

# NEW MUSIC CIRCLE

## **Luna Nova(3)**

Saturday, April 14, 2012 at 7:30 pm

Christ Church Cathedral

Craig Hultgren, cello – CAMA Artist

with

John McMurtery, flute

Adam Bowles, piano

### PROGRAM

*Oceanic Prelude* for piccolo, cello, piano & crotales (2006) Robert G. Patterson

*Voice* for solo flute (1971) Toru Takemitsu

*81* for solo piano (2010) Monroe Golden

*Walls Like These* for cello & piano (2011) James Romig

### **- INTERMISSION -**

*Le Merle noir* for flute & piano (1952) Olivier Messiaen

*Enchanted Preludes* for flute & cello (1988) Elliot Carter

*Broken Consort* for flute, cello & piano (2009) Justin Merritt

### Program Notes

***Oceanic Prelude*** is conceived as a foil for George Crumb's masterwork, *Voice of the Whale*. It calls for the same players as Crumb's piece and shares an association with the sea, but in all other respects (not least in its brevity) it strives to be different. The piece consists of three splashes. The first two are followed by the floating stasis of lyrical melodies in the cello, while the final splash builds to an ending that could be described as resembling waves crashing against rocks. *Oceanic Prelude* is a "prelude" because it is brief, and the ending invites the audience to hear more.

**Robert G. Patterson** holds a doctorate in composition from the University of Pennsylvania. His mentors include George Crumb, John Baur, and Don Freund. His compositions have been performed from South Africa to Norway and Spain to Seattle. Among the awards he has received are the 2004 National Symphony Orchestra Residency Commission, 1999 University of Michigan Bands Commission and the 1994 International Composition Prize from the City of Tarragona in Spain. In addition to his musical activities, Patterson helps develop PC-based hotel software for Hilton Hotels, and his interest in computers has led him to become an expert in musical engraving using a computer. He plays horn in the Memphis Symphony Orchestra. He has participated in new music festivals with Luna Nova since its beginning in 2002.

***Voice*** is one of three works for solo flute by Takemitsu. The piece combines elements of traditional Japanese theater with lines from a poem by Shuzo Takiguchi, in both French and English, and implies the use of a traditional Japanese flute. There is uncertainty as to which

flute the composer intended to imitate, but the score indicates a *Noh* flute. The composition displays the Japanese aesthetic of *ma* (which translated into English refers to space, or silence) and uses hollow-tone trills, multiphonics, and a layering of several nonmusical programmatic inspirations.

**Toru Takemitsu** (1931-1996) was a self-taught Japanese composer who combined elements of Eastern and Western music and philosophy to create a unique sound world. Takemitsu believed in music as a means of ordering or contextualizing everyday sound in order to make it meaningful or comprehensible. His philosophy of "sound as life" lay behind his incorporation of natural sounds, as well as his desire to juxtapose and reconcile opposing elements such as Orient and Occident, sound and silence, and tradition and innovation. From the beginning, Takemitsu wrote highly experimental music involving improvisation, graphic notation, unusual combinations of instruments and recorded sounds. His music is usually slowly paced and quiet, but also capable of great intensity. The variety, quantity and consistency of Takemitsu's output are remarkable considering that he never worked within any kind of conventional framework or genre. In addition to the several hundred independent works of music, he scored over ninety films and published twenty books.

The piano work **81** was composed for Kurt Carpenter and premiered at the American Episcopal Cathedral in Paris in 2005. A nine-note scale is analogous to partials 2, 3, 9, 17, 19, 27, 51, 57, and 81 -- harmonics perceptively close to equal-temperament -- with pitch and rhythmic structures derived from those relationships. The piece is 81 measures long, with nine sections each nine measures in length, and the note representing the 81st partial sounding on the downbeat of each measure.

**Monroe Golden** is a freelance composer from rural Alabama. His compositions often explore alternate tuning systems and the implications of those systems for other musical structures. Awards include the 2006 Alabama Music Teachers Association/MTNA Commissioning Award and an Individual Artist Fellowship from the [Alabama State Council on the Arts](#). A CD of his works titled *A Still Subtler Spirit* is available from [Living Artist Recordings](#), [amazon.com](#), and [CD Baby](#). Beyond his artistry, Golden has actively encouraged and promoted the innovative arts in his resident community. He is a founding member and former president of the [Birmingham Art Music Alliance](#). He has also headed the [Birmingham Art Association](#) and the [Arburst Performance Series](#) at the [Unitarian Universalist Church of Birmingham](#). He produced the 1998 Birmingham International Improvisation Festival. Golden graduated cum laude from the [University of Montevallo](#) and earned a doctorate from the [University of Illinois](#). His composition teachers include James A. Jensen, Edwin Robertson, Ben Johnston, Sever Tipei, Aurel Stroé, and Herbert Brün.

***Walls Like These***, for cello and piano, was commissioned by Augustus Arnone for the Collide-O-Scope Music ensemble. Completed in November 2011, the work lasts approximately eight minutes in one continuous movement. After an opening section of interlocking staccato figures in both instruments, sustained notes in the piano induce a transition to slower legato gestures. Eventually, the cello gives way to a concluding solo in the piano. *Walls Like These* is a companion piece to *Leaves From Modern Trees* (for flute and piano, also composed in 2011). Both duos are titled after a lyric from the song "First Wave Intact" by the Secret Machines on their 2004 album *Now Here is Nowhere*.

**James Romig** composes music that endeavors to reflect the intricate complexity of nature, where fundamental structures exert influence on both small-scale iteration and large-scale design, obscuring the boundaries between form and content. His work shows the influence of academic study with Charles Wuorinen and Milton Babbitt, interaction with the natural world through hiking and photography, and an interest in chaos theory, fractal geometry, and small-world networks. Recent guest-composer visits include Northwestern University, the Aspen Institute, the Cincinnati Conservatory, the University of Illinois, Juilliard, and the American Academy in Rome. Residencies include Petrified Forest National Park, Grand Canyon National Park, and Copland House. He holds degrees from Rutgers University and the University of Iowa and has been on faculty at Western Illinois University since 2002.

***Le Merle noir*** translates as *The Blackbird*. The six-minute work was written on a commission as a test piece for the Paris Conservatoire's flute examination. While not his first work to incorporate stylized birdsong, it was the earliest of his pieces to be based mainly on birdsong, and it foreshadows the composer's later, more extended birdsong-inspired pieces.

**Olivier Messiaen** (1908-1992) studied at the Paris Conservatoire (1919-30) with Dukas, Dupré and others, and taught there from 1941-78 while also serving as organist of La Trinité in Paris (1931-92). His pupils include many distinguished musicians such as Boulez, Stockhausen and Xenakis. His Roman Catholic faith was deep and lasting, and much of his music has an explicitly religious program. He believed that all his music was written to glorify God and developed a sophisticated sign system with which to evangelize. Messiaen was an ardent ornithologist. He incorporated birdsong transcriptions using his own 'style oiseau' into much of his music (*Catalogue d'oiseaux*, 1958). He wrote music in every major genre, making special contributions to the organ repertoire and to the piano repertoire, due largely to the skills of his second wife Yvonne Loriod.

***Enchanted Preludes***, for flute and cello, was commissioned by Harry Santen for the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday of his wife Anne Santen, the musical director of Cincinnati's public radio station WGUC, who had supported new American music for many years. This fantasy duet contrasts the flute with the cello in playful moments. Each instrument, while maintaining its own musical personality, follows its own moods and logic. The title is a quotation from Wallace Stevens:

"Time. . . the enchanter'd space  
In which the enchanted preludes have their place."

Born in New York City in 1908 and still living, **Elliott Carter** began to be seriously interested in music in high school and was encouraged at that time by Charles Ives. He attended Harvard University where he studied with Walter Piston, and later went to Paris where for three years he studied with Nadia Boulanger. With the explorations of tempo relationships and texture that characterize his music, Carter is recognized as one of the prime innovators of 20<sup>th</sup>-century music. Carter has been the recipient of the highest honors a composer can receive: the Gold Medal for Music awarded by the National Institute of Arts and Letters, the National Medal of Arts, membership in the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and honorary degrees from many universities. Hailed by Aaron Copland as "one of America's most distinguished creative artists in any field," Carter has received two Pulitzer Prizes and commissions from many prestigious organizations.

Fans of the Renaissance will know that a group of instruments is a consort. A group of viols is a consort of viols for example. A broken consort is a group of different kinds of instruments like the trio used in this piece. ***Broken Consort*** is a wild, flashy, virtuosic piece that is hugely demanding of the performers. While it has a sort of world music flavor, it is not derived from any particular source. In fact, it is more an amalgam of world music and set theory.

Composer **Justin Merritt** (born 1975) was the youngest-ever winner of the ASCAP Foundation/Rudolph Nissim award in 2001 for *Janus Mask* for Orchestra. He is the winner of many other awards including the 2011 McKnight Fellowship, the 2008 Copland Award, the 2008 Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute Award for *River of Blood*, the 2006 Polyphonos Prize for *Hay Días*, the 2006 VocalEssence Essentially Chorale Competition for *Adoro Te Devote*, the 2000 Left Coast Chamber Ensemble Composition Competition Award for *The Day Florestan Murdered Magister Raro*, and the 2001 Kuttner String Quartet Competition for *Ravening*. He received his Bachelors from Trinity University and his Masters and Doctorate from Indiana University. He studied composition with Samuel Adler, Sven-David Sandström, Claude Baker, Timothy Kramer, Don Freund, and electronic and computer music with Jeffrey Hass. He is currently Associate Professor of Composition at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota.

### **Performers**

Since its formation in 2002, **Luna Nova**, a group of artists devoted to the music of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, has performed in colleges, museums, churches, and concert halls across the country. Its repertoire consists of recognized masterworks as well as works by emerging composers. With concerts, master classes and private instruction, Luna Nova maintains a

strong commitment to the education of performers and listeners, and to the cause of new music. Luna Nova is currently the core ensemble for the Belvedere Chamber Music Festival held each June in Memphis, Tennessee. Luna Nova(3) is a subset of the larger ensemble.

For several decades, cellist **Craig Hultgren** has been a fixture on the scenes for new music, the newly creative arts, and the avant-garde. In recent years, he has performed solo concerts and chamber music in Rome, Boston, Pittsburgh, Miami, Atlanta, Orlando, Denver, Memphis and San Antonio. A recipient of two Artist Fellowships from the Alabama State Council on the Arts, he was a member for many years of Thámyris, a contemporary chamber music ensemble in Atlanta. A cellist in the Alabama Symphony, he also plays in Luna Nova, a new music ensemble with a large repertoire of performances available as podcast downloads on iTunes. Hultgren is featured in three solo CD recordings including *The Electro-Acoustic Cello Book* on Living Artist Recordings. For ten years, he produced the Hultgren Solo Cello Works Biennial, an international competition that highlighted the best new compositions for the instrument. He teaches at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the Alabama School of Fine Arts and Birmingham-Southern College where he directs the BSC New Music Ensemble. He is a founding member and former President of the Birmingham Art Music Alliance and is past Chair of the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Youth Orchestras of Birmingham.

**John McMurtery** is section flutist of the New York City Opera Orchestra, and substitutes regularly with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, the New Jersey Symphony, and the OK Mozart Festival Orchestra. He has appeared as soloist with the New York Symphonic Ensemble, the Artemis Chamber Ensemble, the Manhattan Chamber Orchestra, and the 2005 Lincoln Center Festival. He has recorded for the NAXOS label as principal flutist on the collaborative disc of world premieres by award-winning composer Sean Hickey. McMurtery served as Visiting Professor of Flute at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, and has also taught at Westminster Conservatory in Princeton, New Jersey. He currently serves on the board of directors of the New York Flute Club, co-chairing the annual Flute Fair. McMurtery graduated from The Juilliard School with a Doctor of Music Arts degree, where he studied with Jeanne Baxtresser, Julius Baker, and Robert Langevin. Previous teachers include Bart Feller at Rutgers University and Hal Ott at Central Washington University.

Pianist **Adam Bowles** is dedicated to the performance of newly composed art music, but he is also an active and passionate interpreter of established solo piano, chamber music, and vocal repertoire from other periods of music history. Bowles has performed nationally is a founding member to the Luna Nova ensemble. He is also an active member and officer of the Birmingham Art Music Alliance, a non-profit organization dedicated to the performance of living composers. He holds degrees from Eastman School of Music and New England Conservatory and received his Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. His teachers have included Milton Stern, Barry Snyder, Jacob Maxin, and Eugene and Elizabeth Pridonoff. Bowles is currently on the faculties of the Birmingham-Southern College and Conservatory. He is an accompanist for the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He is recorded on the Living Artists label and was recently featured on a CD of music by Argentinian composer Valdo Sciammerella titled *Rosas de Pulpa Rosas de Cal*. His playing can also be heard on Belmont University composer Mark Volker's CD titled *Elemental Forces* on the Centaur label.