



NEW ZEALAND IN L.A.

APRIL 19, 2012 8:30 PM

presented by

REDCAT

Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theater

California Institute of the Arts

CaLARTS

NEW ZEALAND IN L.A.

Thursday, April 19, 2012, 8:30pm

PROGRAM

Inner Bellow (2010)

Gretchen La Roche, clarinet

Christopher Cree Brown

Stapes (2005)

Samuel Holloway

Blessed Unrest (2006)

Trio Terroir: Mark Menzies, violin; Derek Stein, cello; Dzovig Markarian, piano

James Gardner

Hineraukatauri (1999)

Richard Nunns, Maori instruments; Vinny Golia, flutes

Gillian Whitehead

Improvisation

Chris O'Connor, percussion; Richard Nunns, Maori instruments;
Vinny Golia, winds

Te Moanapouri (2006)

Sarah Beck, English horn; Jillian Risagari-Gai, harp
CalArts Orchestra, conducted by Mark Menzies

Ross Harris

Heavy Traffic (2006)

Jonathan Stehney, contrabassoon
CalArts Orchestra, conducted by Mark Menzies

Michael Norris

Intermission

Epeisodos (2004)

Gretchen La Roche, Eb clarinet

Jeroen Speak

Bachelorette: a set of new songs (with video)

With the support of Creative New Zealand Toi Aotearoa



CalArts Orchestra

Elise Roy, Marley Eder, flutes; Travis Kane, oboe; Kathryn Pisaro, English horn; Ryan Espinosa, Eb clarinet; Christin Hablewitz, bass clarinet; Jessica Waithe, Aaron Kahn, trumpets; John Eagle, Adam Wolf, horns; Tyler Jordan, bass trombone; Mike Gilleran, tuba; Jaclyn Urlik, harp; Tony Gennaro, Domi La Russa, percussion and timpani; Emily Call, Madeline Falcone, Mona Tian, Georgi Dimitrov, violin 1; Ginny Luke, Orin Hildestad, Ava Burtch, Andy Studer, violin 2; Alessandra Barrett, Andrew McIntosh, Kristín Haraldsdóttir, viola; Betsy Rettig, Min Lee, Thea Mesirow, Jarret Furst, Kaelan Schorger, cello; Samuel Rose, Marcus Buser, Maggie Hasspacher, bass

I am excited to welcome you to these two evenings of offerings from New Zealand, at REDCAT. At the outset, I want to stress that, as a kiwi residing in Southern California for the last eighteen years, I have the privilege of *welcoming* the participants to this gathering, but I am *not* the head honcho that has made this all happen.

Some years ago, I had the hono(u)r of being invited to perform as part of a festival in Auckland, NZ, called (09)03; though Glenda Keam was a treasured friend of mine, given the scope and ambition of the festival, it was not an occasion to indulge friends: it was an idea to give a stylized snapshot of things in and through Australasia that were pertinent and alive *now*. I have never yet attended a festival that so successfully presented that very ambition. Dr. Keam was the organizer of that festival, as she is the co-convenor of “New Zealand in L.A.”.

As a result of that festival, eventually Glenda and I began the discussions about creating something along those lines in Los Angeles. Like (09)03, “New Zealand in L.A.” would not happen were it not for the generous support of Creative New Zealand, a government agency that supports the arts in New Zealand and their potential beyond its shores. It couldn’t happen without the generous participation of the artists either, in particular the guests who have made their way to Los Angeles for this occasion. Part of constructing this presentation has been to program material from an array of cultural and artistic points of view; “New Zealand in L.A.” does not attempt to present a catalogue or retrospectives of “important” or “historically canonized” New Zealand music, but rather what Glenda and I formed as a particular idea of a snapshot of things—inviting things which have what we hope comes across with a particular uniqueness and charisma.

A thread through both concerts is the presence of New Zealand’s living national treasure: Richard Nunns, performer on Maori instruments; he will be playing compositions by Gillian Whitehead and Gareth Farr that were written for with him—and in improvised contexts, including with the renowned L.A.-based Vinny Golia, and

joined by Chris O'Connor, one of New Zealand's foremost drummers and improvisors. Another thread through the concerts is led by clarinetist Gretchen La Roche, who is one of New Zealand's new music virtuosi, with countless works for various clarinets being written for her. Bachelorette (Annabel Alpers) is a special guest for this festival, and appears on the April 19th concert; a singer-songwriter who uses technology extensively in her sets of original vocal and video material, she has a career in the U.S., in Europe and in Australasia.

The first evening on April 18th, focuses on intimate chamber music and small group performances. In contrast, the concert on April 19th includes the very LA-relevant *Heavy Traffic*—a concerto for contrabassoon—and some other larger-scale works, though always reflecting the particular New Zealand characteristic of being ambitious, rambunctious even (you will hear what Samuel Holloway, James Gardner and Michael Norris have done with the most urbane of chamber combinations, the piano trio), but within the confines of avoiding exaggeration ... almost always polite, even if accessing the "inner bellow".

—Mark Menzies

PROGRAM NOTES

***Inner Bellow* (2010)**

Christopher Cree Brown

Inner Bellow was written for the clarinetist Gretchen La Roche in 2009–2010; it won the 2010 SOUNZ Contemporary Award.

***Stapes* (2005)**

Samuel Holloway

Stapes is the first piece in a series of three trios collectively entitled *Middle Ear*.

The stapes (or stirrup) is the smallest in the chain of three bones that transmit vibrations from the eardrum to the internal ear in the process of transformation of external soundwaves to an emotional or cognitive response within the listener. The composition of *Stapes* was largely dictated by the idiosyncrasies of the ensemble: the piano, suffering under equal temperament and timbral limitation, and the strings, free in pitch and hosting a wide timbral palette. The juxtaposition of these disparate musical entities, with the instruments working together and against each other, forms the basis of this work. The piece is physically and mentally demanding, pushing the players in individual and collective struggles for articulacy.

***Blessed Unrest* (2006)**

James Gardner

Blessed Unrest was one of six short pieces commissioned by the New Zealand Trio as “attention-grabbing”, programme opening pieces. They wanted something that would start a concert “with all guns blazing”; a piece that ought to be “high-impact, dynamic and edgy”. It took a long time until I found something that I thought satisfied this demand, as I didn’t want to write an obviously motoric pulse-based piece. I wanted to create a sense of pent-up energy and its release in bursts. Many approaches were tried and rejected and while this was going on I came across the quote that gave the piece its title. I don’t think my dissatisfaction with earlier versions of the piece was either “queer” or “divine” and I dislike the lofty tone, but parts of Martha Graham’s statement nevertheless resonated with me: “There is vitality, a life force, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique. If you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and be lost. The world will not have it. It is not yours to determine how good it is; nor how it compares with other expressions. It is your business to keep the channel open. You do not even have to believe in yourself or your work. You have to keep open and aware directly to the urges that motivate you. Keep the channel open. No artist is ever pleased. There is no satisfaction whatever at any time. There is only a queer divine dissatisfaction, a blessed unrest that keeps us marching and makes us more alive than the others.”

—James Gardner

***Hineraukatauri* (1999)**

Gillian Whitehead

In the tradition of the Maori, the indigenous people of New Zealand, Hine Raukatauri is the goddess of music and dance. She is embodied in the form of the female case-moth, who hangs in the bushes and sings in a pure, high voice to attract the male moths to her. Her hair is found as a fern, the hanging spleenwort, and her voice is heard in the sound of the *putorino*, an instrument known only in Aotearoa (the Maori name for New Zealand). The *putorino* is an instrument that can be played in various ways—as a flute, as a trumpet and as a means of enhancing or altering the human voice.

Hineraukatauri is written for two performers, one playing conventional flutes (piccolo, C and alto flutes), and the other for *taonga pūoro* (instruments). The score features three different *putorino*, which, like all *taonga pūoro*, (and also the songs and chants) have a small pitch range, rarely exceeding a fourth, which varies

from instrument to instrument. Three *putorino* are used in this piece—one made of albatross bone and two of wood, and both the flute and trumpet voices are used. Other instruments used are a *karanga manu* (bird-caller), a *purerehua* (swung bull-roarer) and *tumutumu* (tapped instruments.) The flute player's part is notated, but the music for the *taonga pūoro* is improvised; there are areas when the flute player is encouraged to improvise with the *taonga*.

***Te Moanapouri* (2006)**

Ross Harris

In June 2005 my niece Verona sailed from Nelson heading for a romantic holiday in Rarotonga. She traveled with her beloved partner on his yacht. They ran into a severe storm north of New Zealand and were never found. While writing this piece I came across reference to a quote from *Tristan and Isolde* in *The Waste Land*—“Öd’ und leer das Meer”—“desolate and empty the sea”. In both Wagner’s and T. S. Eliot’s works the reference is to drowning at sea. When I discovered that the words were sung, in the opera, by the Shepherd (who plays *cor anglais*) it seemed appropriate for *Te Moanapouri* to end with a brief quotation from Act III of *Tristan and Isolde*.

—Ross Harris

***Heavy Traffic* (2006)**

Michael Norris

The contrabassoon, undoubtedly one of the most strange and wonderful of all modern-day orchestral instruments, is thrust into the limelight in this work—an opportunity it grabs with both hands. After the opening motoric passage in the strings, the contrabassoon comes flying down the entrance ramp with horn blaring, thereafter engaging in a constant battle for supremacy with the aggressive manoeuvres of the orchestra. In the final chaotic section, for instance, it has to endure the strings’ lane-changing (without indicating), the woodwinds’ tailgating, and the tuba’s road rage while struggling to chart its own course through the orchestra’s clogged highways. Although the way is often blocked by intimidating forces threatening to run it off the road, the contrabassoonist’s command of the lowest orchestral register ensures that, in the end, he will be the one sitting in the driver’s seat.

***Epeisodos* (2004)**

Jeroen Speak

Epeisodos for solo E \flat clarinet started life as an electroencephalograph (a printed electronic graph showing the electrical activity in the brain). I have a passing interest in the brain and correlations in its activity which could relate to the way we write and experience music. I came across a readout of a patient having an epileptic fit and

the sorts of things I noticed correlated very closely to a piece by Brian Ferneyhough I was studying at the time called *Epicycle*, for twenty solo strings. When I later found out that he suffered from a form of epilepsy, this was just too tempting for me and I couldn't leave it alone so I simply transcribed the electroencephalograph literally for solo E♭ clarinet and set it as the centrepiece of an extended "response" to this discovery. The resulting piece, through its very difficulty, comments on the condition of artists, and their need to push the boundaries of what is possible and to be aspired to. At the same time the piece has a physical presence that reveals the very anxiety of the creative process. The piece collapses in on itself through the sheer weight of expectation being imposed on its structure.

—Jeroen Speak

Bachelorette

Bachelorette's live performance is a spectacle of visual sound, and her set is centered around music from her latest record, the self-titled "Bachelorette", as well as her 2009 release, "My Electric Family". She has also added a track from her first album, "The End of Things", entitled "Love is a Drug", which is an exciting surprise for the long-time Bachelorette fans!

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES AT REDCAT

April 28 – 29

Wunderbaum: *Songs at the End of the World*

May 1

Transparent Cities

May 16 – 20

Arcane Collective: *Cold Dream Colour*

June 14

Partch

June 24 – 25

Studio: Summer 2012

April 28 – 29

Ntare Guma Mbaho Mwine: *A Missionary Position*

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