

PERELMAN THEATER

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4

7:30PM

FRESH INK

eighth blackbird

HIGDON

Zaka (2003)

RZEWSKI

Les Moutons des Panurge (1969)

LUDWIG

Haiku Catharsis (2004)

I. Night

II. Covered with flowers

III. Late Cicadas

IV. Temple bell

Commissioned by Kimmel Center Presents and the American Composers Forum, Philadelphia Chapter.

—Intermission—

PERLE

Critical Moments 2 (2001)

SAARIAHO

Cendres (1998)

GORDON

Dramamine (2002)

Fresh Ink is generously supported by Linda and David Glickstein.

The use of cameras and recording equipment is prohibited during performances. As a courtesy to the performers and fellow audience members, please turn off all beepers, watch alarms and cellular phones. Latecomers and those who leave the concert hall during the performance will be seated at appropriate intervals.

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Steinway is the Official Piano of the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts.

JENNIFER HIGDON

(b. 1962, Brooklyn, New York)
Zaka (2003)

Jennifer Higdon is an active freelance composer. She is the recipient of awards, including a Pew Fellowship, a Guggenheim Fellowship and two awards from the American Academy of Arts & Letters. Some of her recent commissions include works for the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Atlanta Symphony, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the Pittsburgh Symphony, the Chicago Symphony, National Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Cypress String Quartet, the Verdehr Trio and the Ying Quartet. She is on the composition faculty at The Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. About *Zaka*, the composer writes, “As the dictionary might say: *Zaka*, pronounced ‘za’-ka’ verb: To do the following almost simultaneously and with great speed: zap, sock, race, turn, drop, sprint. See also eighth blackbird.”

Zaka was commissioned as part of the national series of works from Meet the Composer Commissioning Music/USA, which is made possible by generous support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Helen F. Whitaker Fund, the Target Foundation, and through the fiscal sponsorship of Concert Artists Guild.

FREDERIC RZEWSKI

(b. 1938, Westfield, Massachusetts)
Les Moutons des Panurge (1969)

Frederic Rzewski’s compositional career has had many phases; his music from the late sixties and early seventies (*Les Moutons de Panurge*, *Coming Together*) combine elements of written and improvised music, which in the seventies led to a greater experimentation with forms in which style and language are treated as structural elements (*The People United Will Never Be Defeated*). He briefly returned to experimental and graphic notation (*Le Silence des Espaces Infinis*, *The Price of Oil*), before exploring new uses of the twelve-tone technique in the eighties (*Antigone-Legend*, *The Persians*). His more recent work (*Whangdoodles*, *Sonata*) adopts a freer and more spontaneous approach.

Les Moutons des Panurge (the Sheep of Panurge) takes its title from a story found in the fourth book of Francois Rabelais’ *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. Pantagruel is traveling by ship with his rascally companion, Panurge, when their boat meets with a merchant ship carrying sheep. The merchants make fun of Panurge, though Panurge manages to buy one sheep from them after much haggling. Panurge then chucks the sheep into the sea, whereby all of the other sheep follow the first sheep overboard, one after another. To this day, the phrase “sheep of Panurge” implies a person who blindly follows the lead of another.

Rzewski’s work follows this concept in several ways. The work is constructed of only 65 notes, though Rzewski instructs the performer to follow an additive and then subtractive process. The performer plays the notes as follows: 1, 1-2, 1-2-3, 1-2-3-4 etc. until the 65th note is reached, at which point the process is reversed by subtracting notes from the beginning (1-2-3-4 . . . 65, 2-3-4 . . . 65, 3-4 . . . 65, etc), until the 65th note is reached and held. The pitfall is that no two people can stay together the whole time, and Rzewski indicates that when a performer gets off from the others, they stay off and continue to follow the rules. We have found that in rehearsing this work, as soon as one person gets off, other people gradually begin to get off as well, and so each player is obliged to follow the lead of the person who originally got lost.

DAVID LUDWIG

(b. 1972, Bucks County, Pennsylvania)
Haiku Catharsis (2004)

David Ludwig attended the Oberlin Conservatory, The Manhattan School of Music, The Curtis Institute, and The Juilliard School. Ludwig’s music has been heard worldwide in North America, Europe, and Asia, and has been performed in venues including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and the Kimmel Center. His awards and honors include a Theodore Presser Career Grant, an Independence Foundation Fellowship, the First Music Award, and awards from The American Music Center, and The American Composer’s Forum. He

holds a number of residencies, including the Gardner Art Museum, the Hartwick Summer Music Festival and the Vermont Symphony, where he is a Meet The Composer “Music Alive!” resident composer. Ludwig joined the faculty of The Curtis Institute in 2002. About *Haiku Catharsis*, the composer writes:

“*Haiku Catharsis* was written in the later part of the summer of 2004. The commission came from the American Composers Forum [and the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts] in the form of a competition to write a new work for eighth blackbird. In the commission proposal, I had offered to write something fast and flashy, to match the electricity in their playing. But I had a secret crisis as the deadline approached: I wanted to write for them a slow and colorful piece that could feature an unconventional side of virtuosity, instead. So I was in luck when Molly Barth [flutist for eighthblackbird] suggested that though they in no way wanted to tell me what to write, the group could really use some new music on the more understated side of the spectrum.

“I don’t think composers often start with a title (in fact, often composers add the title after writing the piece!), but that’s exactly what I did. I liked the inherent conflict of the words “Haiku,” and “Catharsis,” since haikus are all about quiet revelations and a catharsis is certainly the opposite of that. The use of haikus runs throughout the piece as a thread: each short movement is inspired by its own poem, and all of the music finds different ways to group into sets of five, seven, and five—just like the syllables of traditional haiku. And I arranged the poems to exist in a seasonal cycle. The suggestion of a catharsis is more abstract. Haikus tend to describe the smallest details of revelation on the surface, but they speak to deeply profound and emotional events underneath. This is what I want to capture in the music.”

Haiku Catharsis was commissioned by the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Composers Forum and the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts for eighth blackbird, with funds provided by the William Penn Foundation.

GEORGE PERLE (b. 1915, Bayonne, New Jersey)
Critical Moments 2 (2001)

George Perle, Pulitzer Prize-winning composer and a MacArthur Foundation fellow, was among the first American composers to recognize and profoundly be influenced by the revolutionary transformation in the language of music embodied in the work of Arnold Schoenberg and the Second Vienna School. From his first encounter with this tendency in summer 1937, however, he subjected it to a radical reinterpretation that he calls “12-tone tonality,” which is still the basis of his own musical language. Along with his many compositions, which are widely performed and recorded, he has written seven books, including a two-volume study of the operas of Alban Berg. He lives with his wife in New York City and Richmond, Massachusetts.

Of his work, Mr. Perle writes, “The instrumentation of these nine short, self-contained, and strikingly individual movements for six players corresponds to that of *Pierrot lunaire*, except for the substitution of a percussion part for the quasi-spoken (*Sprechstimme*) vocal part of Schoenberg’s work. I had taken much pleasure in the composition of a set of six such pieces in 1995-96, and was already strongly inclined to undertake such a project again when an unexpected commission from the Naumburg Foundation gave me an opportunity to do exactly that for eighth blackbird.”

—George Perle

KAIJA SAARIAHO (b. 1952, Helsinki, Finland)
Cendres (1998)

The Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho has lived and worked in Paris since 1982. Her teachers include Paavo Heininen, Brian Ferneyhough and Klaus Huber. She rose to international prominence during the 1980s, and has since written for many of the world’s best known groups and soloists. Among her numerous prizes are the 2003 Grawemeyer Award, the Prix Italia, the Stoeger Award of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Rolf Schock Prize (Sweden) and the Kaske Prize (Germany). Saariaho’s music

is available on the Finlandia, Ondine, SONY, Wergo, Neuma, BIS and naïve record labels and is published exclusively by Chester Music Ltd. and Edition Wilhelm Hansen. About *Cendres* (French for “Ashes”), the composer writes,

“I found the basis of the musical material for this piece in my double concerto . . . à la fumée for alto flute, cello and orchestra. The name of the piece also derives from this. While writing *Cendres*, I was mainly concentrating on the interpretation of particular musical ideas by the three different instruments of the trio, each of which has its unique character and palette of colors. Musical tension is created and regulated by sometimes bringing the instruments as close together as possible in all ways (pitch, rhythm, dynamics, articulation, color etc.), or, at the other extreme, letting each of them express the music in their most idiomatic fashion. Between these two extremes there is an unlimited number of possible ways to create more or less homogenous musical situations. The consciousness of this variety was the rope on which I was balancing whilst working on the piece.”

DAVID M. GORDON (b. 1976)
Dramamine (2002)

David M. Gordon received Bachelor and Master’s degrees in music composition from Northern Illinois University, studying primarily with Jan Bach. Currently, he is pursuing a doctorate in composition at the University of Chicago where his principal teachers are Shulamit Ran and Marta Ptaszynska. David’s works have been performed in a variety of settings ranging from university programs to a concert at Chicago’s Symphony Center. Most notably, his work *Hollow Psalm* for Javanese gamelan and orchestra was commissioned and premiered by the Chicago Sinfonietta in 1998. Currently, David is awaiting the premieres of both his Concerto for Steelpan and Orchestra, written for pan virtuoso Liam Teague, and *Shivchei Yir’ah ve-Simcha*, an extended chamber vocal composition commissioned by the new-music ensemble *Aguava*. To illuminate tonight’s piece, the composer writes,

“*Dramamine* derives its title from a popular medication designed to alleviate symptoms of motion sickness and vertigo. Although it is not programmatic in the traditional sense, the work abstractly explores the notions of disorientation, imbalance and disaccord in the context of a relentless and extremely fast *moto perpetuo*. The overarching impression of instability in *Dramamine* is conveyed through a variety of musical devices, the most notable of which are the superimposition of rhythmically dissonant ostinati (pattern in complex proportional ratios—10:8:3, 14:12:5:4, etc.) and the melodic pairing of instruments a quarter-tone apart. While these associations are significant in the overall conception of the work, *Dramamine* ultimately centers on a more general development of musical techniques that are of long-standing interest to me. The use of complex rhythmic cycles, canonic techniques, 24-tone (more or less) equal-tempered pitch space and exotic timbres can be seen as deriving more from a broad compositional viewpoint than from specific extra-musical connotations. Timbral manipulation, in particular, has occupied a focal point in my creative investigations, and *Dramamine* is no exception to this. The work features an extensively prepared piano—26 of the strings have machine screws placed between them, supplying a wide range of unique timbres and microtonally-inflected pitches—and incorporates an array of exotic percussion instruments, including toy piano, two bowl gongs, a Peking opera gong, a tuned clay flower pot, three brake drums and two toy hoses. Many of the sonorities highlighted in the work are, in fact, loosely inspired by the sound of a Central Javanese Gamelan. . . . In addition to such timbral associations, this influence can be tangibly identified in my use of low, bell-like octaves in the piano as markers of important formal divisions (an allusion to the low gong which marks cyclical repetitions in gamelan music). I would like to note, lastly, that *Dramamine* is conceived, abstractly, as a psalm of praise to God to whom I owe everything I am and have—in *nomine Jesu*.”

—Nicholas Photinos