HOT OFF the PRESS—
ALL NEW WORKS by
AMERICAN COMPOSERS

7 pm, Sun, 15 March 2009
Studio Theatre, Mondavi Center

6 pm, “Demystifying the Music,”
a pre-concert talk with Ross Bauer

Performers
Tod Brody, flute
Peter Josheff, clarinet
Hrabba Atladottir, violin
Anna Presler, violin
Ellen Ruth Rose, viola
Thalia Moore, cello
Leighton Fong, cello
Michel Taddei, bass
Michael Seth Orland, piano
Karen Rosenak, piano
Loren Mach, percussion
David Milnes, conductor

music.ucdavis.edu/empyrean
Directors
Mika Pelo
Kurt Rohde
Laurie San Martin

Core Players
Hrabba Atladottir, violin
Tod Brody, flute
Chris Froh, percussion
Peter Josheff, clarinet
Thalia Moore, cello
Karen Rosenak, piano
Ellen Ruth Rose, viola

Guest Performers
Anna Presler, violin
Leighton Fong, cello
Michel Taddei, bass
Michael Seth Orland, piano
Loren Mach, percussion
David Milnes, conductor

Pre-Concert Speaker
Ross Bauer

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ABOUT THE EMPYREAN ENSEMBLE

Through compelling performances and diverse programming, the Empyrean Ensemble offers audiences an opportunity to hear original works by emerging and established composers alike. It has premiered more than 200 works and performed throughout California, including appearances at many prominent music festivals and concert series. Empyrean has two full-length CDs released under the Centaur and Arabesque labels and has been the featured ensemble on others. Founded by composer Ross Bauer in 1988 as the ensemble-in-residence at UC Davis, the Empyrean Ensemble now consists of a core of seven of California’s finest musicians with extensive experience in the field of contemporary music. The ensemble is co-directed by composers Laurie San Martin, Mika Pelo, and Kurt Rohde.

PROGRAM

UC DAVIS DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC PRESENTS THE EMPYREAN ENSEMBLE

Lygnir (2009)† Mika Pelo (b. 1971)
Hrabba Atladottir, violin • Tod Brody, flute • Leighton Fong, cello
Peter Josheff, clarinet • Ellen Ruth Rose, viola • Karen Rosenak, piano
Loren Mach, percussion • David Milnes, conductor

Trio (2008)‡‡‡ for flute, cello, and piano Ed Martin (b. 1976)
Tod Brody, flute • Michael Seth Orland, piano • Thalia Moore, cello

Deserts (2009)† Petros Ovsepyan (b. 1966)
Hrabba Atladottir, violin • Tod Brody, flute • Leighton Fong, cello
Peter Josheff, clarinet • Ellen Ruth Rose, viola • Karen Rosenak, piano
Loren Mach, percussion • David Milnes, conductor

Intermission

Piano Trio (2009)† Sara Doncaster (b. 1964)
Anna Presler, violin • Michael Seth Orland, piano • Thalia Moore, cello

Piano Septet (2007)‡‡ Mario Davidovsky (b. 1934)
Hrabba Atladottir, violin • Tod Brody, flute • Leighton Fong, cello
Peter Josheff, clarinet • Ellen Ruth Rose, viola • Karen Rosenak, piano
Michel Taddei, contrabass • David Milnes, conductor

† written for Empyrean, world premiere
‡‡ West Coast premiere
‡‡‡ world premiere

This concert is funded in part by the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University.

This concert is being recorded professionally for the university archive. Please remain seated during the music, remembering that distractions will be audible on the recording. Please deactivate cell phones, pagers, and wristwatches. Flash photography and audio and video recording are prohibited during the performance.
Mika Pelo (See About the Directors).

Ed Martin is an award-winning composer of instrumental and electroacoustic music. His music has received first prize in the Electro-Acoustic Miniatures International Contest, the Craig and Janet Swan Composer Prize for orchestra music, and the Tampa Bay Composers’ Forum Prize. He also earned second prize in the ASCAP/SEAMUS Student Commission Competition. His work has been performed throughout the United States and in Asia, Europe, and South America at events such as the Seoul International Computer Music Festival, the International Computer Music Conference, Confluences—Art and Technology at the Edge of the Millennium in Spain, the Soundings Festival in Scotland, Nuclea Musica Nueva de Montevideo in Uruguay, and the International Electroacoustic Music Festival Santiago de Chile. Additionally, he attended the prestigious Minnesota Orchestra Composers’ Institute, which included a performance of his music by the Minnesota Symphony Orchestra. Originally from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, Martin holds music degrees from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (doctorate), University of Texas at Austin (master’s), and the University of Florida (bachelor’s). He has studied composition and electronic music with Scott Wyatt, Stephen Taylor, Guy Garnett, Dan Welcher, Donald Grantham, Russell Pinkston, Steven Montague, James Paul Sain, and Budd Udell. In addition to composing, he is passionate about teaching and is currently assistant professor of music at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. He taught formerly at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Illinois Wesleyan University. His scholarly work includes writings on the music of composer Magnus Lindberg. For more information please visit edmartincomposer.com.

“Trio for flute, cello, and piano (2008), unlike much of my music, is not meant to evoke any particular images or ideas. Instead, my aim was simply to explore the unique sounds of each instrument and various ways of combining those sounds. The music moves between sections in which the ensemble is treated as one multifaceted instrument, fusing the three distinct timbres and characters of each individual voice into composite gestures and textures, and those in which the flute and cello take on more soloistic roles. While the trio is not meant to be about anything in particular, it is intended to be very dramatic, so please let your imagination take you where it may! Trio for Flute, Cello, and Piano was composed for the Noul Trio, who will give its Korean premiere in summer 2009.”—E.M.

A native of Baku, Azerbaijan, Petros Ovsepyan immigrated to the United States in 1979. He holds a bachelor’s degree in music from the Manhattan School of Music and master’s and doctor’s degrees from Indiana University. His teachers have included Claude Baker, Giampaolo Bracali, Brian Ferneyhough, Klaus Huber, Eugene O’Brien, and Harvey Sollberger. He has received several international awards and distinctions, including BMI (1992) and ASCAP (1992). He has

been a composer-in-residence at international festivals, including Gaudeamus Muziektheater (2004), Musica Nova (2001), Fondation Royaumont (2000), MATA (2000), Gaudeamus Musiek Week (1996, 1998), Time of Music (1998), and the Words and Music Latin-American Festival (1994). He has also received fellowships from the Bogliasco Foundation (2005), the Rockefeller Foundation (2002), the Netherland-America Foundation (2002), and the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival (1995). His works have been performed by ensembles such as L’Instant Donné, Nieuw Ensemble, Nouvelle Ensemble Moderne, l’Itinereire, Aquarius, Doelen Ensemble, and Insomnio.

Deserts exploits the sonic element in its various elongations and compressions. The piece is interactive in its environment and based on energetic exchanges. The events of the piece are set up on a macro-time, similar to what one might experience being in a desert.

Sara Doncaster is the director of the Warebrook Contemporary Music Festival in Vermont. She has received awards and fellowships from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Vermont Arts Council, the Composers Conference, the Vermont Community Foundation, the MacDowell Colony, the Ragdale Foundation, the Corporation of Yaddo, and the Millay Colony for the Arts. Doncaster’s music has been commissioned and performed by the Hungarian Chamber Symphony Orchestra, the Vermont Symphony Orchestra, the Dinosaur Annex Music Ensemble, the Lydian String Quartet, Second Instrumental Unit/Composers Guild of New Jersey, the Vermont Contemporary Music Ensemble, Village Harmony, St. Paul’s Episcopal Cathedral (Burlington), Social Band, and the Composers Conference at Wellesley College, among others. Doncaster currently is working on an opera, Coriander and a Penny’s Worth of Lonesome, with librettist Ron Falzone. She is a graduate of Brandeis University (doctor’s and master’s degrees) and Boston University (bachelor’s degree in music). Principal teachers include Allen Anderson, Martin Boykan, Charles Fussell, and Yehudi Wyner.

“For several years, I have been interested in interweaving diatonic and atonal music within the same composition. My recent encounter with two contrasting works—Rainer Maria Rilke’s Duino Elegy #3 and Blue Nile’s Headlights on the Parade—inspired the same approach in my Piano Trio.”—S.D.

Argentine-American composer Mario Davidovsky is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, director of the Koussevitzky Foundation at the Library of Congress, director of the Fromm Foundation at Harvard University, and founder and vice president of the Robert Miller Fund for Music. Fellowships have included the Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, the Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship, and the Walter Channing Cabot Fellowship. Davidovsky has received a Pulitzer
Prize and awards from the Association Wagneriana, the Asociación Amigos de la Música, BMI, Brandeis University, and the National Institute of Arts. Davidovsky is the Fanny P. Mason Professor of Music, emeritus, at Harvard University. He is the former director of the Columbia/Princeton Electronic Music Center and MacDowell Professor of Music at Columbia University. He has served for 29 years as the director of the Composers Conference at Wellesley. He has held visiting professorships at the University of Michigan, Yale University, City University, the Di Tella Institute (Argentina), the Manhattan School of Music, and the University of Pennsylvania.

“During the 1960s I spent many years of intense study wishing to grasp what the fledgling field of electronic music really meant. One of the many rewards of this effort was that it provided my imagination with new and fresh ways of conceptualizing sound. The total impact of the experience was enormous. It affected all aspects of my musical memory and thinking. It raised many basic questions about polyphony, continuity, time and space, etc. It seems clear that in all my music I am toiling (among other things) in different ways to embed the new sound space into the old ‘traditional one,’ hoping that the result of this addition would be greater than its parts, on the one hand, and on the other, opposing them would provide an ambiguity and dramatic tension capable of further generating musical narrative. The Piano Septet fits into this general description, except that, from the middle part on, the piano adopts a more soloistic manner. The Piano Septet is in one movement. It was commissioned by the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and the pianist Gil Kalish.”—M.D.

Icelandic violinist Hrabba Atladottir studied in Berlin, Germany, with Axel Gerhardt and in Klagenfurt, Austria, with Helfried Fister. After finishing her studies, Atladottir worked as a freelancing violinist in Berlin for five years, regularly playing with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Deutsche Oper, and Deutsche Symphonie Orchester. Atladottir has also participated in a world tour with pop artist Björk and a German tour with violinist Nigel Kennedy. In 2004 Atladottir moved to New York and continued to freelance, performing on a regular basis with the Metropolitan Opera, the New York City Opera, the Orchestra of St. Luke’s, and the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, among other orchestras. She also plays a lot of new music, most recently with the Either/Or ensemble in New York in connection with their Helmut Lachenmann festival.

Tod Brody, flutist, has enjoyed a career of great variety. He was a member of the Sacramento Symphony for many years, where he was a frequent soloist on both flute and piccolo. He currently teaches flute and chamber music at UC Davis, where he performs with the Empyrean Ensemble. As a member of Empyrean, Earplay, and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, Brody has participated in many world premieres and has been recorded on the CRI, Centaur, Arabesque, New World, Capstone, and Magnon labels. When not performing contemporary music, he often can be found in the orchestras of the San Francisco Opera and the San Francisco Ballet, and in other chamber and orchestral settings throughout Northern California. In addition to his activities as a performer and teacher, Brody is the director of the San Francisco Bay Area chapter of the American Composers Forum, an organization dedicated to linking communities, composers, and performers, encouraging the making, playing, and enjoyment of new music.

Leighton Fong is a longtime member of the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble and also serves as principal cello with the California Symphony. He plays regularly with the Berkeley Contemporary Chamber Players and the Empyrean Ensemble and is an active freelancer in the Bay Area. He has taught at UC Berkeley since 1997. Fong studied at the San Francisco Conservatory, the New England Conservatory, the Bern Conservatory in Switzerland, and the Royal Danish Conservatory in Copenhagen. He joined the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in 2006.

Peter Josheff has premiered hundreds of solo and chamber works by a wide range of composers and has had numerous pieces composed for him. He has appeared on many recordings, concert series, and festivals, both nationally and internationally. He performs with Earplay, the Paul Dresher Ensemble, the Empyrean Ensemble, the Berkeley Contemporary Chamber Players, and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. Also active as a composer, Josheff has been in residence at the MacDowell Colony and has been the recipient of grants from the American Composers Forum, Meet the Composer, and the Zellerbach Family
ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Thalia Moore, cellist, is a native of Washington, D.C. She began her cello studies with Robert Hofmekler, and after only five years of study appeared as soloist with the National Symphony Orchestra of Washington at the Kennedy Center Concert Hall. She attended the Juilliard School of Music as a scholarship student of Lynn Harrell and received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in 1979 and 1980, respectively. While at Juilliard, she was the recipient of the Walter and Elsie Naumburg Scholarship and won first prize in the National Arts and Letters String competition. Since 1982, Moore has been associate principal cellist of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra. In 1989 she joined the cello section of the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra. She has continued to concertize extensively, appearing as soloist at Avery Fisher Hall, Carnegie Recital Hall, Kennedy Center Terrace Theater, Herbst Theater, and the San Francisco Legion of Honor. She has also performed as guest artist at the Olympic Music Festival in Seattle, Washington, and the Lake Tahoe Summer Music Festival.

Ellen Ruth Rose is currently a member of the Empyrean Ensemble and Earplay and performs regularly with other California ensembles, including the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, the Left Coast Ensemble, Santa Cruz New Music Works, and the Berkeley Contemporary Chamber Players. She has worked extensively throughout Europe with Frankfurt’s Ensemble Modern and the Cologne experimental ensembles Musik Fabrik and Thürmchen Ensemble. She has performed as soloist with the West German Radio Chorus, Thürmchen Ensemble, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, and Santa Cruz New Music Works.
at the San Francisco Other Minds and Ojai Music festivals, and at Monday Evening Concerts in Los Angeles. Over the past several years, she has premiered numerous works by Northern California composers, including Kurt Rohde (Double Trouble, a double-viola chamber concerto, 2002), Pablo Ortiz (Le vrai tango argentin for solo viola, 2001), Steed Cowart (Zephyr for solo viola 1989/2001), Edmund Campion (Melt me with thy delicious numbers for viola and live electronics, 2003), Aaron Einbond (Beside Oneself for viola and live electronics, 2008), Cindy Cox (Turner for viola and piano), William Beck (Aquarium for viola, theremin, and tape, 2002), Robert Coburn (Fragile Horizons for viola, video, voice, and computer, 2007), and Linda Bouchard (4LN for viola, percussion, and electronics, 2008). Rose holds degrees in performance from the Juilliard School and the Northwest German Music Academy in Detmold, as well as a bachelor’s degree with honors in English and American history and literature from Harvard University. Her teachers have included Heidi Castleman, Nobuko Imai, Marcus Thompson, and Karen Tuttle. She is on the instrumental faculties at UC Davis and UC Berkeley.

Pianist Karen Rosenak is a longtime member of the Empyrean Ensemble, as well as a founding member of Earplay, the new music ensemble based in San Francisco. She is and has been on the music faculty at UC Berkeley since 1990. She has just returned from a year’s residence at Amherst College, where she held the Valentine Professor Chair in Music. There she taught beginning composition, harmony, species counterpoint, and musicianship and performed in solo and chamber music concerts. She completed her Doctor of Musical Arts degree at Stanford University in keyboard performance practices and theory, having studied piano with Nathan Schwartz and early piano with Margaret Fabrizio. She admits to a special affinity for the keyboard music from the early classical period, but also finds the challenge of tackling a piece of fresh new music well-nigh irresistible.

Michel Taddei is an accomplished double bassist. He was solo bassist for the Orchestre de L’Opéra National de Lyon (France) for seven seasons and is principal bassist for the Berkeley Symphony and San Francisco Chamber Orchestras. He has toured with Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble in the United States and in Central Asia. Other chamber music credits include being a founding member of the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble and performances with the New Century Chamber Orchestra, Earplay, the Moab Music Festival, and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. He has numerous recordings to his credit, including commercial work at Fantasy Studios, film and video game scores for Skywalker Sound, and more than 40 CD and DVD recordings on the EMI, Decca, Erato, Nonesuch, Philips, and Virgin labels, among others. Recent recordings include world premieres by Edmund Campion and Libby Larsen. Taddei is also a singer, with significant experience in opera, oratorio, and concert work.

Swedish composer Mika Pelo writes music for soloists, chamber ensembles, and orchestras—both with and without electronics. After finishing studies in Stockholm, Sweden, Pelo moved to New York to pursue a doctoral degree in composition at Columbia University under the supervision of French composer Tristan Mural. Last fall, Pelo joined the music faculty at UC Davis and is co-directing the Empyrean Ensemble with fellow faculty members and composers Laurie San Martin and Kurt Rohde. Pelo gained international attention with the string orchestra piece Apparition, which was nominated for the Gaudeamus Prize in Holland in 2000 and performed by the Dutch Radio Chamber Orchestra under the supervision of Peter Eötvös. Pelo’s music is performed on both sides of the Atlantic, including upcoming performances by the Serbian Radio Orchestra and the Manhattan Sinfonietta in May 2009. In addition to these, his new string quartet will be performed in Prague and then released on CD with the Swedish string quartet Nya Stenhammarkvartetten. Pelo’s music is published by Peters Edition (Germany).

Composer and violist Kurt Rohde lives in San Francisco. Recipient of the Rome Prize and the Berlin Prize, he has also received awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, as well as a Guggenheim Fellowship. Recent commissions include a new work for the San Francisco-based choral group Volti, a new string quartet for the Cypress String Quartet, a new piece for violinist Iris Stone, a piano concerto for Sara Laimon and the New York-based ensemble Sequitur, and a new work for violinist Axel Strauss. Rohde is a graduate of the Peabody Conservatory at Johns Hopkins University, the Curtis Institute of Music, and SUNY Stony Brook. He studied composition with Donald Erb, Ned Rorem, and Andrew Imbrie and viola with Karen Tuttle, John Graham, and Caroline Levine. He is artistic director of the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble, co-director of the Empyrean Ensemble, and teacher of composition and theory at UC Davis. He has taught composition at UC Santa Barbara, was composer-in-residence at the Yellow Barn Music Festival, and was guest composer at the Wellesley Composers Conference.

Laurie San Martin is an associate professor in the UC Davis music department, where she teaches music theory and composition and co-directs the Empyrean Ensemble. Her music has been performed in the United States and Italy by such ensembles as Speculum Musicæ, eighth blackbird, and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. She has received awards from the International Alliance for Women in Music, the ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer’s Awards, the Margaret Blackwell Memorial Prize in Composition, and a Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Her music includes solo, chamber, and orchestral compositions, and she has collaborated with other artists in multimedia and video.
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