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American Composers Alliance

Summer Music Festival

June 17-20, 2009

Symphony Space Leonard Nimoy Thalia
New York City

Concert 3: Friday, June 19, 2009 7:30 PM

www.composers.com

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Live Sound Playback:

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2009 Festival Full Concert Schedule:

Wednesday, June 17 7:30pm

- Frederick Tillis: SONG for Sister Hokkaido
- Brian Fennelly: 'Sigol' for Two, Fantasy Duo
- Travis Alford: Transitions*
- Richard Cameron-Wolfe: Arq III: Refuge
- Robert Ceely: Metamir
- Lewis Nielson: What about you?
- John Eaton: Our Four Candidates

Thursday, June 18 7:30pm

- John Melby: Concerto No. 2 for Clarinet & Computer
- Anthony Greene: String Quartet 'Chance'*
- Griffith Rose: 63 Bars for John Cage
- Matthew Davidson, "I Had Five Long Years"
- Joel Gressel: Blue States
- Gilbert Galindo: Lost in the Caves*
- David Fulmer: String Quartet No. 3*

Friday, June 19 7:30pm

- Kirsten Volness: Hverfa*
- Robert Carl: Shake the Tree
- Gary Schneider: Friends Romans Countrymen
- Elizabeth Bell: String Quartet No. 1
- Richard Brooks: Sonata for Solo
- Joyce Hope Suskind: Two Yeats Songs

Saturday, June 20 4:30pm

- Harold Seletsky: Microtonal Variations
- David Gordon "MY GRAIN"
- Joan Tower: Circles
- Margaret Fairlie-Kennedy: Four Images
- Paul Kerekes: Soliloquy, Aside*
- Earle Brown: Summer Suite '95

Saturday, June 20 7:30pm

- Hubert Howe: Composition for Piano
- Darleen Mitchell: Metaxu
- John Gibson: SLUMBER
- Gheorghe Costinescu: Sonata for the Piano
- Raoul Pleskow: Konzertstück for violin and piano
- Ronald Keith Parks: Anacoustic Zones
- Elliott Schwartz: The Seven Seasons
- Christopher Bailey: Time Lash*

*ACA is grateful for special funding for seven works by young composers on the program (noted with asterisk above), with support from the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University.

Friday, June 19, 2009 7:30 PM

KOLOT ENSEMBLE

Gerardo Ubaghs, violin
Jung-Min Shin, viola

Véronique Mathieu, violin
Yotam Baruch, cello

Yael Manor, piano

with special guest artists: Jan Opalach, Nicole Pantos, John McDonald, and Donald Berman

Kirsten Volness

Hverfa (2006) **

Véronique Mathieu, violin
Yotam Baruch, cello

Jung-Min Shin, viola
Yael Manor, piano

Robert Carl

Shake the Tree (2004) **

John McDonald and Donald Berman, piano 4 hands

Gary Schneider

Friends, Romans, Countrymen (2005) **

Jan Opalach, Baritone
Véronique Mathieu, violin
Yotam Baruch cello

Gerardo Ubaghs, violin
Jung-Min Shin, viola
Yael Manor, piano

Intermission

Elizabeth Bell

String Quartet No. 1 (1957)

Sostenuto, Allegro Scherzando, Religioso, Con Fuoco

Gerardo Ubaghs, violin
Jung-Min Shin, viola

Veronique Mathieu, violin
Yotam Baruch, cello

Richard Brooks

Sonata for Solo Violin (2007) *

Allegro molto, Adagio, Allegro velocitato

Gerardo Ubaghs, violin

Joyce Hope Suskind

Two Yeats Songs (1992-93)

“The Wild Swans at Coole”

“The Shadow-Like Generations”

Nicole Pantos, Soprano
Véronique Mathieu, violin
Yotam Baruch, cello

Gerardo Ubaghs, violin
Jung-Min Shin, viola
Yael Manor, piano

* World premiere

** New York Premiere

ABOUT THE COMPOSERS, PROGRAM NOTES, AND SUNG TEXTS

Kirsten Volness (b. 1980) grew up in a small town in southern Minnesota, a place that fostered in her a keen interest in the outdoors and the wonders of nature. The magic to be found in the natural world informs and inspires her creative work as do earth-based spiritual traditions.

She completed her DMA in Composition at the University of Michigan (from which she also received her MM). She worked with Bright Sheng, William Bolcom, Betsy Jolas, Michael Daugherty, Karen Tanaka and studied electronic music with Evan Chambers and Erik Santos. She received a Bachelor of Arts, summa cum laude, from the University of Minnesota where she studied with Judith Lang Zaimont. Kirsten was named winner of the 2007 BMI Women's Music Commission and received a 2007 ASCAP/Seamus student commission. Her electronic work has been performed at numerous festivals including Bourges, SEAMUS, Electronic Music Midwest, and Third Practice. Her acoustic work has been performed by the Colorado Quartet, Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra, featured at Midwest Composers' Symposia, the Montreal and Edinburgh Fringe Festivals, and presented at various concerts throughout North America, Europe, and Australia.

Hverfa, (2006) pronounced ker'fa, means to "disappear" or "vanish" in Icelandic. The word also has connotations of revolution, spiraling and change. I had an image of a long winter's journey in my mind as well as the theme so commonly found in Scandinavian short stories that the forest and sea are places of (super)natural danger. If one chooses to go venturing, one may or may not return (and who knows what mischief one may meet along the way). (New York premiere)

Robert Carl (b.1954) studied composition with Jonathan Kramer, George Rochberg, Ralph Shapey, and Iannis Xenakis. His music is performed throughout the US and Europe, and is published by American Composers' Alliance, Boosey&Hawkes, Roncorp, and Apoll-Edition. His grants, prizes and residencies have come from such sources as the National Endowment for the Arts, Tanglewood, Connecticut Commission on the Arts, Camargo Foundation, MacDowell Colony, Yaddo, Ucross, Millay Colony, Bogliasco Foundation, Djerassi Foundation, the Aaron Copland House, and the

Rockefeller Foundation. He was awarded a 2005 Chamber Music America commission for a string quintet written for the Miami String Quartet and Robert Black. An excerpt from his opera-in-progress *Harmony* (with novelist Russell Banks) was presented in May 2005 in the New York City Opera's VOX Showcase series. He is also the recipient of the 1998 Charles Ives Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. New World Records released a CD of three large string chamber works in March 2006. In 2006-07 he has received a fellowship from the Asian Cultural Council for travel to Japan to research contemporary Japanese composers, and he has been commissioned by Oxford University Press to write a book on the premiere of Terry Riley's *In C*. Other CD releases of his work are found on Neuma, Koch International, Lotus, Centaur, Vienna Modern Masters, E.R.M., and The Aerial. For fifteen years he was a co-director of the Extension Works new music ensemble in Boston; he is chair of the composition department at the Hartt School of Music, University of Hartford, and writes extensively on new music for *Fanfare* Magazine.

Shake the Tree (2005) began as an experiment. A series of ringing chords announce the work, all radiating up from a low A, following overtone patterns which result from that note as a fundamental. I then created a series of "time-molds", each centered on a different pitch, moving up and down the A overtone-series, into which I poured music, spontaneous, but still exploring harmonies that treated each respective center as a fundamental. The durations of these "molds" and the patterns of movement through the centers is simultaneously rigorous and arbitrary; I admit, this is one of the more abstract pieces I've ever written, designed as a vehicle of exploration rather than an attempt to express any pre-conceived emotional or imaginative state. Instead, it's very much about a world of sound to which I'm increasingly attracted, and compelled to return.

The title comes from the one motivating image of the piece. If you shake the tree, the fruit falls. The opening chords are rolled, shiver, and then begin to yield their harvest over the course of the work. I am honored by John and Don's openness, despite its ferocious technical difficulty, and to have two such great pianists premiering the work. The piece composed in May of 2005 at the MacDowell Colony, which is thanked for providing the ideal circumstances for its completion. (New York Premiere)

Gary M. Schneider, composer, is more widely known locally as an award winning conductor of orchestras throughout the United States and Europe. In addition to his activities on the podium, he has composed a wide variety of concert works as well as music for theater, dance and for film. He holds both Bachelors and Masters Degrees in composition from the Indiana University School of Music. Mr. Schneider has received commissions to write works for Opera at Florham, Shirley Broughton Dancers, Fran Snygg Modern Dance Company and The Rockport Chamber Music Festival, where he served as composer-in-residence during the summer of 1985. His Concerto for Jazz Clarinet and String Orchestra, written for the noted jazz clarinetist Perry Robinson, has been heard numerous times in the United States and in Europe including the New York premiere performance by the American Composers Orchestra at Merkin Concert Hall. During Mr. Schneider's six years as music director of the International Zelt Musik Festival in Freiburg, Germany, he was awarded the Society of Baden-Wurtemberg Cultural Prize in recognition of his distinguished work as composer, conductor and pianist. Mr. Schneider's works are published by Berben edizione musicali, Peer Music and American Composers Editions.

Friends, Romans, Countrymen (2005) is a musical setting of Mark Anthony's great soliloquy from Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. My setting of the text attempts to capture the great affection that Mark Anthony felt for Caesar as well as the great contempt he felt for Caesar's betrayer, Brutus. In setting Shakespeare's text, I have strived to allow his words to come through as clearly as when spoken unadorned on the stage. The musical coloration I have dressed it in is clearly my own personal interpretation of Mark Anthony's feelings for Caesar. The soliloquy is a mere seven minutes in duration, but it is packed with a broad range of drama and emotion. Opera at Florham commissioned this work in 2005 and presented the premiere performance with Jan Opalach as Mark Anthony under the direction of the company's gifted music director Thomas Carlo Bo. (New York Premiere)

Elizabeth Bell was born in 1928; graduated from Wellesley College (Music) in 1950, and from Juilliard (Composition) in 1953. She was music critic of the *Ithaca Journal*, 1971-1975; one of the founders, a former officer, and currently a director of New York Women Composers; and a member of Board of Governors of American Composers Alliance,

2000-2004. She has had commissions from the New York State Council on the Arts, the Bradshaw/Buono duo, the Inoue Chamber Ensemble, North/South Consonance, the Putnam Valley Orchestra, and Vienna Modern Masters. Awards have been: the Delius Prize (Keyboard), 1994; first prize (1986), and grand prize (1996) in the Utah Composers Competition; many Meet-the-Composer grants. There are three all-Bell CD's: "The Music of Elizabeth Bell", MMC 2082; "Snows of Yesteryear", N/S R 1029; and "A Collection of Reflections", N/S R 1042. Other recordings are on CRS, Classic Masters, VMM, and North/South Records. There have been six all-Bell concerts, including two to celebrate her 75th birthday: NYC 10/12/03, and Yerevan, Armenia, 4/28/04. Performed world-wide, she is a member of BMI, ACA, SCI, AMC, NACUSA, and other professional organizations.

"My first **string quartet** was completed in 1957 - long enough ago! -- but the first three movements were actually written while I was still a student at Juilliard: i.e. before 1953. A true oldie. . . . The first two movements were premiered at a music school conference at the Eastman School in 1953, and I attended while on my honeymoon. The entire quartet was not given its premiere until 1986, by the Lydian Quartet in Washington, DC. (Since then it was recorded, on MMC 2028, by the Moyzes Quartet.)"

"The first movement is a long, slow rumination; I hear in it now intimations of the loneliness and sadness which seems to go better with old age; but there is also much peacefulness, and the joy of discovering the creative process. . . . The second movement is a loosely scherzoid romp, worked over a 5-beat ostinato. The third alternates chorale-like sections with cadenza-like solo statements, and the fourth is in nearly constant motion, with jabbing chords and long-reaching melodies."

Richard Brooks holds a BS degree in Music Education from the Crane School of Music, Potsdam College, an MA in Composition from Binghamton University and a PhD in Composition from New York University. In December 2004 he retired from Nassau Community College where he taught for 30 years; for the last 22 years he served as department chairperson. From 1977 to 1982 he was Chairman of the Executive Committee of the American Society of University Composers (now the Society of Composers, Inc.). From 1993-2002 he served as President of the American Composers Alliance. He is an active

composer with over eighty works to his credit, including two full length operas. His children's opera, *Rapunzel*, was most recently produced by the Cincinnati Opera giving 65 performances. He was selected as New Music Connoisseur's New Music Champion for 2006-2007 in recognition of his work with Capstone Records on behalf of new music. He was recently appointed Composer-in-Residence with The Lark Ascending (NYC).

Sonata for Solo Violin (2007) is a virtuoso work in three movements. All three movements are based on one of the six all-combinatorial hexachords articulated by Milton Babbitt. The interval pattern is: 2-1-1-1-2 which is one of the diatonic hexachords from which one can derive a triad containing both a major third and a minor third (C-D-E-flat-E-F-G). An all combinatorial hexachord must be transposable and invertible at some pitch level that yields the other six notes of the chromatic scale (in this case F-sharp-G-sharp-A-A-sharp-B-C-sharp). This hexachord thus suggests both atonal and tonal configurations, which is a prevailing interest of the composer.

The first movement is a hybrid structure incorporating features of both sonata form and ternary form. The interval pattern (2-1-1-1-2) suggested a rhythmic pattern of 2+3+2 which is featured in the middle section. The second movement is in a slow tempo and is cast in a rather traditional ternary form with a slightly faster middle section. It is intended to have a quasi-rhapsodic character.

The last movement is a perpetual motion piece. There are four distinct segments with the opening using an initial duple beat pattern. This is followed by a section using a quintuple pattern, then another in seven. The rows are exploited by alternating between the prime hexachord and the inversion with each hexachord rotating through the row (a technique employed earlier by Stravinsky). In the middle sections the motion "slows down" due to more use of repeated notes until the opening *velocitato* section returns. (World Premiere)

Joyce Hope Suskind has enjoyed a varied career as composer, concert singer, oboist, pianist, and teacher. After completing her studies at Juilliard as a scholarship student in oboe and voice, Suskind discovered her talent for composing while playing improvisational piano at the Martha Graham School. She received a commission from Lehman College to compose a score for a Balinese dance which was written for gamelans, flute, and percussion.

She went on to specialize in vocal music, composing a score for a musical comedy, a revue, a feminist anthem, her first published song, cabaret songs, and numerous art songs, most of them set to the poems of WB Yeats. She is currently interested in composing vocal chamber music. She resides in Manhattan, her hometown.

The Wild Swans at Coole (1993)

Yeats has spent nineteen summers at Coole Park, home of his great friend and co-founder of the Abbey Theatre, Lady Augusta Gregory. He is now fifty-one years old. He writes, "All's changed"... His tread is heavy. He is no longer in love with Maude Gonne and feels incapable of passion. He feels like an old man. But the hearts of the swans "have not grown old". They passionately inhabit two worlds, the sky and the water. There is a changeless pattern that goes on forever, always remaining at fifty- nine swans, even though individual swans may die. They symbolize immortality. Yeats ends the poem with a question. Where will they go? Who will be delighted some day by their presence? Where will Yeats be? One year later, Yeats married Georgie Hyde-Leeds. He felt his life was finally "in order" and went on to write some of his finest poems and win the Nobel Prize.

The Wild Swans at Coole

The trees are in their autumn beauty,
The woodland paths are dry,
Under the October twilight the water
Mirrors a still sky;
Upon the brimming water among the stones
Are nine-and-fifty Swans.
The nineteenth autumn has come upon me
Since I first made my count;
I saw, before I had well finished,
All suddenly mount
And scatter wheeling in great broken rings
Upon their clamorous wings.
I have looked upon those brilliant creatures,
And now my heart is sore.
All's changed since I, hearing at twilight,
The first time on this shore,
The bell-beat of their wings above my head,
Trod with a lighter tread.
Unwearied still, lover by lover,
They paddle in the cold
Companionable streams or climb the air;
Their hearts have not grown old;
Passion or conquest, wander where they will,
Attend upon them still.
But now they drift on the still water,
Mysterious, beautiful;
Among what rushes will they build,
By what lake's edge or pool
Delight men's eyes when I awake some day
To find they have flown away?

The Shadow-like Generations (1992)

This poem by Yeats is a paraphrase of commentary made by the chorus of Elders in Sophocles' Oedipus Rex. The song is a lamentation for all humanity, which, like Oedipus, is doomed. The singer plays the role of storyteller, not a disinterested commentator, but one who is emotionally involved in the tragedy. This means that the soloist is not merely telling a story, but expressing it. Even the great king Oedipus who solved the riddle of the Sphinx could not escape his destiny. The singer depicts the sadness and resignation of this commentator. In the third stanza, Oedipus innocently commits the terrible sin of incest. This lyrical section in the music combines the feelings of love in the melody with the sense of doom in the harmony. The singer expresses the lovemaking with the voice, but lets the facial expression and gesture bespeak of Oedipus's terrible fate.

The storyteller becomes more and more desperate. She tries to make sense of all this. She personifies Time who sees all things. Only the eyes of the singer move to depict the eagle-eyed Time who sees all and reveals all. The body is motionless. In the final stanza the singer laments the tragedy, feeling the heart-break of Oedipus and expressing the wish that it had never happened.

The Shadow-Like Generations

What can the shadow-like generations of man
attain
But build up a dazzling mockery of delight
That under their touch dissolves again?
Oedipus seemed blessed,
But there is no man blessed amongst men.

Oedipus overcame the woman-breasted fate;
He seemed like a strong tower against death
And first among the fortunate;
He sat upon the ancient throne of Thebes
And all men called him great.
But looking for a marriage bed,
He found the bed of his birth,
Tilled the field his father had tilled,
Cast seed into the same abounding earth;
Entered through the door that had sent him wailing
forth.

Begetter and begot as one! How could that be hid?
What darkness cover up that marriage-bed?
Time watches, he is eagle-eyed,
And all the works of man are known and every soul
is tried.

Would you had never come to Thebes or to this
house,
Nor riddled with the woman-breasted fate,

Beaten off Death and succoured us,
That I had never raised this song, heartbroken
Oedipus!

William Butler Yeats - Poems used by permission of
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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Kolot Ensemble ("voices") was established in 2006 when a group of young musicians from the renowned Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University discovered a shared passion for contemporary music performance. The ensemble emerged out of a desire to give expression to this extraordinary body of work with its wealth of styles and intricate musical and cultural influences. The mission of Kolot is to become a voice to largely unknown new music by bringing it to the attention of wider audiences.

The music performed by Kolot Ensemble encompasses early 20th century and recent compositions. Its repertoire is diverse and challenging, with a focus on music written by Jewish and Israeli composers. Kolot's programs are uniquely positioned to combine solo and chamber pieces, creating musical experiences which journey through a gamut of styles and dynamic combinations.

The Ensemble is currently working on several programs for contemporary music. In April 2008 the Ensemble performed in Carnegie Hall as part of David Krakauer's Workshop: Exploring Klezmer. Other performances have included collaborations with the Melton Center for Jewish Studies and the School of Music at Ohio State University. This month, Kolot presents new works for the American Composers Alliance Festival, and for the Institute & Festival for Contemporary Performance at Mannes College the New School for Music.

Jan Opalach, whose voice has been described as "lyric," "flexible," and "displays a wonderful variety of color," is one of America's most versatile performers on the operatic stage today, combining serious musicianship with excellent acting skills.

Mr. Opalach has been a regular guest of the New York City Opera since 1980. Among the many roles he has performed during his long association there, are Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, the title role in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, Bartolo in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Sancho Panza in *Don Quichotte*. He has appeared as Dulcamara in Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*, a new production directed by Jonathan Miller and as Lotario in Chas Rader-Scheiber's

charming production of Handel's comedy *Flavio*. In the Spring of 2008, Mr. Opalach had critically acclaimed performances in the title role of Verdi's *Falstaff* with the company. In July of this year, he will be heard in the title role of *Don Pasquale* for PortOpera (ME).

An avid performer of new music, soprano **Nicole Pantos** collaborates regularly with composers to perform chamber and recital programs. Formally trained as a concert pianist, harpist, and flutist, Ms. Pantos brings instrumental sensibility to chamber performance. She has appeared in concert in Italy, Switzerland, Germany, and in all time zones of the continental US. Her voice has been heard in a variety of venues: by millions at the Christmas Tree Lighting in Rockefeller Center, the Korean Embassy in Washington, DC, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Carnegie Hall, on WQXR, to the grand *Nikolaikirche* in Wismar, Germany. She recently performed a recital of new music, premiering Joyce Hope Suskind's "Meditations on War and Peace," in the 2008 Women's Work series presented by Greenwich House.

Donald Berman, piano is a champion of new works by living composers, overlooked music by twentieth century masters, and recitals that link classical and modern repertoires. His CDs *The Unknown Ives volumes 1 & 2* and *The Uncovered Ruggles* (New World Records) have been internationally acclaimed. He is Artistic Director of *Americans in Rome: Music by Fellows of the American Academy in Rome*, a four-volume CD on Bridge Records (2008).

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ACA congratulates New York Women Composers, Inc. on their 25th anniversary in 2009, and salutes one of its founders, ACA composer **Elizabeth Bell**.



The 2009 ACA Laurel Leaf Award for a distinguished career in support of American music was presented on Thursday, June 18th to the acclaimed soprano, **Phyllis Bryn-Julson**, a champion of new music by American composers throughout her long career. First awarded by ACA in 1951, the Laurel Leaf has been received by such notable artists as Martha Graham (1959), Claire Reis (1963), Henry Cowell (1965), Aaron Copland (1963) --ACA's first president, the MacDowell Colony (1973), Ralph Shapey and the Contemporary Chamber Players of the University of Chicago (1979), WNYC Radio and the American Composers Orchestra (1987), and the Gregg Smith Singers (2003).

Recently, Donald premiered Christopher Theofanidis' Piano Concerto with the Pro Musica Chamber Orchestra of Ohio and Belgrade Philharmonic, and recorded CDs with soprano Susan Narucki of songs by Aaron Jay Kernis (Koch 2008) and Charles Ives (New World 2008). He is a prizewinner of the 1991 Schubert International Competition. He studied with Leonard Shure (New England Conservatory), John Kirkpatrick, George Barth (Wesleyan University), and Mildred Victor. Mr. Berman teaches at Tufts University and directs the New England Conservatory Summer Piano Institute.

John McDonald, Associate Professor of Music and Director of Graduate Music Studies at Tufts University, is a composer who tries to play the piano and a pianist who tries to compose. McDonald was named the 2007 MTNA—Shepherd Distinguished Composer of the Year by the Music Teachers National Association. His recordings appear on the Albany, Archetype, Boston, Bridge, Capstone, Neuma, New Ariel, and New World labels, and he has concertized widely as composer and pianist. His recent compositions include: Peace Process (basset horn and piano) The Creatures' Choir (evening-long song cycle for voice and piano) Ways To Jump (choral work concerning frogs) Piano Albums (annual collections of piano miniatures) Stäudlin As Vogl: Preamble To A Winter Journey (alto saxophone and piano) Four Compositions (flute and piano)