

International Rostrum of Composers.

The EAR Unit has recorded for the Nonesuch, Crystal, New Albion, New World, Tzadik, O.O. Discs, CRI/Emergency Music, and Cambria labels and has the distinction of being one of the first contemporary music groups to be featured on a CD-ROM, Morton Subotnick's *All My Hummingbirds have Alibis* on the Voyager label. New Albion has released a collection of pre-eminent Dutch composer Louis Andriessen's works, featuring *Zilver* which was also written for and commissioned by the Unit in conjunction with the EAR Unit's tour of England for the Contemporary Music Network. Bridge Records has issued Morton Feldman's four-hour-long trio *For Philip Guston* (labeled "Best Classical CD of 1997 by CDNow). Recent recordings include "Go" on the Echograph label and "Settings," music by Mel Powell on New World.

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CALIFORNIA EAR UNIT

Premieres!

May 14, 2008
8:30 pm

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PROGRAM

***Trois Espaces du Son* (2004)** **Eric Chasalow**

***Automatic Arms* (2008, world premiere)** **Wil Smith and Kevin Lovelady**

***The Light Within* (2007)** **John Luther Adams**

INTERMISSION

***Rites of Summer* (2007, world premiere)** **Gordon Beeferman**

California EAR Unit: Phil O'Connor, clarinet; Vicki Ray, piano; Amy Knoles, percussion; Eric km Clark, violin; Erika Duke-Kirkpatrick, cello

Guest Artists: Sara Andon, flute; Donald Crockett, conductor

PROGRAM NOTES

***Trois Espaces du Son* (2004)** **Eric Chasalow**

Since the days of the analog studio, composing slow electronic music has been a challenge. The medium naturally encourages two extremes—highly articulated, percussion-like gestures, or dense layers of longer sounds. When Thierry Miroglio and Ancuza Aprodu asked for a piece for piano, percussion and electronic sound, I naturally thought of the great Stockhausen landmark, *Kontakte*. This piece, like many of my own, is characterized by extended high-energy passages made up of streams of attack-points. The acoustics of both piano and percussion naturally emphasize attacks or beginnings of notes, and resonance is often fleeting.

In *Trois Espaces du Son*, I have intentionally set out to make a piece that combines

curated by pianist Kathy Supové. Wil has attended the Czech-American Summer Music Festival in Prague and the Bang on a Can Summer Music Institute, and studied composition, organ, and jazz piano at Florida State University. He received his masters degree in composition from the Manhattan School of Music in 2005, where he studied with Julia Wolfe. Upcoming performances include the New York premiere of *Automatic Arms* on the Electronic Music Foundation's "EMF Lab" series on May 20.

Dubbed the "wizards of new music" by the *L.A. Daily News* ... Cited by the *New York Times*: "The EAR Unit performs with exuberance and razor-sharp precision" ... heralded in Brussels by *La Province*: "The California EAR Unit, d'excellents musiciens ... un ensemble de très grand qualité" ... and noted by *LA Style*, "The exhilaration in their playing, as they plunge with glorious high spirits and dazzling skill into the world's most daunting repertoire ... should be reward enough for anybody."

These are just a few of the national and international press accolades garnered by the **California EAR Unit** in its twenty-two year history. The Los Angeles-based new music ensemble is dedicated to the performance, promotion and creation of the exciting music of our time. Founded in March 1981, the EAR Unit has brought unparalleled versatility, virtuosity and dedication to its performances and is recognized today as one of America's finest contemporary chamber ensembles. For its contributions to the field of contemporary American music, the ensemble has recently garnered awards from *LA Weekly* (Best Classical Series 1999 and 2003) and the 1999 "Letter of Distinction" from the American Music Center.

Kaleidoscopic. Eclectic. Violins and pianos one minute, harmonicas and amplified plants the next—the audience never knows what to expect. Attending an EAR Unit concert means experiencing a fresh, exuberant approach to music making. From 1987 to 2005 the EAR Unit was Ensemble-in-Residence at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art where they presented their own four-concert critically acclaimed series. Since 2005 the ensemble has been ensemble-in-residence at REDCAT. The EAR Unit's repertoire of over 400 compositions ranges from the most demanding works for the concert hall to collaborations with major artists in other fields to create original multi-media works. The EAR Unit combines a "classic" instrumentation of flute, clarinet, keyboards, percussion, violin and cello with "anything goes" including voices, panpipes, handcuffs, playing Bach on the cello with a carrot (*Cage's Theater Piece*), theatrics and the latest interactive electronic media.

The Unit has performed at major venues all over the world including Tanglewood, Brussels, Aspen, Kiev, Paris, the Kennedy Center, Cologne, New York, Boston, Minneapolis, San Francisco, Santa Fe, Amsterdam, Reykjavik, and many places in between. The ensemble has been featured in documentaries for the BBC and Japanese television and many of their concerts have been broadcast by American and National Public Radio, WGBH's "Art of the States" Program, WDR (Germany), BRT (Belgium) and DR (Danish Radio) and the

Sudbury (Ontario), Tempe, Torino, Versailles, and Warsaw. He produces the biennial BEAMS Electronic Music Marathon, as part of the Boston Cyberarts Festival. Since 1996 Eric Chasalow and his wife, Barbara Cassidy, have directed the The Video Archive of Electroacoustic Music, an oral history project chronicling the pioneer electronic music composers and engineers from 1950 to the present. Recent projects have included the premiere of *Concerning Sunspots* for large orchestra by Boston Modern Orchestra Project and *The Puzzle Master*, a multi-media retelling of the Icarus myth on a libretto by poet and Wesleyan University Professor of Letters F.D. Reeve. His flute concerto, *Three Love Poems*, was commissioned in honor of his 50th birthday in 2005 by the Koussevitzky Foundation together with a consortium of flutists: Susan Gall, Tara Helen O'Connor, Rachel Rudich, Patricia Spencer, and Dorothy Stone, with their respective ensembles, Auros Ensemble, New Millennium Ensemble, DaCapo Chamber Players, and the California EAR Unit. It was subsequently awarded the Sylvia Goldstein Award from Copland House. Eric Chasalow is Professor of Music at Brandeis University, and Director of BEAMS, the Brandeis Electro-Acoustic Music Studio. He holds the D.M.A. from Columbia University where his principal teacher was Mario Davidovsky and where he studied flute with Harvey Sollberger. Other teachers included Elliott Schwartz, William T. McKinley, George Edwards, and Jack Beeson. Among his honors are awards from the Guggenheim Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Fromm Foundation at Harvard University (two commissions), New York Foundation for the Arts, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters (awards in 1986 and 2003). His music is available from Suspicious Motives Music, G. Schirmer, McGinnis & Marx (New York) and Edition Bim (Switzerland) and on CDs from New World Records, ICMC, Intersound Net Records, SEAMUS, and RRRRecords. Additional information may be found at www.ericchasalow.com and www.brandeis.edu/departments/music.

Kevin Lovelady grew up Mojave-adjacent making videos from VCR to VCR. These investigations led him to the study of film and art history at the University of California, Santa Cruz. In downtown Los Angeles he began to present digital video work in the form of installations, music videos, and animations. Kevin now resides in Brooklyn, where he works with choreographer Cathy Weis and other collaborators while continuing to produce his own work. *Automatic Arms* marks Lovelady's return to downtown L.A. www.highandamazing.com

Wil Smith is a composer and improviser based in Brooklyn, New York. His music spans traditional and popular styles, integrating electronics, theatrics, and improvisation. Wil performs regularly on keyboards and laptop with his experimental band Passenger Fish, for which he is currently writing a multimedia rock opera. Three scenes from the opera-in-progress were recently showcased at The Flea Theater's "Music with a View" series,

certain idiomatic ways of playing piano and percussion with an unconventional simplicity. I have composed music in which different colors of attack are allowed to resonate. As each sonority "breathes", its color and harmony shifts, sometimes by subtle changes of spectrum that allows new chords to emerge, sometimes through more obvious timbre modulation or *portamenti*. These changes seem to do more than create progressions of timbre and harmony. The space inhabited by the instruments also seems to change over time.

The piece is in three movements—slow, faster, slow. Even the fast movement, though, has a slow harmonic rhythm and is fast music only in that there are many repeated-note figures on the surface. The slow movements each emphasize resonance differently. Movement one opens with a declamatory fanfare of arpeggios, followed by simple melodic lines that change color, in part, by leaping in register. Movement three consists mostly of a rather static, slow chord progression with ever-lengthening spaces between attacks. As the instruments simply repeat slightly revoiced chords many times, the electronic sounds change the perceived harmony. In movements one and three the percussionist is limited to only two metal instruments—vibraphone and crotales—both of which are capable of producing long decays. For the second movement the percussionist plays entirely inside the piano, changing and augmenting the sonorities set in vibration by the pianist.

—Eric Chasalow

***Automatic Arms* (2008, world premiere)**

Wil Smith

Automatic Arms was written for EAR Unit violinist Eric km Clark, who has transformed an ordinary hot-pink violin into a simplified all-E string assault vehicle. In Eric's world, extremist improvisation, falsetto vocalizations and Whammy Pedal sweeps are a common language. In this new multimedia work, Brooklyn-based artists Wil Smith (music) and Kevin Lovelady (video) mechanically regulate this world with an array of digital equipment, the raw power of the human performer, and the arms in between.

—Wil Smith

***The Light Within* (2007)**

John Luther Adams

Sitting in the silence of their meetings, Quakers seek to "greet the light within". In his work, the artist James Turrell (a Quaker himself) says that he aspires to address "the light that we see in dreams".

On a crisp autumn day sitting inside *Meeting*—Turrell's skyspace at P.S.1 in Queens, New York—I experienced my own epiphany of light. From mid-afternoon through sunset into night, I was transfixed by the magical interplay of light and color, above and within.

Over the hours the sky descended through every nameless shade of blue, to heaviest black. The light within the space rose from softest white, through ineffable yellows to deepest orange. Just after sunset there came a moment when outside and inside met in perfect equipoise. The midnight blue of the sky and the burnished peach of the room came together, fusing into one vibrant yet intangible plane... light becoming color, becoming

substance.

Out of this experience came *The Light Within*. A companion to *The Light That Fills the World* (1999/2001), the harmonic colors of this new piece are more complex and mercurial than those of its outward-looking predecessor. Within this more introspective sonic space, the light changes more quickly, embracing darker hues and deeper shadows.

—John Luther Adams, November 2007

Rites of Summer (2008, world premiere)

What comes after the Rite of Spring? Well, rites of summer, of course! And in the mind's eye of a New Yorker, L.A. is the place of perpetual summer. When I started to think about writing this piece for the EAR Unit, I knew I didn't want to write a dark, claustrophobic, stressful piece (that is, my New York state of mind). I wanted to write something sprawling, like L.A. itself, something that moves in gigantic strides, rather than piling microscopic details upon top of one another. In keeping with the "Rite" aspect, I imagined this piece as an imaginary ballet; what the magic action is or what it signifies I can't suggest, but hope it conjures something up for everyone individually. Lastly, one New York thing did creep in, California fantasies to the contrary, and that is this: that summer certainly does end, suddenly and definitively. This work was commissioned with the assistance of Eleanor Eisenmenger/20th Century Unlimited.

—Gordon Beeferman

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

From his home in Alaska, **John Luther Adams** has created a unique musical world grounded in wilderness landscapes and indigenous cultures, and in natural phenomena from the songs of birds to elemental noise. His music includes works for orchestra, small ensembles, percussion and electronic media, and is recorded on Cold Blue, Cantaloupe, New World, Mode, and New Albion. He is the author of the book *Winter Music* (Wesleyan 2004), and his writings have appeared in numerous periodicals and anthologies. His sound and light environment *The Place Where You Go to Listen* is a permanent part of the new Museum of the North at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. In 2006 Adams was named one of the first United States Artists Fellows. Previously he has received awards and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Rasmuson Foundation, and the Foundation for Contemporary Arts. JLA has served as composer in residence with the Anchorage Symphony, Anchorage Opera, Fairbanks Symphony, Arctic Chamber Orchestra, and the Alaska Public Radio Network, and as president of the American Music Center. He has taught at the University of Alaska, Bennington College and the Oberlin Conservatory of Music.

Gordon Beeferman is a composer, pianist and improviser based in New York City. His works—orchestral, solo, chamber, and opera—have been performed by the Minnesota Orchestra, Albany Symphony, Quartet New Generation recorder collective, eighth blackbird, pianist Winston Choi, soprano Lisa Bielawa, and many others. His chamber opera-in-progress *The Rat Land*, performed by the New York City Opera on their VOX 2007: Showcasing American Composers series, was praised by the *New York Times* as "complex and daringly modern ... Mr. Beeferman's music, with its skittish melodic lines and pungent atonal harmony, is gritty, fidgety and intriguing." Beeferman has received commissions from the Fromm Foundation, the BMI Foundation, and Concert Artists Guild, among others. A "fully liberated pianist" (*Cadence*), he has performed in a wide range of capacities, from concerto soloist to free improviser, and has collaborated regularly with dancers and other artists, including Jeff Arnal, Jane Barnes, Charlotte Jackson, Anita Cheng, Seth Misterka, Brad Kemp, Katt Hernandez, and Estelle Woodward. In New York he has performed at Roulette, the Merce Cunningham Studio, MATA, Columbia University and the Improvised and Otherwise Festival, as well as at other venues in Boston, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Canada, and elsewhere. His recordings of improvised music are available on Generate Records. Beeferman has received recognition for his work including three BMI Student Composer Awards, an ASCAP Young Composer Award, and the BMG/Williams College National Awards to Young Composers Grand Prize. He has been a fellow at Tanglewood and a resident composer at the Copland House. A native of Cambridge, Mass., Beeferman was born in 1976. He played piano from an early age; he studied jazz, Third Stream and piano privately at the New England Conservatory. He received his B.M. in composition from the University of Michigan. His teachers have included William Albright, William Bolcom and Leslie Bassett for composition, and Steven Drury and Anton Nel for piano.

Eric Chasalow (U.S.A., 1955) is widely recognized as one of the few composers equally at home in both electroacoustic music and music for traditional instrumental ensembles. He is especially well known for works that combine traditional instruments with electronic sound. According to a recent review in *ARRAY*, the journal of the International Computer Music Association, his 2003 CD, *Left to His Own Devices*, "clearly establishes him as one of the leaders of our times ... offer(ing) a wondrous fusion between distinct styles and mediums, nullifying many of the preconceived limitations and/or political borders beset by the ongoing struggle to recognize electro-acoustic art as an equal to the tradition-abundant world of acoustic music." Eric Chasalow's music is programmed throughout the world, with recent performances in Annecy, Ann Arbor, Bacau (Romania), Bari, Beijing, Berlin, Boston, Bratislava, Brno, Canberra, Houston, La Paz, London, Los Angeles, Lyon, Minneapolis, Milan, New York, Padova, Pittsburgh, Rome, San Francisco, Seoul, Singapore,