



AMERICAN
COMPOSERS
FORUM

Young Composer Steps Out With Liz Lerman Dance Exchange

Editors' note: During the winter and spring of 2003, the Community Partners Program of the Forum's Washington, D.C. Chapter arranged for Ben Takis to serve as composer-in-residence for the Teen Exchange dance program of Liz Lerman Dance Exchange. Takis composed a score for marimba, electric bass, percussion and laptop computer, which was choreographed by the teens involved in the Dance Exchange's program in collaboration with two professional members of the nationally renowned dance company. The resulting dance was performed at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center's Dance Theater at the University of Maryland, College Park, on May 31 and June 1, 2003. The following story originally ran in the May 28, 2003, edition of Gazette 2, the arts and entertainment section of the Montgomery County Gazette, a weekly community newspaper published throughout Maryland.

By Chris Slattery
Maryland Gazette
Staff Writer

Ben Takis describes himself as "a musical omnivore."
"I am equally interested in jazz, punk, avant-garde classical, computer music, death metal and pop," says the Queens, N.Y.-born composer, whose original music takes center stage this weekend when the Takoma Park-based Liz Lerman Dance Exchange stages its annual end-of-year concert.

"This is another thing that appeals to me about dance," he adds. "To be thrust into a situation that I react to [by] calling upon any means at my disposal, where I am free to drift from style to style as necessary."

That sense of drift suits the laid back modern dance style that characterizes Liz Lerman's company, where the featured dancers range in age from 20-something Elizabeth Johnson, who heads up the Teen Exchange, to Thomas Dwyer, who is nearing 70.

"Ben applied through the American Composers Forum," says Johnson. "He was young, he had had experience working with dancers and an interest in dance, and he uses percussion and technology in his work. He seemed fresh -- and appropriate."

That freshness is real: Takis is just two years out of college, a high school percussionist who parlayed his talents with marimba and timpani into a music scholarship to George Washington University.

He majored in English at GW, but music took up most of his time -- and when he was asked to play a gig for a modern dance piece, he says he found his musical niche.

"There was a certain immediacy and directness about playing for dance," he remembers. "That led to more and more dance-related gigs."

Takis also co-founded Washington Free Collaboration, an improvisation collective with dancers and musicians based at GW, and he became the lead accompanist for the university's dance department. Now, as he prepares for law school, Takis works fulltime as a legal temp - and puts in as many hours making music as a young energetic schedule will allow.

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Photo: Mireille Raharison-Demangel



Liz Lerman "Teen Exchange Program" dancers in concert

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Sound Bites

The Composer's Voice at the Library of Congress

During a recent visit to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., Forum President **John Nuechterlein** presented Music Division Head **Jon Newsom** with a complete second series of *Composer's Voice* radio programs. This compact-disc set, representing seventeen hour-long programs, will be added to the Library's permanent collection.

The Forum and Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) produced their second series of *Composer's Voice* programs between 1997 and 2000. Each profiled a contemporary American composer; the show's impressive list includes John Luther Adams, Dominick Argento,

Elmer Bernstein, William Bolcom, John Duffy, Philip Glass, Aaron Jay Kernis, Libby Larsen, Terry Riley, Ned Rorem, Peter Schickele, Gunther Schuller, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, Augusta Read Thomas, Joan Tower, Robert Ward, and Judith Lang Zaimont.

The profiles, based on extensive interviews with each subject, featured the composer discussing the challenges of creating music, their formative influences, and their professional careers. The series was first broadcast regionally on the network stations of MPR. Thirteen of

the programs were subsequently distributed to public radio stations across the country via Public Radio International (PRI). Funding for this series was provided by the National Endowment for the Arts.

RealAudio excerpts from the series can be sampled online via MPR's *Composer's Voice* website: <http://music.mpr.org/programs/composersvoice/composers> ♦



Photo: Anthony Edwards

Forum President John Nuechterlein presents the Composer's Voice CDs to Jon Newsom, head of the Music Division of the Library of Congress, with a portrait of violinist Fritz Kreisler partially visible as a backdrop.

Composers Datebook: "A Hit, a Palpable Hit"

Since the summer of 2001, the Forum and MPR have also collaborated in the production of a daily, two-minute radio feature entitled *Composers Datebook*®, which now airs on over 250 public and commercial classical music radio stations coast to coast. Cheek-by-jowl with daily, date-specific anecdotes about Bach, Beethoven and Brahms, each segment also highlights milestones in the careers of Crumb, Corigliano and Colgrass – to name just a few of the contemporary composers included in the mix. The idea is to subtly, but persistently, remind radio listeners and the increasingly conservative world of classical programmers that, as the show's tagline puts it, "all music was once new."

The show's website — www.composersdatebook.org — offers RealAudio sound files, links to composer websites, and additional historical information. Web statisticians at Minnesota Public Radio have been tracking the number of online visitors or "hits" to the site. They report that since 2001, the average quarterly number of "unique hosts" visiting *Composers Datebook* online has more than doubled (from 2,500 to 6,800), and the average number of "page views" has more than quadrupled (from 7,400 to 35,300). Clearly, the number of visitors to the site has steadily risen over the past three years -- and they're viewing more than just one page of the site per visit.

Composers Datebook was originally developed as an independent Forum project in 2000-2001, funded by the James Irvine Foundation. In 2001, the series continued as a three-year project in partnership with MPR and financial support from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. ♦



Each month's batch of Composers Datebook programs is sent to stations on a single compact disc.

Welcome Christmas!

2003 Carol Contest Winners Announced

Two composers have just been selected as the winners of the Sixth Annual *Welcome Christmas!* Carol Contest, co-sponsored by the Forum and Philip Brunelle's Minneapolis-based VocalEssence ensemble. This year, the contest sought new carols for chorus with solo instrument accompaniment, and **Thomas Fielding** (Bloomington, Ind.) and **Alan Higbee** (Beechwood, Ohio) were selected from a total of 74 entries from 28 states. Fielding's carol, "Behold the Dark and Bitter Night," is a setting of his own text and is scored for chorus accompanied by solo harp; Higbee's carol, "In the Bleak Midwinter" sets a poem by Christina Rossetti, accompanied by solo oboe.

Over the past five years, this annual contest has showcased 10 new carol settings: The 1998 competition for a cappella chorus was won by **Joan Griffith** and **Richard Voorhaar**; the 1999 competition for an audience participation carol was won

by **Robert A.M. Ross** and **Jonathan Santore**; the 2000 competition for carols with harp accompaniment was won by **Brian Holmes** and **Emily Maxson Porter**; the 2001 competition for carols accompanied by string orchestra was won by **Clive Muncaster** and **Sergey Khvoshchinsky**; and the 2002 competition for carols accompanied by percussion was won by **Mary Lynn Place Badarak** and **Paul Lohman**.



Photo courtesy: VocalEssence

Plymouth Congregational Church of Minneapolis in winter.

The new carols for 2003 will be premiered at the VocalEssence *Welcome Christmas!* concerts at Plymouth Congregational Church in Minneapolis on Dec. 7 and 14 at 4 p.m., and at Normandale Lutheran Church in Edina, Minn., on Dec. 13 at 7:30 p.m. For ticket information, call 612.624.2345 or visit the VocalEssence website: www.vocalescence.org. These concerts will be recorded for regional broadcast on the network stations of Minnesota Public Radio (MPR), and distributed nationally by Public Radio International. ♦

American Composers Forum

Jerome Foundation Commissioning Awards

We're pleased to announce the 14 composers selected for this year's round of the *Jerome Composers Commissioning Program (JCCP)*.

Photo: Philip Blackburn



Composers Yehuda Yannay, Joan La Barbara, and Zhou Long made up the panel selecting the winners of the Forum's 2003 Jerome Composers Commissioning Projects.

The St. Paul-based Jerome Foundation's guidelines stipulate that these annual awards are available to composers living in Minnesota or one of the five boroughs of New York City (where the foundation's namesake, philanthropist Jerome Hill, lived and worked). Minnesota and New York composers may apply for *JCCP* grants in partnership with a performer or presenter located anywhere in the world. Composers living outside of Minnesota or New York

City boroughs are also eligible for *JCCP* grants, but must apply in partnership with a Minnesota-based performer; or, in the case of self-producing musicians (such as improvisers and installation artists), with a Minnesota-based presenter.

One of the Jerome Foundation's goals is to foster the careers of emerging artists. *JCCP* awards are intended to be among a composer's first major commissions and represent a significant boost in his or her career. The *JCCP* grants awarded this year ranged from \$5,000 to \$8,000. Since the program's inception in 1979, the Forum has awarded over \$650,000 in *JCCP* grants to 193 recipients.

Here is the list of this year's winners and their commission partners:

Maura Bosch (Minneapolis) will write a work for the soprano voice and double-bass duo of Miriam Fulmer and Bert Turetsky (Madison, Wisc.); **Du Yun** (New York) has been commissioned to write a work for the International Contemporary

Ensemble (Chicago); **Joshua Fried** (New York) will write a piece for LEMUR, a robotic instrument ensemble (New York); **Geoffrey Gordon** (Milwaukee) will write a piece for the recorder and harpsichord duo of Clea Galhano and Vivian Montgomery (Minneapolis-St. Paul); **Michael Karmon** (St. Paul) will write for the combined choral forces of the Rose Ensemble and Voices of the Sepharad (Minneapolis-St. Paul); **Andrew Lafkas** (Minneapolis) will present multiple solo and collaborative improvised performances starting with the Center on Contemporary Art (Seattle) and at additional venues in Minneapolis-St. Paul and Berlin, Germany; **Lu Pei** (New York) is writing a piece for the East Meets West Ensemble (New York); **Dean Magraw** (St. Paul) will compose a work for the violin and guitar duo of Leslie Shank and Joe Hagedorn (Minneapolis-St. Paul); **Michelle Nagai** (New York) is creating an interactive environmental sound installation for the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (New York); **Moto Osada** (New York) has been commissioned to write an opera for the Vadstena Academy (Sweden); **Jonathan Pieslak** (New York) is writing a work for the Plainfield Symphony (New Jersey); **Paul Rudy** (Kansas City) will write a piece for the flute and piano Calliope Duo (Bemidji, Minn.); **Spencer Schedler** (New York) will write a new work for two pianos and two percussionists sponsored by the Clinton/Narboni Duo (Nebraska); and **Ethan Wickman** (Salt Lake City, Utah) will write a piece for the Fargo/Moorhead Symphony (Moorhead, Minn.).

For more information on the *Jerome Composers Commissioning Program*, visit the Forum website: www.composersforum.org ♦

Sounding Board

November/December 2003

Young Composer Steps Out With Liz Lerman Dance Exchange

continued from cover

On a Mission

"My method of writing -- or improvising -- for dance is to give the dancers something that makes them want to move, and [to] help bring out the emotional content of the piece," says Takis. "In effect, my role is akin to that of an audience member, and I try to give a voice to the visceral reactions the piece evokes."

He traces the approach back to the influence of Ennio Morricone, the film composer who scored, most famously, Clint Eastwood's "Fistful of Dollars" series - and perhaps most notably, "The Mission."

"For this piece, my influences were, most notably, David Byrne, who has also worked with modern dance, on a piece with Twyla Tharp," he explains. "And the Brazilian composer Tom Ze, [Icelandic pop singer] Bjork, and some other composers who are a constant influence, like Steve Reich and Morricone."

For Takis, the opportunity to work with Liz Lerman Dance Exchange came about the old-fashioned way, through an informal network of local composers constantly on the lookout for new talent to nurture.

"Jonathan Matis from the American Composers Forum recognized me from some of my other gigs," says Takis, referring to another Takoma Park musician. "He encouraged me to apply for the grant."

Although Takis says he has worked with composers who have connections with the Dance Exchange, this is his first collaboration with the group. The freedom Johnson has afforded him, he says, is an interesting departure from his more interpretive work.

"I am usually completely subservient to the movement," he observes, "but this time, I have had a lot more freedom to interpret the music. While it's nice to have that freedom, I didn't get to utilize my skills at interpreting the visual elements as much."

That's because Teen Exchange is about integrating dance technique and composition -- and using ideas to launch the physical aspect of dance.

"Teen Exchange is a program at Liz Lerman Dance Exchange where young people help to create the work they perform," explains Johnson, who started as an apprentice with the group in 1998. "It's really about them developing original work from their personal experiences."

This year, Teen Exchange projects have combined physiological studies of body system functions like the heart with emotional ideas -- "what makes my heart race," as Johnson put it.

"With memory, we study the physiology of memory, and also the things you'll never forget," she adds. The idea of memory is the focus of the composition Takis has done. "We began in March really focusing on this," she says, "and he came back with this amazing piece of music -- an example of a contemporary moment the teens will never forget."

Made even more contemporary by an addition to the live band that will accompany the dancers: "This will be my first publicly performed piece using the computer," says Takis, "with the group consisting of marimba, drums, bass -- and PowerBook!"

A well-balanced meal indeed for a musical omnivore. ♦

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The Community Partners Program of the Forum's Washington D.C. Chapter is funded by the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation and the Harman Family Foundation.



Photo: Mireille Raharison-Demangel

Composer Ben Takis warms up before the performance

"I have found the American Composers Forum to be an invaluable resource. As contemporary

composers find themselves compelled more and more to seek out opportunities through other disciplines and art forms, it is all the more necessary to have a reliable source from which to find and direct these opportunities. I think ACF does a great service to the choreographers, directors, and artists in other disciplines who benefit from these collaborations."

— Ben Takis, composer

New Music, New Look:

A *BandQuest*® Update

Three new compositions in the Forum's *BandQuest* series have just been published: "Alligator Alley" by **Michael Daugherty**, "Smash the Windows" by **Robert X. Rodríguez**, and "City Rain" by **Judith Lang Zaimont**.

Details on these new publications can be found on the Forum's freshly redesigned *BandQuest* website: www.bandquest.org. In addition to a new look, the redesigned site offers many new features, including an interactive "Music Lab" and an in-depth "Resources" section for students and teachers.

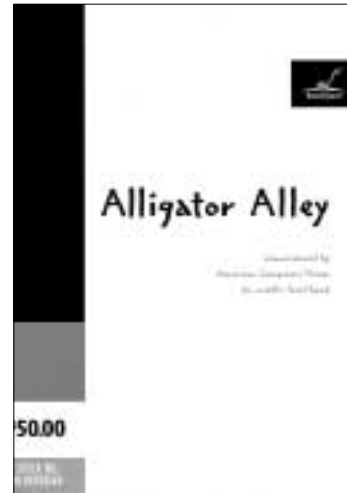
To date, the Forum has commissioned and published 11 *BandQuest* titles and three CD-ROMs. The interactive, interdisciplinary materials on the CD-ROMs and the new website are meant to encourage teachers and students to go beyond the music itself, toward a deeper understanding of the cultural influences and environment behind each new piece of music.

For students, the website's "Music Lab" includes new games associated with four *BandQuest* pieces: "The A+ Joke Show," for **Thomas Duffy's** "A+: A 'Precise' Prelude and an 'Excellent' March"; "SoundScapes" to accompany **Michael Colgrass's** "Old Churches"; "Alegre Groove Sampler" for **Tania León's** "Alegre"; and "CodeCracker" for **Adolphus Hailstorck's** "New Wade 'n Water." Additional games and activities will be added to this section over time.

For teachers, the site's "Resources" section gives in-depth examinations of all 11 *BandQuest* pieces, based on the "Facets Model" developed by music educators Kari Veblen, Janet Barrett and Claire McCoy. Their approach places each work in its larger social context, providing both specific insights into the music and fostering a more general understanding of its broader cultural significance. The section also includes each composer's photo and biography, plus a short audio clip of their *BandQuest* piece and links to their own websites.

In the months to come, watch the *BandQuest* site for a new, ongoing web journal by composer **Stephen Paulus** and California band director **John Christian**, who will chronicle what it's like for teachers and students to work with a composer-in-residence in the creation of a brand-new *BandQuest* piece.

The new *BandQuest* website is funded by the AT&T Foundation. ♦



Michael Daugherty's "Alligator Alley" is one of three new BandQuest publications. All eleven titles in the series are distributed by Hal Leonard.



The "Alegre Groove Sampler" in the "Music Lab" section of the new BandQuest website.

Chapter Spotlight Boston

The Forum's success would not be possible without its network of regional chapters. With each Chapter Spotlight, we aim to give you an up-close look at a year in the life of one of our amazing chapters. — Ed.

What a Difference a Year Makes...

By Beth Denisch

Just a year ago, you'd find the Boston Chapter's files and records in milk crates under my desk at home. Today, those same files reside in a suite on the top floor of one of Boston's most prestigious addresses, 75 Arlington Street, directly across from the ritzy Park Plaza Hotel.

Talk About a Cinderella Story!

Our luxury suite (well, technically, it's really just an office cubicle – but an especially nice one!) came to us courtesy of the Boston Foundation. Their "Incubator Space Project" for developing arts organizations has made it possible for the Forum's Boston Chapter to finally have a space we can call our own, with office equipment and support services to boot. All this is ours for three years. As you can imagine, being able to operate in an attractive and professional space located on prime Boston real estate has had a great effect on the Chapter's collective efficiency and enthusiasm. What a difference a year makes! This relocation has meant a quantum leap in the visibility of the Chapter and in the accessibility of the services we offer our members and community partners.

The move to our more professional "incubator space" facilitated the hiring of a professional assistant director for the chapter. It's a newly created position, and Catherine Hedberg was chosen to fill it. She's taken over many of the day-to-day administrative tasks that make things flow so smoothly for all concerned. Catherine brings a wide range of skills and professional acumen to her work, including experience with intellectual property rights, copyright issues, and developing database systems. She's also a professional classical singer who performs with several local ensembles, including Boston's Cantata Singers. In short, she's amazing, and her work to date has been exemplary. We hope she stays with us for a long, long time.

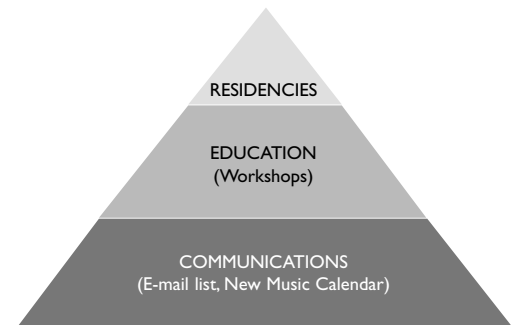
Catherine is also the "point person" charged with developing our new website. With designer Leila Lee Mitchell, she's created a multi-colored website "map" and scotch-taped it to the wall of our cubicle. Every inch of it has been covered with a maze of colored notes and arrows, as it goes through

transformation after transformation. With fingers crossed, we plan to launch the new website this December. When that occurs, the Boston Chapter will enter cyberspace: first visually, then, in the year to come, with audio components that will give us a virtual voice as well as a face.

Perhaps the Chapter's most crucial transformation this past year has happened in the realm of strategic planning. In this, the Boston Foundation again proved helpful, providing funding for the Technical Development Corporation to work with our strategic planning committee in the creation of a three-year business plan. The committee included many of the Chapter's most devoted and loyal supporters. We're deeply grateful for the depth of their commitment in moving the chapter forward. Not surprisingly, we tapped many of these same committee members to form the nucleus of the Chapter's first board of directors, a group whose inaugural meeting occurred earlier this fall.

A Three Year Plan (with Pyramid)

Over the next three years, the Boston Chapter will focus on three distinct areas: communications, education, and residencies (see diagram). The greatest number of professional participants will be reached via the communication component of this plan, namely via our new website and new music calendar. While the Chapter's educational programming will touch fewer members, its impact will be felt more deeply, because of its focus on developing composers' career skills. Finally, residencies will engage just a handful of composers each year, but will impact the largest number of community constituents. As the Chapter expands its membership base over time, the base of this "pyramid" will also increase, as will the number of composers involved in our programs. This focus captures the potential movement of members through a continuum of chapter programming. Our idea is that composers will be drawn to the organization initially via its communications, then attend workshops to develop their skills, and ultimately take advantage of the residency opportunities we offer.





Change, Continuity – and More Than a Few Successes

In a year of great change, some things remain constant. Our composer residencies continue to be among the most successful community engagement projects in greater Boston and New England. The complete list is to the right, but let me cite just one project in more detail.

Elena Ruehr's three-year residency with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP) culminated in "Toussaint Before the Spirits," a new choreographed opera, at the Opera Unlimited festival last summer. This was one of the chapter's longest residency projects, and culminated in a premiere well worth the wait. Based on Madison Smartt Bell's book "All Souls Rising," Ruehr's opera features four singers, six dancers, and an ensemble of string quartet, bass, harpsichord, percussion, and oboe. The libretto by Bell and Elizabeth Spires tells the story of Toussaint L'Ouverture, the 18th century Haitian slave who led the Haitian independence movement at the time of the French Revolution. During her three-year residency, Ruehr worked with an especially broad community, well beyond the immediate performers. She coordinated and moderated pre-concert lectures, organized informal concerts at a local folk music club, gave public lectures, spoke at colleges, and held workshops for students at the Charles Sumner Elementary School in Roslindale, Mass.

After it was all over, here is what Ruehr had to say: "The American Composers Forum made it possible for me to be composer-in-residence with an enormously important orchestra dedicated to the highest possible quality performances of new music. Support from the American Composers Forum is a vital part of our cultural heritage."

For all those involved in the hard work of developing and maintaining the Boston Chapter over the past year, comments like this only make us want to do more – and that is exactly our plan. ♦



Beth Denisch

Beth Denisch is the Director of the Forum's Boston Chapter. The Chapter is funded by the Boston Foundation's Arts and Culture Fund, the Cherbec Advancement Foundation, the Gunst Foundation, Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Boston Globe Foundation, Open Meadows Foundation, A.C. Ratshesky Foundation, the Helen F. Whitaker Fund, and individual contributors.

Recent Boston Projects

Here is a list of composers who participated in the Chapter's community projects in the past year, followed by their community partners, series and venues:

Lauren Bernofsky, Robert Bradshaw, David Cleary, Sean O'Laughlin, Marilyn Ziffrin
(Huntington Brass Quintet Reading at Sheppard Studios)

Bruce Bertrand, Michael Bierylo, Leo Brouwer, Bubbyfish, Meeyoung Choi, Mario Davidovsky, Charles Dodge, Garrison Fewell, Glenn Ianaro, Rick Iannacone, Ove Johansson, Neil Leonard, Susanna Lindeborg, Stephen MacLean, Per-Anders Nilsson, Tom Plsek, Mimi Rabson, Poh-Gek Tay
(Sonic Circuits X at Berklee College of Music)

Steven Bryant, Christine Southworth, Tony Suter
(Wind Ensemble Reading at New England Conservatory)

Stephanie Gelfan
(Vento Chiaro Woodwind Ensemble and Beaver Country Day School)

Eric Lindgren
(Herring Run Arts Festival in Middleboro, Mass.)

John McDonald
(Elizabeth Leehey and Sarah Tenney; Tufts University)

Michael McLaughlin
(Art Complex Museum in Duxbury, Mass.)

Martin Near
(Project Aria ensemble and Fenway Community Health Center)

Elena Ruehr
(Boston Modern Orchestra Project and Roslindale Elementary School)

Patricia Van Ness
(Boston Landmarks Orchestra and Boston ParkARTS Program)

Chapter Updates

Atlanta

Shakespeare X3

In mid-August, composer **Eric Alexander** began his residency at Atlanta's Tri-Cities High School in association with *Shakespeare X 3*, a new community collaboration involving the Atlanta Chapter, Atlanta Ballet Centre for Dance Education, Georgia Shakespeare Festival, and Tri-Cities' Visual and Performing Arts Magnet Program. The project will give Tri-Cities' students the opportunity to create

original music and choreography for a new musical based on Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet." Throughout the fall semester, resident artists from the partner organizations have been teaching after-school classes in music composition and choreography, as well as workshops in Shakespearean theater, for interested VPA students. In the spring, the production will go into rehearsals with a cast of actors and dancers from

"Shakespeare X 3" student composers and choreographers at Tri-Cities High School in Atlanta, with ACF composer-in-residence Eric Alexander (at far right).

Tri-Cities High School and three elementary and middle schools in the Tri-Cities community. "Romeo and Juliet" is scheduled to premiere at Tri-Cities High School in May 2004.

Shakespeare X 3 represents the third composer residency hosted by Tri-Cities High School, and its second residency created in partnership with the Atlanta Chapter. The project is made possible by a generous grant from The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation.

Composer to Composer

On Saturday morning, September 13, Forum members and their guests gathered in Atlanta Symphony Hall to hear the dress rehearsal by the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (ASO) of **Jennifer Higdon's** *Concerto for Orchestra* with music director Robert Spano conducting. This opportunity brought full circle an introduction to the work presented by Higdon when she was the guest at the chapter's meeting in November 2002. The Philadelphia-based composer was in Atlanta for recordings and performances by the ASO of both the concerto and "City Scape," an ASO commission that premiered last year. ♦

Chicago

Discounts for Members

The Chicago Chapter has compiled a list of nine Chicago music ensembles and venues that provide discounted tickets to concerts. In addition, four of the city's major music businesses are offering goods and services to ACF members at favorable rates. For a copy of the list, visit the chapter website at www.composersforum.org/chicago.

Concerts in the Parks

With support provided by Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, Richard H. Driehaus Foundation and the Chicago Park District, planning sessions for a series of six concerts of newly created music took place this summer and fall. The Chapter is actively pursuing corporate and foundation support for the concert series, scheduled for the fall of 2004. Two concerts will take place at each of three Chicago Park District Cultural Centers: Eugene Field, Humboldt and Hamilton Parks, which serve a wide variety of Chicago's ethnic communities. The five organizations participating in the creation of the concert series (ACF's Chicago Chapter, AACM, Asian Improv, Inc., the Guild Complex, and Columbia College's initiative for Latino composers) will issue calls for submissions from their respective constituencies. Each of the concerts will showcase new works by composers from each of the participating organizations. A central feature of the series will be the inclusion of multi-age educational events.

Commissioning Competition

For the first time, the chapter is overseeing a commissioning competition. Made possible by the Katherine A. Abelson Fund of the Lester S. Abelson Foundation, the competition calls for submission of a piece for six to eight instruments, plus voice, and of 10 to 15 minutes in duration. The winner will be commissioned to compose a work to be considered for performance in the 2004-05 season of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's (CSO) MusicNOW Series. The winning composer will receive \$2,500 for the commission. There will be three judges for the competition: one from the CSO; one from the board of the Chicago chapter; and a performer, conductor or singer. A call for scores will be issued this fall; for details, see the Chapter website listed above. ♦

Los Angeles

"New Music LA" Receives a Boost

In late summer, it was looking grim for "New Music LA," the only comprehensive new music calendar for Southern California.

Published by the Los Angeles Chapter and delivered free of charge six times annually to ACF members and friends throughout the region, the cost could no longer be sustained by the Chapter's operating budget. An appeal for donations went out to readers in the September/October issue, stating that the calendar would have to be put on hiatus unless readers could support its continued publication. The appeal garnered an overwhelming response: more than \$7,000 was received within a week. With this support, the calendar is set to publish on schedule for the November/December issue and beyond. "New Music LA" will also offer space for paid advertising and logo placement.

ACF/LA has published 18 bi-monthly issues of "New Music LA" since May 2000. By presenting a comprehensive picture of the vitality of the SoCal new music scene to over 4,000 readers, the publication has played an active role in the expansion of local new music activities and provides an essential guide to new music in the region.

Photo: Lane Wilson



City Backs Making Music

After a successful pilot year placing composers in community centers, ACF/LA has been awarded a second \$12,000 grant from the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department and is gearing up for the next round of its *Making Music Residency Program* in 2004. Next year's version will focus on music technology in collaboration with YPI (Youth Policy Institute), a technology-based community center in Pacoima, Cal., that provides technological resources to lower income children and adults. Another program at the Eagle Rock Community Cultural Center will continue to provide middle-school-aged children with experience in building musical instruments, writing graphic scores, improvising, and playing in an ensemble. In addition, a few sessions are devoted to "Grandparents Day," when parents and grandparents (many of whom are immigrants) share personal histories, stories, and cultural myths that the students integrate into their music and drama. Last year, Making Music residencies took place in the Eagle Rock Community Cultural Center with composer **David O** and at the Chinatown Service Center with composers **Robert Fernandez** and **Penny Pan**.

Project Targets Youth "At Risk"

With renewed funding from the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, ACF/LA is continuing its work with the Poseidon School. Poseidon School works with young people who show educational and artistic promise but who are subject to influence from street gangs. Working in conjunction with the school's drama program, the composer residency blends musical improvisation with instruction in various musical instruments. Intended to enhance self-esteem and nurture teamwork, the program trains participants to create incidental music for theater pieces. Last year the program received a \$1,000 grant for percussion instruments from Remo Percussion Instruments. Past composers-in-residence include **Ron George**, **Robert Fernandez**, **Fletcher Beasley** and **James McAuley**.

Music Room with Pierre Boulez

Those who have been involved in the Los Angeles new music scene for the past few decades are familiar with the Music Room, founded by new music patron Betty Freeman and continued by writer Judith Rosen. For more than fifteen years, the Music Room featured composers of international stature including Gyorgi Ligeti, John Adams, Luciano Berio and Luigi Nono, as well as such leading L.A.-based composers as William Kraft, Morton Subotnick, and Donald Crockett. In March, 2003, ACF/LA and Rosen revived the Music Room with a presentation by composers Naomi Sekiya and George Lewis, a recent recipient of the prestigious MacArthur Fellowship. The next Music Room is scheduled for November 23, with **Pierre Boulez**. The event coincides with his week-long residence as guest conductor with the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Subito South

Subito is a quick-turnaround grant program designed to provide critical funding for composer projects. Features of the program include community impact, peer review, the encouragement of risk-taking in composer-designed projects, and no deadlines for applications (first come/first served). Last year, *Subito* awarded \$23,975 to 21 composers; since it was launched in March 2002, the program has awarded \$72,789 in grants to 65 composers in Southern California. *Subito* is now a California-wide program administered in the north by ACF's San Francisco Bay Area Chapter (see their report below), and in the south by ACF/LA. The next round of *Subito* grants will be made in January. The program is funded by the James Irvine Foundation. ♦

Minnesota

Guitar & Mandolin Reading Session

On September 18, the Chapter hosted a reading session and master class with **Duo Ahlert and Schwab**, a German guitar/lute and mandolin duo visiting Minnesota as part of their first American tour. The event was co-sponsored by Hamline University, and was held at Sundin Music Hall in St. Paul. Two works by Minneapolis composer **Jay Huber** were read: "DAMONELIX" for guitar and mandolin and "SBME [superbliss-machine embrace]" for solo guitar. Also selected were: "Variations on a Popular Melody" for solo guitar by Duluth composer **Tyler Kaiser** and "Two Pieces for Guitar" by St. Paul composer **Richard Voorhaar**. "The reading session was amazingly beneficial," commented Huber. "It was very useful to have such dedicated and talented musicians work through my scores and then have ample time for an open dialogue with them afterwards."

The Duo also presented "Interiors of a Courtyard" by the Milwaukee-based composer **Geoffrey Gordon**, a work commissioned by the duo for their American tour. Gordon offered his insights about writing music for guitar and mandolin.

Crumb, Corigliano & Co.

On October 9, visiting composer **George Crumb** was the first scheduled guest for a new series of *Composer-to-Composer* discussions with Forum members and friends. Crumb was booked for a number of events and concerts at Carleton College and at the Minnesota History Center, arranged by the MacPhail Center for Music, the Chamber Music Society of Minnesota and the Schubert Club. The discussion series will continue with open rehearsals and informal roundtable sessions featuring noted composers appearing with the Minnesota Orchestra this season, including **John Corigliano** (Oct. 22), **Stephen Paulus** (Nov. 12), **Peter Lieberson** (Nov. 26), **Aaron Jay Kernis** (Feb. 4) and **Nicholas Maw** (March 3). These events are free to students and Forum members; others may attend for \$5 (RSVP required for all attending; contact David Wolff at (651) 251-2833 or dwolff@composersforum.org). Additional details on these and other events in the Twin Cities are available on the Minnesota Chapter section of the Forum's website:

www.composersforum.org/minnesota ♦

New York

Faith Partners Premiere

The final premiere of the chapter's inaugural *Faith Partners* residency took place on Sunday, September 14, at St. Ignatius-Loyola Church. **Gerald Cohen's** setting of the "Adon Olam," a very old poem recited by Jews at their morning prayers, was performed in Hebrew by choir and organ for an appreciative congregation of nearly 500 people. Though "Adon Olam" was originally proposed as the "traveling" piece to be performed by the program's three participating congregations, Kent Tritle, music director at St. Ignatius-Loyola (Roman Catholic), suggested it be one of their commissions, an apt illustration of the interfaith openness encouraged by the program. *Faith Partners* in New York City is funded by the Wolfensohn Family Foundation. ♦

Philadelphia

Subito East

The chapter is pleased to announce its first round of *Subito* awards. Grants were awarded in early September to composer **Andrea Clearfield** in support of her now famous Salon series, and to the fourth **Collective Voices Jazz Festival**. Both organizations highlight the work of Philadelphia composers. A full listing of *Subito* awards is available on the chapter's website at www.composersforum.org/philadelphia. *Subito* in Philadelphia is funded by the William Penn Foundation.

The chapter is also supporting two *Community Partners* projects, which place composers in local schools to create new works. **Andrew Bleckner** is working with dancers Anne Marie Mulgrew and Dance Company to write a work for children's choir and mixed ensemble. **Mogauwane Mahloele** is working on a project involving story-telling, theater, art, and music, as students at Holy Cross K-8 School recreate the Zulu folktale, "Song of the Birds." ♦

San Francisco Bay Area

Subito North

The chapter announced its latest round of *Subito* grantees. This quick-turnaround career enhancement program has helped fill a real need in northern California. *Subito* in the Bay Area is funded by the James Irvine Foundation. The September round of grants came from the largest pool of applications received to date. Recipients included:

- **Peter Josheff** and **Allen Shearer**, in support of *Harvest of Song*, an October program featuring new vocal chamber music and poetry.
- The **Left Coast Chamber Ensemble**, to help commission composers **Kurt Rohde** to write a work for mixed ensemble and **Eric Zivian** for a new work for baroque cello and fortepiano.
- The **Somei Yoshino Taiko Ensemble**, which will create original music for a work integrating taiko with dance, in collaboration with choreographer **Krissy Keefer**.
- Composer/performer **Patrick Cress**, in support of *Octagon*, a collaboration of four musicians and four dancers combining choreographed and improvised dance and music. ♦

Washington, D.C.

Sonic Circuits to the Max

Throughout the month of September, the chapter presented its annual DC Sonic Circuits Festival of Electronic Music. Fourteen concerts took place throughout the D.C. area, at venues as diverse as the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage, the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum, the Warehouse Theater, DC Arts Center, the Black Cat, and the Galaxy Hut. For the first time, the Chapter partnered with the Kennedy Center, Washington Performing Arts Society, the McLean Project for the Arts, and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, to bring the festival to life. Featured artists traveled from around the country and the world to perform alongside the region's leading artists. This year's roster included: **Ladislao Todoroff** (Italy), **John Morton** (New York), **Tom Heasley** (Calif.), **DJ Spooky** (New York), **Daniel Lapp** (Canada), **Accelera Deck** (Alabama), and **DJ Donna Summer** (New York), along with local favorites **Chessie**, **302 Acid**, **Mikroknites**, **edgEnsemble**, **John Berndt**, **Neil Feather**, and many others.

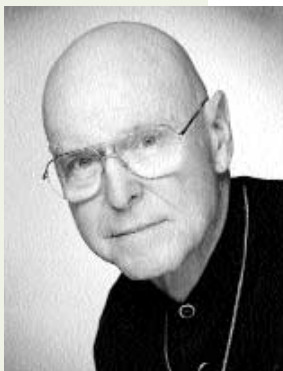
The festival was assembled by a group of very dedicated volunteers, under the resourceful leadership of **Derek Morton**. Derek also presented his own work, in conjunction with the McLean Project for the Arts. To coincide with an exhibit of visual art by Elsabe Dixon, created using live silkworms, Derek created a multi-channel audio installation built from samples of the sounds made by the silkworms themselves. This project was sponsored by the chapter's *Community Partners* residency program. For more about another *Community Partners* project in DC, see this issue's cover story.

Canadian Exchange

D.C. Chapter members were invited to attend a master class and lecture by visiting composer **Denys Boullaine** on November 11th. His work is featured during the North American tour of the National Arts Centre Orchestra, based in Ottawa, Canada. This presentation was developed as a joint project of the Chapter and the School of Music at the Catholic University of America, with special thanks to the Education Department of the National Arts Centre Orchestra. ♦

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Charles Fitts

Dear ACF:

Several months ago, I read the initial announcement about the Foundation Orchestra Association's 2003 International Composition Competition in the "Forum Calls for Submissions" section of Sounding Board. I have found these preliminary announcements to be a most valuable benefit of Forum membership. Had it not been for the Forum, I would not have been able to enter. My eight-minute symphonic poem "Cobá" was chosen as the winning entry, and will be premiered and recorded by the Foundation Orchestra in Reno, Nevada, on October 13. I'm also to receive a \$1,000 prize from the Foundation.

I would also enjoy seeing follow-up notices concerning the final results of the announced competitions. Such items would benefit the winners by giving them a greater measure of name recognition. I believe other Forum members would also enjoy knowing about the final outcome of the contests and having more information about the winning entries and composers.

Very truly yours,
Charles Fitts
Montgomery, Texas

Editors' note: While space, time and budget limitations preclude tracking the results of all the competitions we list each month, we would like to inform Sounding Board readers about some interesting results from time to time (as with the "Masterprize" story you'll find on this page).

Editors' note: We received the following letter from composer Charles Fitts, dated September 5, and thought we'd share it with you. If you are a Forum member who has won a competition or commission as a result of one of our "Opportunities" listings, we'd love to hear from you, too!

Masterprize Finalists Include Two American Composers

Robert Henderson and **Christopher Theofanidis** have been selected as two of the six finalists for the third annual *Masterprize* international competition for new orchestral works. Robert Henderson's piece, entitled "Einstein's Violin," was commissioned by the Utah Festival and premiered by the Utah Symphony. Christopher Theofanidis's piece, "Rainbow Body," was premiered and recorded by the Atlanta Symphony under Robert Spano.

The other four finalists (and their submitted orchestral works) are: **Nicolas Bacri** of France (Symphony No 6 Opus 60), **Bechara El Khoury** of France/ Lebanon ("Les Fleuves Engloutis"), **Arturs Maskats** of Latvia ("Tango"), and **Anton Plate** of Germany ("You Must Finish Your Journey Alone"). These six compositions,

among 1,000 entries submitted from 65 countries, were selected in mid-September by a jury of notable musicians, record producers and orchestral conductors.

The *Masterprize* competition was organized in 1996 as a unique partnership between the London Symphony, the classical record company EMI, the classical recording magazine *Gramophone* and two classical music broadcasters: the U.K.'s Classic FM and National

Public Radio of the U. S. With the goal of changing audience attitudes toward new symphonic music, the competition was set up to allow millions of classical music lovers around the world to audition the new works by the six finalists. Music fans received a free compact disc included with *Gramophone* and *Classic FM* magazines, then voted for their favorite on line or over the phone.

This year's competition culminates in a live concert performance of the six works by the London Symphony on Thursday, October 30, 2003, after which the votes will be tabulated and the winner announced. For the final judging, the competition's artistic director, conductor Mariss Jansons, has assembled an international jury including Kurt Masur, Gidon Kremer, Emmanuel Pahud and Barry Tuckwell. The worldwide public vote (45 percent of the total) will be combined with that of the audience in the hall (5 percent), musicians of the London Symphony (10 percent) and the international jury (40 percent). The composer of the winning work will be presented with a check for £25,000.

To hear all six pieces and find out who won, check the *Masterprize* website: www.masterprize.com.

