



Founded in 1937
Affiliate of BMI since 1944

American Composers Alliance

Summer Music Festival

June 17-20, 2009

Symphony Space Leonard Nimoy Thalia
New York City

Concert 4: Saturday, June 20, 2009 4:30 PM
www.composers.com

*Piano courtesy of Yamaha Artist Services

ACA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation in the State of New York. It relies on donations from the public and from members and friends of ACA. These concerts are funded, in part, by generous contributions from BMI, Proskauer Rose, the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, the Argosy Foundation, CUNY Graduate Center Research Fund, and the Office of Cultural Affairs, Consulate General of Israel in New York.
American Composers Alliance 648 Broadway, Suite 803, New York, NY 10012 (212) 925-0458 info@composers.com

SATURDAY, JUNE 20, 2009 4:30PM

SUMMER SUITE

Harold Seletsky

Microtonal Variations on “My Country, ‘Tis of Thee” (2009)*

Susan Palma, flute Ashley Horn, violin
Richard Cohen, clarinet David Calhoun, cello
Christopher Oldfather, piano/electronic keyboard

David Gordon

MyGrain (2001)

electronic playback

Joan Tower

Yael Manor, piano

Circles (1964)**

Margaret Fairlie-Kennedy

Four Contrasting Images for Piano (1961)

*Scintillante ma delacato; Toccata – Celere con animazione;
Lento mesto; Moderato –Vivo con spirito.*

Christopher Oldfather, piano

Paul Kerekes

Soliloquy, Aside (2009)*

Paul Kerekes, piano

Ed Rosenberg, alto saxophone

Earle Brown

Summer Suite '95 (1995) *

Christopher Oldfather, piano

* World premiere

**** New York Premiere**

ABOUT THE COMPOSERS & PROGRAM NOTES

Earle Brown (1926-2002) was a major force in contemporary music and a leading composer of the American avant-garde from the 1950s. He was associated with the experimental composers John Cage, Morton Feldman, and Christian Wolff who, with Brown, came to be known as the New York School. Like many composers who came to New York City in the 1940s, he joined the American Composers Alliance, and subsequently became a BMI member. He was born in 1926 in Lunenburg, Massachusetts and, in spirit, remained a New Englander throughout his life. Like other artists from that region – Ives,

Ruggles, Dickinson – he spoke with his own voice
and found his own path.

Brown's influence on the avant-garde community has been philosophical as well as tangible and practical. His conducting techniques and experiments with "time notation", improvisation, and open-form compositional structure have become part of contemporary compositional usage. His early influential orchestral scores include Available Forms 1 and Available Forms 2, and his musical friendships were legendary, from Bruno Maderna who conducted first

performances of many of Brown's works to jazz musicians such as Zoot Sims and Gerry Mulligan.

Summer Suite '95 (1995) "...is, I think a significant departure from my work to this point. Part of the challenge and part of the solution was the computer, which I had never used before. It intrigued me to see what I could do with it and I figured out a way that I could combine old ways of my working with new ways of generating results. As usual, I started with graphically sketching an idea, or structure – range, density, et cetera - then I would see if I could play my sketches. It was like a dancer dancing or a jazz musician performing, except I wasn't following anyone else's tune. I would work at the keyboard, and one of the reasons some of the things are so odd is because I'm not a good pianist. But I could play my sketches and have the results immediately printed out. Basically, it enabled me to take dictation from myself... the suite came out unlike what I might write plodding along daily with a fountain pen. It came out highly personal. Ultimately, what I was doing was realizing my own graphic scores. And once I got the basic material in, I could take this note or that, run it an octave up or down, lock it in, or try it and save it, or not save it.

Summer Suite '95 is definitely the *jazziest* of my piano pieces. Those are chords that I love to hear. A lot of my chamber orchestra music has lush chords like that, especially *Tracking Pierrot*. ...I'm not interested in avoiding responsibility, *Summer Suite '95* is a fully and traditionally notated work; and I certainly have never been embarrassed by writing a beautiful melody, a very lyrical passage, or what I consider a beautiful chord progression.

But I'm also interested in activating, more and more, the interaction between composers and performers, and making music a more collaborative world..." (World Premiere Live Performance). –Note excerpted from EB interview with John Yaffe' (1995)

Note from pianist Christopher Oldfather: "I am playing seven of these pieces in all. The names in order are:

- Untitled O (#4 in the book)
- Segment 2 (Jun12, '95) (#8)
- Untitled O (#5)
- One Page Piece (#7)
- 6/12/95 (#1)
- Untitled O (14 July, '95) (#12)
- No Horns at All (#2)

In the last section, imagine Coltrane and Adderley riffing while I play the piece."

Margaret Fairlie-Kennedy writes for chamber groups, voice, orchestra, contemporary dance and mixed media. She was Composer in Residence for Dance and Theater Arts at Bennington College and Cornell University. Her awards and grants include the NEA and NEH Endowments, the Georgia Commission on the Arts, Meet the Composer grants, and the Cornell Council for Creative and Performing Arts. She was a winner in the Philadelphia Classical Symphony/Maxfield Parrish and Women Composers' Showcase and New

Jersey City University competitions. Commissions include the Walker Art Center, Cornell Theater Arts Dept., several choreographers and commissions for 20th and 21st century works.

"Expressive use of a 12 tone row...eloquence and energy... atmospheric and dreamy" --*N.Y. Times*;
"extended the usual sonorities of the instruments... its emotional focus was strong and the expressive range of the instruments spoke well for the composer's gift." --*Philadelphia Inquirer*;
"the opening dance was set to urgent and atmospheric music by Margaret Fairlie-Kennedy" -- *N.Y. Times Dance Review*.

Fairlie-Kennedy's works have been performed by the Alabama Symphony, Atlanta String Quartet, Second Instrumental Unit and Relache Ensemble, among others, and at venues including the Eastman School of Music, Weill Recital Hall, the Bowling Green College of Musical Arts Festival, and abroad—in Paris, Upsala and Beijing. She is a member of ACA, SCI, AMC, IAWM, NYCC and BMI. **Four Contrasting Images for Piano** (1961) is based on a single tone row in four movements.

David Gordon is the founder and director of the Look & Listen Festival, a non-profit series of new music concerts in New York City art galleries (www.lookandlisten.org). He is also the President of the League of Composers/ISCM. Gordon has taught on the faculty of New York University and Hofstra University, been the Executive Director of the League of Composers/ISCM, served as the Vice President of First Performance, a new music performing organization, and founded and directed the Composers Ensemble at Hofstra, a 60-member performing ensemble, which premiered seven of his works, including *Storm*—a clarinet concertina, and *Images*—a double guitar concerto. Born in Illinois in 1969, Gordon studied at NYU with Charles Wuorinen, Martin Boykan, Louis Karchin, and Elizabeth Hoffman.

MyGrain was generated on a computer with CSound, incorporating granular synthesis techniques.

Paul Kerekes (b.1988) is an undergraduate Piano Performance and Composition student at Queens College. He has attended notable programs such as Stony Brook Summer Music Festival, the Young Artists Piano Program at Tanglewood, and California Summer Music. This summer Paul is looking forward to attending Yale's New Music Workshop in Norfolk, Conn. At Queens College, Paul received the Gabriel Fontrier award for achievement as an undergraduate composer and has had the privilege of hearing his music performed by the Second Instrumental Unit, Stonewall Chorale, and the Mannes Preparatory Division Choir. Additionally, Paul enjoys playing the cello, drawing, and painting. He currently studies piano with Donald Pirone and composition with Bruce Saylor.

"In **Soliloquy, Aside** (2009) I wanted to create a musical texture of two different perspectives happening simultaneously based upon the same material. The piano part is a seven chord chorale that moves through different combinations and voicings while the tenor saxophone's melody moves primarily in minor thirds. I was influenced a lot by free improvisatory jazz and material from improvisations I did with composer/saxophonist Ed Rosenberg a couple years ago. Special thanks to Bruce Saylor for helping me write the piece and Ed Rosenberg for playing it." (World Premiere)

Harold Seletsky is a prolific and versatile composer and a virtuoso clarinetist and improviser whose playing is marked by great expressivity and vitality. He has distinguished himself, as both composer and performer, in the realms of classical, jazz, folk and popular music. Born in 1927 in Brooklyn, Seletsky studied clarinet early on and from 1944-49 studied music theory and composition with composer-conductor Josef Schmid, a pupil of Alban Berg. Soon thereafter Seletsky used Schoenbergian techniques in such early works as the *Gradual Variations on a Simple Theme* for clarinet and string quartet, Op.1 (1958), the *Sonata* for clarinet and piano (1958) and the *First String Quartet* (1963). In the 1960s, Seletsky began experimenting with various microtonal concepts based on equal temperament. As clarinetist and bandleader of the West End Klezmer, he is dedicated to the performance of old and modern Klezmer music including Yiddish songs, theater songs, and various types of gypsy, Hungarian, Russian and Ladino folk music. Since the mid-1950s Seletsky has also been active as a teacher of composition and clarinet. Among his students are jazz pianist Armen Donelian, Richard Hayms, and the jazz saxophonists Roger Rosenberg and David Schnitter.

Microtonal Variations on "My Country, 'Tis of Thee" (2009) is a special world premiere event in which the composer presents a new work commissioned by a member of Arnold Schoenberg's family, Nancy Bogen, and is dedicated to her husband, Arnold Greissle. The variations utilize the 24-tone octave scale and the distortion of the theme ends with a fugue. The variations are built on the concept of emphasizing dissonance, which is more intense in the 24-tone idiom than in the 12-tone idiom. The technique is an outgrowth of the 12-tone technique established by Arnold Schoenberg in the early 20th century. Seletsky also draws influence from the ensemble genre of Schoenberg's landmark piece from 1912, featuring the "Pierrot ensemble" of flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano.

Hailed as "one of the most successful woman composers of all time" in *The New Yorker* magazine, **Joan Tower** was the first woman to receive the Grawemeyer Award in Composition in 1990. She was inducted in 1998 into the prestigious American Academy of Arts and Letters, and into the Academy of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University in the fall of

2004. She was the first composer chosen for the ambitious new *Made in America* commissioning program, a collaboration of the League of American Orchestras (at that time, the American Symphony Orchestra League) and Meet the Composer. In October 2005, the Glens Falls Symphony Orchestra presented the world premiere of Tower's 15-minute orchestral piece *Made in America*. The Nashville Symphony and conductor Leonard Slatkin recorded *Made in America*, *Tambor*, and *Concerto for Orchestra* for the Naxos label. The top-selling recording won three 2008 Grammy awards: Best Classical Contemporary Composition, Best Classical Album, and Best Orchestral Performance.

Tower has been a member of the American Composers Alliance since the mid-1960s. ACA is the proud publisher for several of her early works, including the well-known *Hexachords* for solo flute (1972), *Brimset* for 2 flutes and 2 percussion (1965), and two early piano works— *Fantasia* (1966) and ***Circles*** (1964), and several others. We chose the earlier piano solo piece for this festival, because it appears that this work has not been performed in a very long time. It's a complex thoughtful piece by the young composer, the ideas moving in waves and in circles, often turning around the same notes.

"I am delighted that my old piano piece **"Circles"** is being performed at the 2009 ACA festival. It is one of my earliest works that I wrote way back when in my older serial style-with many "jumping" registers. I have fond memories of ACA and am happy to see it "getting out there" with performances of the music of its members—past and present." - J.T. May 2009

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

One of New York's most gifted, trusted, respected, often-requested, and well-liked pianists, **Christopher Oldfather** has devoted himself to the performance of twentieth-century music for more than thirty years. As a soloist he has appeared with the MET Chamber Players, the San Francisco Symphony, and Ensemble Modern in Frankfurt, Germany. His recording of Elliott Carter's violin-piano Duo with Robert Mann was nominated for two Grammy Awards in 1990.

Born in 1979, pianist and Kolot Ensemble director **Yael Manor** earned both her Bachelor's and Master's degrees with honors from the Buchmann-Mehta School of Music at Tel-Aviv University. A winner of the America-Israel Cultural Foundation Scholarship for the years 2004-2006, Manor also received several Excellence Awards from the Buchmann-Mehta School of Music. Most recently, she was invited to Carnegie Hall for a commissioning project led by composer Osvaldo Golijov and soprano Dawn Upshaw, and featuring eight contemporary composers under 35.

Ed RosenBerg III is a composer and performer, saxophonist (and sometimes beatboxing in Scotland). <http://virb.com/wetdryvac>