomlinson

Eddie Yervinyan

Thursday, February 6, 2014

7:30 p.m.

Dr. Arturo Rando-Grillot Recital Hall
Lee and Thomas Beam Music Center
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

PROGRAM NOTES AND BIOGRAPHIES

Daniel Asia (b. 1953, Seattle, WA) is one of a small number of composers who have traversed both the realms of professional performance and academia with equal skill. As testament to this he is a 2010 recipient of a major American Academy of Arts and Letters award. Elliott Hurwitt writes in a Schwann Opus review of the composer's music, "Daniel Asia is a genuine creative spirit, an excellent composer... He is a welcome addition to the roster of our strongest group of living composers."

His orchestral works have been commissioned or performed by the symphony orchestras of Cincinnati, Seattle, Milwaukee, New Jersey, Phoenix, American Composers Orchestra, Columbus (OH), Grand Rapids, Jacksonville, Chattanooga, Memphis, Tucson, Knoxville, Greensboro, Seattle Youth, and the Brooklyn, Colorado and Pilsen (Czech Republic) philharmonics. Asia's works have been performed by renowned conductors including Zdenek Macal, Jesus Lopez-Cobos, Eiji Oue, Lawrence Leighton Smith, Hermann Michael, Carl St. Clair, James Sedares, Stuart Malina, Robert Bernhardt, George Hanson, Jonathan Shames, Odaline de la Martinez, and Christopher Kendall.

He has been the recipient of the most important grants and fellowships in music including a Meet The Composer/Reader's Digest Consortium Commission, United Kingdom Fulbright Arts Award Fellowship, a Guggenheim Fellowship, four NEA Composers Grants, a M. B. Rockefeller Grant, an Aaron Copland Fund for Music Grant, MacDowell Colony and Tanglewood Fellowships, ASCAP and BMI composition prizes, and a DAAD Fellowship for study in the Federal Republic of Germany. From 1991-1994, Mr. Asia was the Meet the Composer/Composer In Residence with the Phoenix Symphony.

The composer's major orchestral works include five symphonies, piano and cello concerti, two song cycles, and several single movement works. His output for chamber ensembles and solo performers is also extensive and includes works written for or commissioned by Koussevitsky Music Foundation, Fromm Music Foundation, D'Addario Foundation for the Performing Arts/Domus, The Czech Nonet/Barlow Endowment/Arizona Friends of Chamber Music, Oberlin Woodwind Quintet, Dorian Wind Quintet, American Brass Quintet, Meadowmount Trio, Andre-Michel Schub (piano), Carter Brey (cello), Alex Klein (oboe), Benjamin Verdery (guitar), John Shirley-Quirk and Sara Watkins (baritone and oboe), Jonathan Shames (piano), violinists Curtis Macomber, Gregory Fulkerson, Mark Rush and Zina Schiff, and Robert Dick (flute).

Other performers of his smaller scale works include Cleveland Chamber Orchestra, Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, San Francisco Contemporary Chamber Players, Contemporary Chamber Players/Chicago, Scott Chamber Players/Indianapolis, The Bridge Ensemble, Aspen Festival Chamber Orchestra, Northwest Chamber Orchestra, Endymion Ensemble, Lontano and the BBC Singers.

His music has been played throughout the United States, and in the major venues of New York, including Carnegie Hall and Recital Hall, 92nd Street Y, Merkin Hall, the Great Hall at Cooper Union, those of London including Queen Elizabeth Hall (South Bank), St. John's Smith Square, Wigmore Hall, and throughout Europe and Asia.

Asia's recorded works may be heard on the Summit, New World, Albany, Babel, Innova, and Mushkatweek labels featuring artists as diverse as New Zealand Symphony, Pilsen Philharmonic (release pending), American Brass Quintet, Dorian Wind Quintet, and Cypress String Quartet, to name but a few.

After receiving his BA degree from Hampshire College, Mr. Asia received his MM from the Yale School of Music. After serving as Assistant Professor of Contemporary Music and Wind Ensemble at the Oberlin Conservatory from 1981-86, Mr. Asia resided in London from 1986-88 working under the auspices of a UK Fulbright Arts Award and a Guggenheim Fellowship. He is presently Professor of Composition, and head of the Composition Department, at The University of Arizona, Tucson. Mr. Asia's music is published by Theodore Presser Co. He is represented as composer and conductor by Stanton Consulting & Management of Astoria, New York. Married to Carolee Asia, Mr. Asia and his wife are the parents of three children.

A Lament, is based on the second movement of my Cello Concerto, written for Carter Brey and a consortium of orchestras. The movement is, for the most part, a soulful melody, in an adagio tempo. Starting quietly in the lowest range of the cello, by the conclusion of the movement, the cello has made its way to a searing restatement of this melody in its highest register, only to collapse upon itself in exhaustion and retreat back to the lower register. There are other themes of a more moderate speed that provide a sense of gentle rumination, as well as a chorale that leads back to the opening. The conclusion recalls the chorale music as the music fades into oblivion.

The work was first performed by cellist Steven Honigberg and pianist James Tocco, March 3, 2002, at the U.S. Memorial Holocaust Museum, Washington D.C.

Pajarillo is one of a series of piano pieces based in some way on the many facets of *flamenco*. The title can be loosely translated as *little bird*. It belongs to a specific category of flamenco practiced in urban nightclubs. I recently included it in a daydream scene of my opera. – Virko Baley

The Jane Set, for solo saxophone, is one of a series for solo instruments. Like its progenitor, *The Alex Set* (for solo oboe or saxophone), this work is evocative, idiomatic, virtuosic, and widely expressive. The four contrasting movements are marked *Misterioso*; *Murmuring and ghostly*; *Vivace*; and *Misterioso*. Playful, with the speed moving from slow, to *moderato*, to fast, and finally back to slow again- a completed journey. Why the name? With the first set, in my youthful ebullience, I figured, hmm, a name?- if not sonata or study, perhaps a real name. I chose Alex, which was propitious, as the work, in its final form, was commissioned by the great oboist Alex Klein. I have decided to continue this playful approach with this set as well as the recent *Jack Set* for solo bassoon. – Daniel Asia

Scrivo in vento, for flute alone, dedicated to the wonderful flautist and friend, Robert Aitken, takes its title from a poem of Petrarch who lived in and around Avignon from 1326 to 1353. It uses the flute to present contrasting musical ideas and registers to suggest the paradoxical nature of the poem. It was first performed on 20 July 1991 (coincidentally on Petrarch's 678th birthday) at the Ville Rencontres de la Chartreuse of the Centre Acanthes devoted to my music at the Festival of Avignon, France, by Robert Aitken. – Elliott Carter

Franco Donatoni is among the most prominent Italian composers of his generation, along with his contemporaries Berio and Nono. He studied with Ettore Desderi, Lino Liviabella, and in Rome with Pizzetti. Donatoni's most prominent early influence was Bartók, along with his countryman Petrassi. To them one might trace the roots of Donatoni's distinctively vibrant rhythmic style and concern for instrumental color. In the 1950s, Donatoni entered the sphere of influence of Bruno Maderna, who was in Verona at that time, and became a member of the Darmstadt circle including Boulez and Stockhausen. Boulez's music was a strong influence, and Donatoni began working with strict serial techniques in the late 1950s. By 1960 Donatoni had come under the spell of John Cage and the use of chance procedures in music. This elicited a crisis of faith that led to a complete cessation of compositional productivity by 1965. After resuming composing, Donatoni found a new way characterized by driven rhythms, quick-cut changes in texture, and compulsive development of constrained melodic material.

A student of Paul Hindemith, **Alvin Etler** is noted for his highly rhythmic, harmonically and texturally complex compositional style, taking inspiration from the works of Bartók and Copland as well as the dissonant and accented styles of jazz. Though he played with the Indianapolis Symphony in 1938, he abandoned his orchestral life shortly thereafter to focus on his increasingly successful compositional career (which earned him two Guggenheim Fellowships during this period). In 1942 he joined the faculty at Yale University as conductor of the university band and instructor of wind instruments, where he began his studies with Hindemith. He also taught at Cornell University and University of Illinois before accepting a position at Smith College, which he held until his death.

Breath in a Ram's Horn is a song cycle of five poems. They range from the sublime to the mundane, from the sacred to the profane. The texts are by the writer/poet Paul Pines. He and I first met at the MacDowell Colony, an artist's retreat in Peterborough, New Hampshire. We became close friends, partly as the result of a shared ferocity brought to the game of table tennis. I requested books of poetry. I have so far written five works based on his writings. His poems seem to bring together very disparate worlds, uniting a wealth of emotional perspectives. The imagery ranges from Ecclesiastes to the Blues, stating something universal that is culled from the simple and earthy. At the core of the work is man's uneasy place in the universe; that of a curious bystander to his own inner world, living in a physical world he also hardly understands. How these interior and exterior worlds meet and interact is the enigma at the center of these poems. However it is an enigma that is often imbued with a wry and delicate sense of humor. The poems in this cycle are imbued with images of family and Judaism, and their intertwining. One finds memories of the poet's father, mother, and grandfather; memories of prayer shawls, phylacteries, praying; imagery of the high holydays, Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, and the power of recollection; and a reflection on Job and David. And just like the lives of these two Biblical characters, the poems are not pretty or easy, but rather filled with the difficulties and anguish of a life as it is really lived. – Daniel Asia

The Melbourne composer **Anthony Pateras** is well-known for his exploratory musical style. In *Transmutations*, for percussion sextet, the focus is not on tune, or harmony. Inanimate objects become new sound sources that shift and blur – brake drums and glass bottles are played with manic energy and relentless intensity, then give way to plastic bags and rocks which form a eerie sonic tapestry.

The next NEXTET concert will be on Thursday, March 13, 2014 and will feature composer-in-residence David Lefkowitz, currently on the faculty at UCLA.