

**ALEXANDROS D. FRAGISKATOS,
PERCUSSION**

WITH

SARAH HARTONG, FLUTE
ALEX RESNICK, GUITAR

DOCTORAL RECITAL SERIES
KATZIN CONCERT HALL
SATURDAY, APRIL 23, 2016 • 12:00 P.M.

ASU Herberger Institute
FOR DESIGN AND THE ARTS

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

School of Music

Program

Peeping Tom (1987) Dan Senn
(b. 1951)

Mundus Canis (1998) George Crumb
(b. 1929)

1. Tammy
2. Fritz
3. Heidel
4. Emma-Jean
5. Yoda

with Alex Resnick, guitar

Le Livre des Claviers (1987-88) Philippe Manoury
IV. Solo de Vibraphone (b. 1952)

—Intermission—

To the Earth (1985) Frederick Rzewski
(b. 1938)

Six Elegies Dancing (1987) Jennifer Stasack
(b. 1956)

- I. Adamantly, vigorously
- II. Intensely
- III. Ginger, very stable
- IV. Furiously
- V. With deliberate concentration
- VI. Elegiac

Navi (1992) Noriko Nakamura
(b. 1965)

with Sarah Hartong, flute

Out of respect for the performers and those audience members around you, please switch all beepers, cell phones, and watches to their silent mode. Thank you.

Peeping Tom for solo snare drum and voice
Dan Senn

As an intermedia artist, composer Dan Senn has built a career upon several artistic outlets including kinetic sound sculpture and experimental and documentary film. He works in the fluxus tradition, a movement that rose to prominence in the 1960s which melds a variety of artistic media and disciplines. As an undergraduate music education major at the University of Wisconsin at La Crosse, Senn first trained as a French horn player and vocalist. After studying an ancient ceramic method called "raku," he began trying to emulate this process in musical composition through software he developed. Other influences on Senn's work include his personal journals, which have been incorporated into many of his performance and instillation works. He regularly tours Europe and the U.S. as a featured artist at festivals and experimental venues. In 2014, Senn was artist-in-residence at Marshall University, where he had several of his compositions performed and presented his own kinetic sound sculptures and a new film. He has also held teaching positions at the Canberra School of Music in Australia, Ball State University, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he received his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Music Composition.

Asked to compose a piece in 1986 by Stuart Saunders Smith, Senn wrote *Peeping Tom* for *The Noble Snare* — a collection of snare drum solos aimed at creating new repertoire suitable for concert performance. The semi-autobiographical text of the piece comes from one of Senn's journal entries, and he had already performed it publicly using instruments he had built himself. The performer in this version is required to use wire brushes throughout, while speaking and sometimes singing in prescribed rhythms that were influenced by the text. Senn uses a technique of "phrase resetting," in which the first rhythmic phrase of each section is the source for the rhythmic fragments found throughout. The two-part formal design of the piece is largely determined by tempo and dynamic structure. Senn writes:

The title of this piece came from a lecture given by Herbert Brün at the University of Illinois in the early 1980s where he remarked that listening to music intended to send an emotional message about the author, like that of angst, suffering, love etc., made him feel uncomfortable and like a "Peeping Tom." He was referring specifically to art which was narcissistic by nature and inevitably limited by existing language. Brün was not opposed to evoking emotions in art but was uncomfortable with the restraints imposed by art originating as such.

The piece's text:

As a kid I was rapt by one-way mirrors. NOT because I was a voyeur. Though indeed I was. BUT because of an idea. I knew that light bounced

off mirrors. So it seemed possible to trap light within a sphere surfaced with this one-way mirror stuff. A cheap source of light! The sphere would collect light until it blew up or some of it was let out.

A friend of mine has a brain like that. And to keep it — his brain — from exploding he expresses himself. He writes music. And he does this by transcribing the sounds he hears inside his head. He copes this way. And when I hear his music I feel like a voyeur again.

Mundus Canis for guitar and percussion
George Crumb

A pillar in contemporary music, George Crumb has made a monumental impact with his unique compositional style, which explores extended techniques, graphic notation, and timbral relationships. Born on "Black Thursday" in 1929, his first musical exposure was to country, church music, and band concerts directed by his father. Crumb began clarinet lessons at the age of seven, but piano eventually became his instrument of choice. By the age of ten, he was composing in the styles of Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Debussy, and Brahms. Crumb earned degrees in composition and piano at Morris Mason College and the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana before completing his doctorate in composition at the University of Michigan in 1959. While Crumb has composed several works for orchestra, many of his compositions are chamber pieces for both instrumentalists and vocalists. Percussion and piano are among his most utilized instruments, and *Music for a Summer Evening*, written for two pianists and two percussionists, is one his most celebrated works. The endless possibilities of timbre achievable with percussion make it ideal for Crumb's music.

Commissioned by guitarist David Starobin, *Mundus Canis* (Latin for "A Dog's World") is a collection of five short humoresques. The piece is a musical homage to Crumb's own dogs, each movement serving as a character portrait of the dog after which it is titled. He says:

I have always known that dogs, like their biped masters, have various and distinct personalities. The addition of percussion, which supplies a specific instrumental color for each piece, helped me to delineate each canine character.

The percussionist is called on to use maracas, frame drum, claves, cymbal, tam-tam, water gong, castanet, and güiro. Though many of the instruments have Central American origins, they are not used in a traditional manner. The guitarist, like the percussionist, is asked to perform extended techniques, often in order to imitate the latter. These include Bartók pizzicati, knuckles on the guitar body, and scraping the strings. The varying timbres help to sonically portray each dog. *Mundus Canis* was premiered in France by Starobin and Crumb in 1998.

Les Livres de Claviers, IV. Solo de Vibraphone
Philippe Manoury

French-born Philippe Manoury has become one of the most respected figures in contemporary Western art music. It may be hard to believe that he failed the entrance exam to the Conservatoire de Paris twice before being admitted. Nonetheless, he studied composition with Max Deutsch at the École Normale de Musique de Paris before eventually continuing with Ivo Malec, Michel Philippot, and Claude Ballif at the Conservatoire. Though, strongly influenced by composers such as Iannis Xenakis, Pierre Boulez, and Karlheinz Stockhausen, Manoury has been able to synthesize their styles in a highly personal way. His initial studies in computer music with Perrie Barbaud, a student of Xenakis, heavily informed Manoury's use of electronics with music, so much so that in 1980 he was invited to the Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique (IRCAM) as a composer and electronic music researcher. Other positions held include teacher of the Ensemble Intercontemporain, composer-in-residence at the Orchestre de Paris, and Professor of Composition and Electronic Music at the Lyons Conservatoire. Manoury also taught composition at the University of California, San Diego before retiring in 2012.

Its title French for "The Book of Keyboards," *Les Livres de Claviers* is a six-movement work written for the famous percussion sextet Les Percussions de Strasbourg. This piece makes use of sixxens — microtonally-tuned bars of aluminum invented by Xenakis for his percussion sextet, *Plèiades*, also written for the group. Not all movements of *Les Livres* require six players, however. The second, a marimba duo, and the fourth, a vibraphone solo, can be performed separately. With the vibraphone solo, Manoury aimed to develop the practice of independently dampening individual pitches, which he sees as one of the instrument's most unique and defining capabilities:

There is a polyphony of appearance and disappearance of different sounds in which the performer has the choice to dampen sounds using fingers or mallets. As such, the fingers (or mallets) are frequently playing the role of filters in electronic music. Formally the piece is quite elaborate and functions as a series of free transformation[s] of a basic musical structure, each one with varying degrees of different manipulations.

To the Earth for speaking percussionist
Frederic Rzewski

Composer and pianist Frederic Rzewski's music has long expressed a deep socialist-political concern with modern society. With compositions like *Coming Together*, *What Is Freedom?*, and *The People United Will Never Be Defeated!*, Rzewski uses music as a means to address injustices and problems within

humanity. Educated at Harvard and Princeton, he studied composition with Roger Sessions and Milton Babbitt at the latter while attending courses in philosophy and Greek. A Fulbright scholarship enabled study with composer Luigi Dallapiccola in 1960-61, and a grant from the Ford Foundation brought him to Berlin, where he supplemented his studies in 1963-65 with Elliot Carter. Rzewski has built a career not only on composition but on piano performance as well, having toured Europe and taken part in important premieres such as those of Stockhausen's *Klavierstücke X* and *Plus Minus*. As a teacher, he has held positions at numerous universities in the U.S. and abroad, including the Conservatoire Royal, Yale University, the Royal Conservatory of the Hague, the Berlin Hochschule der Künste, and the Universities of Cincinnati, Buffalo, and San Diego.

“The Earth — whatever it is,” says Rzewski —

is a myth, both ancient and modern. For Heraclitus, it is a ball in the hands of a child. For the Kabbalists, it is the stuff of creation, an act so dangerous that it must never be undertaken alone. For Columbus, it is an egg. For us today as well, it appears increasingly as something fragile. Because of its humanly altered metabolism, it is rapidly becoming a symbol of the precarious human condition.

To the Earth attempts to convey this sense of fragility. Written at the request of percussionist Jan Williams, Rzewski chose to score for flower pots after reading an article about newly-discovered properties of clay including its capacity to store energy for long periods of time. For Rzewski, this makes flower pots “a kind of transitional medium between organic and inorganic materials.” The recited text comes from a Homeric hymn, a prayer to the goddess of Earth, Gaia. Though the text is written in Ancient Greek, it is most commonly performed in the provided English translation. Today's performance, however, will be spoken in Ancient Greek. Below is an English translation.

To the Earth, Mother of all, I will sing:
the well-established, the oldest,
who nourishes on her surface everything that lives.
Those things that walk upon the holy ground,
and those that swim in the sea, and those that fly;
all these are nourished by your abundance.

It is thanks to you if we humans have healthy children and rich harvests.
Great Earth, you have the power to give life to and to take it away from
creatures that must die.

Happy are the ones whom you honor with your kindness and gifts;
what they have built will not vanish.

Their fields are fertile, their herds prosper,

and their houses are full of good things.
Their cities are governed with just laws; their women are beautiful;
good fortune and wealth follow them.
Their children are radiant with the joy of youth.
The young women play in the flower meadows,
dancing with happiness in their hearts.

Holy Earth, Undying Spirit,
so it is with those whom you honor.
Hail to you, Mother of Life.
You who are loved by the starry sky;
Be generous and give me a happy life in return for my song,
so that I can continue to praise you with my music.

A sincere thank-you to Dr. Mike Tueller, Associate Professor of Ancient Greek Language and Literature at Arizona State University, for his generous guidance.

Six Elegies Dancing for solo marimba
Jennifer Stasack

With a passionate ethnomusicological interest in non-Western musical systems, Jennifer Stasack often draws upon her studies of Javanese, Korean, Indian, and Japanese music when composing. She has extensive fieldwork experience, and she has held numerous summer residencies in Eastern countries. Though she was born in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, Stasack was raised in Hawaii, where she also completed her bachelor's and master's degrees in music at the University of Hawaii, Manoa. She received her Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music in 1991, where she is recognized as a Distinguished Alumna. Stasack has received numerous commissions across a broad range of styles, although she primarily composes for chamber ensembles, mixed and women's choruses, and percussion. She also holds the distinction of being the first female composer commissioned by Cincinnati radio station WGUC 90.9 FM for her composition *Cassandra*. Other honors include grants and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the North Carolina Arts Council, and the Korean Performing Arts Institute. Currently, Stasack is Professor of Music at Davidson College in North Carolina.

Commissioned by Swedish percussionist Mikael Ericson, *Six Elegies Dancing* is a marimba solo in six movements, each with its own distinct character. Stasack offers these words about the piece:

Elegy: 1. A poem composed in elegiac distichs (couplets). 2. A mournful poem; especially, a poem composed to lament one who is dead.

Dance: 1. To move rhythmically to music, using prescribed or improvised steps and gestures. 2. To leap or skip about excitedly; caper, frolic. 3. A particular set of prescribed movements.

Six: 1. One of a series of symbols of unique meaning in a fixed order which may be derived by counting. 2. A member of the set of rational numbers.

...thus, the set of prescribed movements composed to frolic in a fixed order derived by a series of symbols, of unique elegiac meaning. In the fifth movement, energy lines that prepare, conclude, and connect individual music events are illuminated through choreographed movements of the marimba player. The dance, here, becomes both auditory and visual.

Navi for flute and percussion
Noriko Nakamura

Born in Shiga, Japan, composer Noriko Nakamura's compositions have been performed all across the world in countries such as Korea, China, Mexico, Germany, France, Switzerland, Finland, Mexico, and the U.S. Completing both her bachelor's and master's degrees at the Kyoto City University of Arts (KCUA), there she studied with Ryohei Jirose, Michio Kitazume, Masahisa Fujishima, Shuichi Maeda, and Wataru Tahjima. In 1997, she received the Ogura Risaburo Music Scholarship for her research into traditional east-Asian music. Though many of Nakamura's compositions call for traditional Japanese instruments, she does have a large output of vocal and chamber music written for various Western instruments, including percussion. Currently, Nakamura is Associate Professor of Composition at KCUA.

Scored for flute, toms, bass drum, mukosho (Japanese woodblocks), cymbals, gong, sistrum, stones, and windbells, *Navi* was premiered in December 1992 at the Kyoto International Festival. The title, according to the composer, is "from Japanese ancient times. Perhaps it concerns animistic and spiritual tradition. Sometimes it means *religious mountain* and often it means *holy forest*." These are the images that Nakamura attempts to evoke in the piece. The flute employs various techniques such as portamento/glissando, mixing of breath, and slow vibrato speed; these techniques combine to mimic of the sound of a shakuhachi (Japanese end-blown flute). Unique among the percussion instruments used in this piece are the windbells, a kind of hybrid between wind chimes and handbells. For *Navi*, the percussionist is required to use rocks and their hands to activate some or all of the bells. The combinative effect with the flute adds to the mystique of the piece and its possible programmatic meanings. The Soleri windbells used in today's performance are courtesy of the Cosanti Foundation.