Program Two

MUSIC FOR FLUTE, VIOLA, AND PERCUSSION

7 pm, Sunday, 24 January 2010
Vanderhoef Studio Theatre
Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts

Tod Brody, flute
Ellen Ruth Rose, viola
Chris Froh, percussion

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THE UC DAVIS DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC PRESENTS THE

EMPYREAN ENSEMBLE

Directors
Mika Pelo
Kurt Rohde

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

Administrative & Production Staff
Philip Daley, publicity manager
Joshua Paterson, production manager
Jessica Kelly, writer
Rudy Garibay, designer

ABOUT EMPLYREAN

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 Mika Pelo and Kurt Rohde.
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PROGRAM

Pas de Deux for flute and marimba (2006) **
Wayne Peterson (b. 1927)

El Árbol de la Noche Triste (The Tree of the Sad Night) for viola and electronics (2009) *
John MacCallum (b. 1976)

Dawn Song for flute and marimba (2009)
Laurie San Martin (b. 1968)

The viola in the motorcycle boy’s life for viola and marimba (2009) *
Pablo Ortiz (b. 1956)

INTERMISSION

Music for Three (1984–87) for flute, viola, and percussion
John Cage (1912–92)

Tod und das Mädchen (Death and the Maiden), op. 7, no. 3 (1817 / 2010)
Franz Schubert (1797–1828)
arr. Ellen Ruth Rose

Good Stuff (1992/2010)
The B-52s
arr. Kurt Rohde (b. 1966)

Thanks to the following people who submitted photos:
Ross Bauer • Francoise Chanut • Chris Froh • Mark Haiman • John MacCallum • Kurt Rohde • Milena Schaller

* Empyrean commission, premiere
** West Coast premiere

This performance is made possible in part by a grant from Meet the Composer/Creative Connections.

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.
Wayne Peterson's catalog of more than 60 compositions includes works for orchestra, chorus, and chamber ensemble. In addition to being awarded the 1992 Pulitzer Prize in Music, Peterson has been honored with fellowships and commissions from the Guggenheim, Koussevitzky, Fromm, Gerbode, and Djerassi Foundations, in addition to Meet The Composer. He also earned an award of distinction from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. Peterson has been active as a guest composer at Indiana University, the University of Minnesota, Brandeis University, UC Santa Barbara, the Wellesley Composer's Conference, and the Festival of New Music at Sacramento State University. He has been professor of music at San Francisco State University for more than three decades, and 1992–94 was a guest professor of composition at Stanford University. He received his doctoral degree from the University of Minnesota and was a Fulbright Scholar at the Royal Academy of Music in London (1953–54). Peterson's music is published by C.F. Peters Corporation, Boosey & Hawkes, Seesaw Music, Trillenium Music, and Lawson-Gould.

Most bizarre concert experience:
It was a piece for 10 players in which the pianist had the predominant part. He came in a full 12 bars early! What was amazing was that most of the other players didn't seem to notice.

Currently reading:
Saturday by Ian McEwan

Favorite food(s) at 13:
Hamburgers and ice cream
Favorite food(s) now:
Italian

What most people would be surprised to learn about you:
All my life I've been an ardent backpacker

My intentions were to write music that took full advantage of the technical and expressive idiosyncrasies of the instruments. While the pitch selection involves the total chromatic resources, it is not predetermined, but freely chosen. Tempi play a major role in defining the first two large, expository section of Pas de Deux: Allegro non troppo and Adagio. Within both parameters, common melodic and rhythmic gestures recur frequently and form the fabric of the entire piece. Opening with a lively exchange of fragmentary motifs, a high point quickly evolves. The tempo relaxes and leads to the more lyric Adagio. Here the alto flute makes its appearance, playing sustained melodies which alternate with descending, sensual harmonies presented by the vibraphone. Shortly thereafter, the flute returns to round off the section, but is rudely and loudly interrupted by music related to the opening Allegro. There follows a long development of familiar motifs and gestures. Now, however, the mood inexorably intensifies, ultimately reaching an exhilarating conclusion.

—WP

John MacCallum grew up in Sacramento and is now the musical applications programmer at the Center for New Music and Audio Technologies (CNMAT) at UC Berkeley, where he is also a doctoral candidate in music composition. Prior to his doctoral work, he completed a master's degree in composition at McGill University in Montréal, Québec. His works have been performed around the world, recently at the International Computer Music Conference in Montréal, and the MANCA festival in Nice, France.

Trescientas rosas morenas
lleva tu pechera blanca.
Tu sangre rezuma y huele
alrededor de tu faja.
Pero ya no soy yo
Ni mi casa es ya mi casa.

Three hundred dark roses
your white shirt wears.
Your blood oozes and reeks
around your sash.
But now I am no longer I,
nor is my house any longer my house.

—García Lorca, Romance Sonambulo

Ahora todo está por el suelo, perdido, que no hay cosa.
Now all is in the dust, lost, there is nothing left.

—Bernal Díaz del Castillo

Favorite piece(s) of music at age 13:
Bach Chaconne arr. for guitar by Segovia/Crossover (album) by D.R.I.

Most bizarre concert experience:
The Manca Festival 2007 in Nice, France: Members of the RAI (Italian Radio Orchestra) were brought in to play a concert in which I was operating the computer electronics. During the dress rehearsal, one of the composers insulted the entire Italian ensemble so profoundly that they almost returned to Turin before playing the concert. During the concert, the fire alarm went off, necessitating an audience evacuation, just as the ensemble was getting ready to play this piece.
El Árbol de la Noche Triste (The Tree of the Sad Night) for solo viola and electronics was written in 2009 for Ellen Ruth Rose. The viola part consists almost exclusively of natural harmonics played on an instrument that has been re-tuned to the 5th, 7th, 11th, and 16th harmonics of a low A (27.5 Hz). The electronic part is generated in real time and involves highly constrained random processes.

—JM

Laurie San Martin is a composer, teacher, and occasional clarinetist and conductor. She is an associate professor of music at UC Davis, where she teaches music theory and composition and was co-director of the Empyrean Ensemble 2001–09. She studied composition, clarinet, and conducting under such masters as Luis Baez, Ross Bauer, Martin Boykan, Jung-Ho Pak, Deborah Pittman, David Rakowski, Olly Wilson, and Yehudi Wyner. She holds a doctoral degree from Brandeis University in theory and composition. As a composer, she writes concert music for chamber ensemble and orchestra but has also written incidental music for theater, dance, and video. Her music has been performed in the United States and Europe. This spring, gayageum virtuoso Yi Ji-Young and the Lydian String Quartet will premiere a new work at the Pacific Rim Festival. San Martin is a recipient of many honors from organizations including the League of Composers-ISCM and the American Academy of Arts and Letters. As a composition fellow, she has attended various residencies, including the MacDowell Colony and Yaddo. Her music can be found on the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble’s San Francisco Premieres CD, released in 2005. Her piano tango is included on a forthcoming CD of new piano tangos performed by Amy Briggs.

Favorite piece(s) of music at age 13:
“Our Lips are Sealed” by The Go-Go’s and Beethoven’s “Pathetique” piano sonata (which I was currently playing).

Currently reading:
Better by Atul Gawande

Favorite food(s) at 13:
Sunflower seeds
Favorite food(s) now:
Indian Saag

What most people would be surprised to learn about you:
I was a wilderness firewoman my first summer out of college.

Dawn Song was written for my teacher and friend Yehudi Wyner in celebration of his 80th birthday. Of his many wonderful pieces, Yehudi’s piano concerto is one of my favorites. It’s a complex hybrid of many different ideas unfolding and connecting over time. The expressive, exploratory opening measures are fleeting—they appear only briefly before being interrupted. I’ve taken this one idea from the concerto and stretched it out into a short aubade, or dawn song.
Pablo Ortiz is a professor of composition at UC Davis. He taught composition and was co-director of the Electronic Music Studio at the University of Pittsburgh 1990–94. Among those who have performed his compositions are the Buenos Aires Philharmonic, the Arditti String Quartet, the Ensemble Contrechamps of Geneva, Music Mobile, Continuum, Les Percussions de Strasbourg, and the Theatre of Voices. His music has been heard at international festivals in Salzburg (Aspekte), Geneva (Exsaxis), Strasbourg (Musica), Havana, Frankfurt, Zurich, Sao Paulo, and Mexico City. He was commissioned by the Fromm Foundation in 1992. In 1993, he received a Guggenheim Fellowship. In 1996, he received the Charles Ives Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 1997 and 1998, Ortiz was commissioned for two chamber operas, Parodia and Una vez en el vienio, by the Centro Experimental Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires. In 1999, he was commissioned by the Koussevitzky Foundation to write a piece, Raya en el mar, for the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. In 2000, he received a grant from Fideicomiso para la cultura Mexico-U.S. to write children’s songs. In 2004, the Gerbode Foundation commissioned Oscuro for Chanticleer and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. In 2008, he received an Academy Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Recent premieres include Heat Wave, written for Joel Sachs and the New Juilliard Ensemble, Suomalainen tango for orchestra by the Orquestra Nacional de Catalunya, and Trois tangos en marge by the Kovacik, Dann, Karttunen trio at the Museo Nacional Reina Sofia in Madrid. He currently is working on a ballet with choreographer Diana Theocharidis for the Teatro Municipal General San Martin in Buenos Aires.

Favorite piece(s) of music at age 13:
Debussy, Suite Bergamasque

Most bizarre concert experience:
Playing in C by Terry Riley with electric instruments in 1979 in Buenos Aires (I was playing a Fender Rhodes).

Currently reading:
Bury Me Standing by Isabel Fonseca

Favorite food(s) at 13:
Beef well done
Favorite food(s) now:
Beef well done

The viola in the motorcycle boy’s life is an homage to Morton Feldman, although the music could not be less Feldmanesque ...
I met Feldman in 1984, we talked about Argentina, he was smoking a cigar, and in his thunderous way he screamed in Brooklynese, “Don’t go back to Argentina” as we parted ways. I followed his advice. The piece was written for Ellen Ruth Rose and Chris Froh and is the latest in a series of motorcycle-boy-related works.

—PO

John Cage—American composer, philosopher, artist, printmaker, and amateur mycologist—was one of the most influential American composers of the 20th century. A pioneer of chance-controlled music, creator of the prepared piano, and early experimenter with non-traditional “extended” instrumental techniques, he was a leading figure, along with Morton Feldman, of the post-WWII avant-garde. His teachers included Henry Cowell and Arnold Schoenberg, but his major influences ultimately lay in the philosophy of Zen Buddhism and the Chinese classic text I Ching.

Music for ________ consists of 17 parts for voice, piano, and orchestral instruments. The instrumentation, number of players, and duration of any given performance is variable, up to 30 minutes in length. The title of each performance depends on the number of players involved, and so in tonight’s case you will hear Music for Three. Each player’s part is comprised of a series of time brackets in which specific pitches and events must happen, but within the brackets there is flexibility in timing. There are single notes preceded and followed by silences, series of notes and proportionally notated “rhythms” with specific directions for articulation and color, and short legato “interludes” in which the performer decides the timbre and dynamic range.

Ellen Ruth Rose has arranged Schubert’s Tod und das Mädchen (Death and the Maiden) for this evening’s performance. See “About the Artists” for Rose’s biography.

Schubert’s Death and the Maiden string quartet has been a favorite of mine ever since I was about 11 years old. At that time, I went every Saturday to the Community Music School in Detroit, Michigan, for violin lessons, ear training, studio class, and the like. One day, three preteen violinists and one cellist somehow got left in a room unsupervised and managed to find parts for Death and the Maiden, which we devoured with as much hunger and enthusiasm as we lacked in understanding and technique. Everyone else loved to romp through the blisteringly fast final movement, but I preferred the solemnity and grace of the second movement theme and variations, based on an earlier song Schubert wrote about a young woman meeting the challenge of untimely death. (This was probably my first indication that I would gravitate towards the viola.) It is this song that I have arranged.

—ERR
Kurt Rohde has arranged Good Stuff by the B-52s for this evening’s performance. See “About the Directors” for Rohde’s biography.

When I moved to San Francisco in 1992, I bought a set of three things during the first day in my new home: a futon, some speakers for my CD player, and three CDs. The CDs were Joni Mitchells’ Night Ride Home, Edward Aldwell playing Bach’s Well-Tempered Clavier, and the B-52s’ “Good Stuff.” For those of you who are interested, this is the only B-52s album with just three members of this New Wave band (Kate Pierson, Fred Schneider, and Keith Strickland). This is my little arrangement of the title song, and was written per Ellen Ruth Rose’s request. I had a failed date with the person I bought the futon from, those speakers have long since bit the dust, but I still listen to all of these recordings.

—KR

Favorite piece(s) of music at age 13:
Beethoven’s “Eroica” Symphony

Most bizarre concert experience:
I was playing a new work where I was supposed to stand up, on cue, and start rambling nonsense very, very loudly in the middle of a 35 minute piece. I misunderstood the cue, got up far too early, and proceeded to begin to make a fool of myself in a place different than what was asked for. Luckily, at the crucial moment of “no return” and destroying the performance single-handedly, a water main pipe broke in the hall, and began to fill the hall with water. It forced us to evacuate quickly, and saved me from a total, embarrassing melt-down.

Currently reading:
Most recent issue of The New York Review of Books

Favorite food(s) at 13:
Grilled Velveeta cheese sandwich with tomato soup
Favorite food(s) now:
Grilled Swiss cheese sandwich with tomato bisque

What most people would be surprised to learn about you:
I haven’t a clue about what surprises people.
Flutist **Tod Brody** is in the forefront of contemporary music activity in Northern California as principal flutist with the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, Earplay, and the Empyrean Ensemble. He has performed numerous world premieres, and has been extensively recorded. His varied musical life also includes teaching flute and chamber music at the University of California, Davis, and playing principal flute for the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, the Sacramento Opera, and the California Musical Theater. He also appears frequently in the San Francisco Opera and San Francisco Ballet orchestras, and in other chamber and orchestral settings throughout the region.

Brody’s recent performance highlights include a series of performances premiering Yu-Hui Chang’s new concerto **Mountain is Mountain**, for flute and chamber orchestra, as part of the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra’s 2007-08 season, and performances with the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in November, 2009, at the MANCA Festival of Contemporary Music in Nice, France.

In addition to his work as a performer and teacher, Brody serves composers and new music as executive director of the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter of the American Composers Forum, which is dedicated to supporting composers’ careers through a variety of educational, residency, and granting programs.

**Favorite piece(s) of music at age 13:**
Count Basie, Maynard Ferguson, Beatles and other pop … and I had just started with our youth orchestra and was lovin’ on the Franck D Minor Symphony

**Currently reading:**
*Sum: Forty Tales from the Afterlives* by David Eagleman

**Favorite food(s) at 13:**
Pizza hamburgers, MEAT

**Favorite food(s) now:**
Pizza, veggie burgers, Thai curries

**What most people would be surprised to learn about you:**
Started out as a would-be juvenile delinquent; survived without incarceration due to being really good at not getting caught. Epiphanous reformation at age 17.

**Chris Froh** is a San Francisco freelance percussionist specializing in new music written for solo and chamber settings. He received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees at the University of Michigan and has also studied at the Eastman School of Music and the Toho Gakuen Conservatory of Music, where he was a special audit student of marimbist Keiko Abe. Froh was a founding director of the Ann Arbor, Michigan-based Brave New Works ensemble, where he produced and performed in dozens of concerts. Since moving to the Bay Area in 1999, he has been heard in a variety of settings, from solo percussionist with the Berkeley Repertory Theater to marimba player for a video game about monkeys and pirates for LucasArts. He is a member of the Empyrean Ensemble, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, new music improvisation group sfSound, and Gamelan Sekar Jaya. He has also performed with Earplay, the Berkeley Contemporary Chamber Players, and Santa Cruz New Music Works and at the Other Minds, Berkeley EdgeFest, Festival Nuovi Spazi Musicali, and Pacific Rim music festivals. He performs abroad frequently, including regular tours of Japan with marimbists Keiko Abe and Mayumi Hama. He has taught percussion at California State University, Sacramento, and currently teaches at UC Davis.

**Favorite piece of music at age 13:**
“Hot for Teacher” by Van Halen. (I’m serious, although I’ll likely never live it down.)

**Most bizarre concert experience:**
My grad recital at Michigan in which I jumped off of a chair and crashed a pair of cymbals over my head at the climax of the Lee Greenwood version of “God Bless the USA.”

**Currently reading:**
*Wind-up Bird Chronicles* Haruki Murakami

**Favorite food(s) at 13:**
Bacon Spaghetti

**Favorite food(s) now:**
Spaghetti Carbonara

**What most people would be surprised to learn about you:**
My in-laws have infected me with Kentucky basketball. If you want to make me mad, just tell me that you’re a Duke fan.
A champion of contemporary music in the United States and abroad, violist 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 Empyrean director Kurt Rohde (Double Trouble, a double-viola chamber concerto), UC Davis faculty composer Pablo Ortiz (Le vrai tango argentin), Steed Cowart (Zephyr), Edmund Campion (Melt me with thy delicious numbers), Aaron Embond (Beside Oneself), Cindy Cox (Turner), William Beck (Aquarium), Robert Coburn (Fragile Horizons 2007), and Linda Bouchard (4LN). 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.

Favorite piece(s) of music at age 13: 
Joni Mitchell’s “Chelsea Morning,” Schubert’s “Death and the Maiden” quartet

Most bizarre concert experience: 
Dropping socks filled with water balloons, in precise rhythms, as part of a music theater production in Dresden.

Currently reading: 
Schlafes Bruder (Sleep’s Brother) by Robert Schneider

Favorite food(s) at 13: 
Crab Newburg

Favorite food(s) now: 
Goat cheeses, ripe avocados, wild mushrooms

What most people would be surprised to learn about you:
I have a fascination with island biogeography and evolutionary biology.

ABOUT THE DIRECTORS

Swedish composer Mika Pelo writes music for soloists, chamber ensembles, and orchestras. After finishing studies in Stockholm, Pelo moved to New York to pursue a doctoral degree in composition at Columbia University under the supervision of French composer Tristan Murail. 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 recent performances by the Serbian Radio Orchestra and the Manhattan Sinfonietta in May 2009. 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 with his partner Tim Allen and labradoodle Ripley. Originally from New York, Kurt attended the Peabody Conservatory, the Curtis Institute, and SUNY Stony Brook. He is the recipient of the American Academy in Rome’s Elliot Carter Fellowship in Music Composition, the Berlin Prize, a Guggenheim Fellowship, awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and commissions from the Fromm, Koussevitzky, Hanson, and Barlow Foundations and the National Endowment for the Arts. A member of the New Century Chamber Orchestra and the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble, he is also an associate professor of composition at UC Davis. His recent projects include a work for puppet theatre, a violin concerto for Axel Strauss, a large ensemble work for Southwest Chamber Music, a piano concerto for Sara Laimon and ensemble Sequitur, and a work for speaking pianist for Genevieve Lee (performed here by Ms. Lee in October 2009).
III. 18 April 2010, Studio Theatre, Mondavi Center
World premieres by Philippe Bodin, Jesper Nordin, and Eric Moe, featuring soprano Haleh Abghari, with TV, video, and chamber ensemble.

IV. 24 May 2010, Studio Theatre, Mondavi Center
World premieres by Hendel Almétus, Ching-Yi Wang, Ben Irwin, Scott Perry, Garrett Shatzer, and Liam Wade.