

New Music Concerts and The Music Gallery present

A Ninety-Seven Note Octave


Saturday April 28, 2007 | The Music Gallery

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New Music Concerts

Robert Aitken, director

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Roger D. Moore with composer Thorkell and wife Barbara Sigurbjörnsson at the reception following the Icelandic opera *Grettir* which Roger sponsored in January 2006

New Music Concerts thanks **Roger D. Moore** for his generous support of this evening's concert, the **Bureau du Québec à Toronto** for sponsoring the reception and **Ann LaPlante** for providing a festive cake for the occasion. Please join us in the Friendship Room following the concert.

COMING NEXT

New Music Concerts | Sunday June 3, 2007 | The Music Gallery | 197 John St.

Rohan's Cello

Guest Artists: **Rohan de Saram** and **David Hetherington**
World Premiere by **Brian Current**

Programme:

Luciano Berio (Italy, 1925-2003) *Sequenza XIV* (2002)
Santiago Lanchares (Spain, 1952) – *Espera, Luz, Espera**** (2006) for solo cello
James Dillon (Scotland, 1950) – *Eos* (1999) for solo cello
Iannis Xenakis (Greece/France 1922-2001) – *Kottos* (1977) for solo cello
Alexander Shchetynsky (Ukraine, 1960) *Pas de Deux* (1996) for 2 cellos
Sven Lyder Kahrs (Norway, 1959) – *Mais tes désir ont la couleur du vent**** (2004)
Guido Baggiani (Italy, 1932) – *Duo Concertante**** (1991) for 2 cellos
Brian Current (Canada, 1972) – *New work** (2007) for 2 cellos

* Canadian work | ** World premiere | *** Canadian premiere

Intro 7:15 | Concert 8:00 | \$25 adult \$15 senior \$5 student (Cheapseats)
 Box Office 416 204-1080 | Info 416 961-9594

New Music Concerts
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36th season | 306th event
Saturday April 28 2007
The Music Gallery
 Intro 7:15 | Concert 8:00

New Music Concerts and The Music Gallery present

A Ninety-Seven Note Octave

Guest Artists:

Bruce Mather sixteenth tone piano | **Pierrette LePage** piano
Jean Laurendeau Ondes Martenot | **Accordes** string quartet
Fujiko Imajishi and **Carol Lynn Fujino** violins
Douglas Perry viola **David Hetherington** cello

Programme:

Gilles Tremblay (Canada 1932) *L'infiniment petit* (2003)
 for sixteenth tone piano
Jacques Desjardins (Canada 1962) *Où va Pierrot?* (2003)
 for sixteenth tone piano
Alain Bancquart (France 1934) *Habiter l'ambre* (2001)
 for sixteenth tone piano and tape

— Intermission —

Marc Patch (Canada 1958) *A l'affaire en seize* (2003)
 for sixteenth tone piano and normal piano
Michel Gonneville (Canada 1950) *Naturel tempérée* (2003)
 for sixteenth tone piano
Bruce Mather (Canada 1935) *Two Pieces* (2004)
 for Ondes Martenot and sixteenth tone piano
 — Short Break —
John Beckwith (Canada 1927) *Fractions* (2006)
 for sixteenth tone piano and string quartet
Jack Behrens (USA 1935) *For John Beckwith's 80th* (2007)
 for string quartet

— Festive Reception — please join us —

New Music Concerts

Robert Aitken, c.m., Artistic Director

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Quarter tone instruments have already been around for a long time. Particular pioneers of these ideas were Charles Ives and the Czech Alois Hába who in turn extended his ideas to the 1/6 tone. However, in 1895 the Mexican Julian Carrillo (1875 - 1965) worked on the problem of the 1/16 tone interval for the first time, as yet probably the smallest unit between the usual semitone step. In 1925 he devised an original notation for these ideas. Together with the conductor Leopold Stokowski he founded an "Orquesto Sonido 13", in other words an ensemble which played microtonally and with which he and Stokowski even went on tour in the 1930s. Then in 1940 Carrillo took out a patent on a project for 15 differently pitched pianos. He found the piano making company Piano Maker Carl Sauter in Spaichingen, Germany which was able to build him the relevant prototype pianos for his project. He presented his instruments built by Sauter in 1958 during the Brussels World Fair. These were pitched, according to the model, from whole tone down to the sixteenth tone. The sixteenth tone piano is pitched from key to key in 1/16 tone intervals so that a normal fifth on this instrument sounds like a semitone. The sound is remarkable as it does not have the traditional sound sensation of a piano but, due to the continually developing vibrations of the individual tones, completely new sound waves are produced. These tonalities result in new challenges for a pianist and also for the composer writing for this type of instrument. The piano stands 116 centimeters tall with 97 keys and 291 steel strings which are stretched tri-chordally (three strings per tone).

— Source: <http://www.sauter-pianos.de/>

Gilles Tremblay

L'infiniment petit (2003)

Gilles Tremblay was born on September 6, 1932 in Arvida, Québec. His first studies were private lessons, principally with Jocelyne Binet, Edmond Trudel and Gabriel Cusson. From 1949 to 1954, he studied piano at the Montreal Conservatory with Germaine Malépart, winning first prize for piano in 1953. During the same period he was taking private composition lessons with Claude Champagne. He then took the famous analysis course of Messiaen in Paris, winning a first prize there in 1957. During that period he studied piano and composition with Yvonne Loriod. The following year he was awarded the Première Médaille in Ondes Martenot at the Conservatory as well a licentiate in counterpoint from the École Normale Supérieure de Musique. During his time in Europe, he made the acquaintance of Stockhausen in Darmstadt. In 1959 he spent a period at the ORTF in Paris with the Groupe de Recherches Musicales under the direction of Pierre Schaeffer and there met Amy, Boucourechliev, Ferrari, Mâche and Xenakis. In 1960, a scholarship enabled him to take summer courses, once again in Darmstadt, with Pierre Boulez and Henri Pousseur. Subsequently his works have been heard all over the world and he has

received several important distinctions and awards, including the Prix Denise-Pelletier in 1991. Gilles Tremblay was professor of analysis and composition at the Conservatoire de musique du Québec in Montreal for more than 30 years. He was named a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture and is the recipient of the Serge Garant Prize from the Fondation Émile-Nelligan.

Depending on whether we are in the shade or in the sun, our pupils dilate or retract. The long evenings spent playing, exploring and living with the sixteenth tone piano produced a similar effect. After the immersion in sixteenth of tones the semi-tone seemed to be very large. We are in a microscopic world, hence the title "Infinitely small". Paradoxically this infinitely small plunges me into the infinitely large, as if the two extremes touched each other.

This work was commissioned by Bruce Mather thanks to a grant from the Canada Council and is dedicated to him with all my gratitude and friendship.

— Gilles Tremblay

Jacques Desjardins

Où va Pierrot? (2003)

Born in Montréal, Jacques Desjardins completed his studies in composition at McGill University and at the University of Michigan. His principal teachers were Bruce Mather, Bengt Hambraeus, William Bolcom and William Albright. A frequent grant recipient from the Canada Council and the Québec Council for Arts and Letters, he has also won first prize on two occasions at the SOCAN competition for young composers and represented Canada at the first International Forum of New Music of the Nouvelle Ensemble Moderne. His music is performed in Canada, in the United States and in Europe by ensembles such as the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the Ijsbreker Ensemble of Amsterdam. He was professor at the University of Sherbrooke where he taught analysis, harmony and counterpoint and directed the vocal ensemble and the contemporary music ensemble. Since September 2002 he has taught at the music department of the University of California at Santa Cruz.

Où va Pierrot? (Where is Pierrot going?) is a chaconne on *Au clair de la lune* (In Moon-light), a song that all francophone children learn before reaching the age of reason. The first part of the theme to the words "Au clair de la lune, mon ami Pierrot" has eleven notes and is repeated 16 times, gradually diluting its identity with microtonal inflections and increasing fluctuations of rhythm and tempo.

A transition section presents a succession of arabesques that all finish with sound aggregates in specific registers. A 19th variation quotes again the entire theme before sliding almost imperceptibly to the original register, quoting for the last time the five notes to the words "Mon ami Pierrot".

— Jacques Desjardins

Alain Bancquart

Habiter l'ambre (2001)

Alain Bancquart was born in Dieppe in 1934. After occupying different posts, with Radio France (as a violist, director and producer) and the Ministry of Culture, Alain Bancquart became Professor of Composition at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique in Paris. He has composed a great number of works, all of them using micro-intervals, including quarter tones, eighth tones and sixteenth tones. His catalogue of works includes four string quartets, numerous works for flute, several concerti and cantatas, two chamber operas and five symphonies for large orchestra. He recently composed a cycle of six works devoted to the Labyrinth theme. This two hour cycle was premiered in its entirety at Radio France on May 27, 2000. Alain Bancquart has received the SACEM's Grand Prix and the Grand Prix National for Music.

Inside an amber stone there is a minute fossil insect and around the insect smooth, transparent matter. Amber, the amber jewel is the favorite object of my wife, the poetess Marie Claire Bancquet. It was only natural that in 2001, the 50th year of our life together, I composed this anniversary present in the form of amber.

The tape part surrounds the solo part with music from a single sampled flute sound and, in the final section, from a single cymbalom note. Composition for the sixteenth tone piano presents specific problems of pitch and duration because of the 96 different notes within a single octave. With the exception of the central section the tape part uses only quarter tones in a sort of enlargement of the sound world of the soloist. The tape part was produced at the Iannis Xenakis Centre with the assistance of Stefano Basanese whom I thank for his skill and patience. The work was first performed in Paris on March 29th by Sylvaine Billier for whom I manifest my admiration and patience.

— Alain Bancquart

Marc Patch*A l'affaire en seize (2003)*

Marc Patch was born in Montréal in 1958. His musical studies were with Paul Loyonnet for piano and Bruce Mather for composition at McGill University where he obtained his master's degree. Then, with a Canada Council grant he spent three years at the Conservatoire de Liège studying electronic music with Henri Pousseur and Patrick Lenfant and composition with Philippe Boesmans. Then he attended the analysis classes of Betsy Jolas at the Paris Conservatoire. He lived for 11 years in Banff as a participant in the program of the Banff Centre for the Arts. In 1998 he wrote his first microtonal work, *Sous-bois* for two pianos in quarter tones. His most recent microtonal work, *Toccate en fer* for piano in sixteenth of tones and two pianos in quarter tones was premiered in Montréal on December 13th, 2006.

In order to facilitate the dialogue between the sixteenth tone piano and the normal piano, I decided to create reference notes in common with the two instruments so that the language in semi-tones would fit with the language in sixteenths of tones. This led me to use my favorite chord, the dominant ninth.

The path from the fundamental note of the chord to its third takes 32 notes in sixteenth of tones, or 16 notes in eighth of tones or 8 notes in quarter tones. I have made extensive use of the scales in eighth and sixteenth of tones, moving between the notes of the dominant ninth chords. The large scale form consists of 12 sections of various lengths corresponding to the 12 transpositions of the basic chord through the cycle of fifths.

— Marc Patch

The title is an example of the play of words dear to Marc Patch. If it is pronounced quickly it becomes *A la française* (In the French manner). — Bruce Mather

Michel Gonneville*Naturel tempéré (2003)*

Born in 1950 in Montréal, Michel Gonneville studied composition with Gilles Tremblay, Karlheinz Stockhausen and Henri Pousseur. Among his works are *Le messenger* (The Messenger) commissioned by the Montréal Symphony Orchestra, *Le cheminement de la balaine* (Journey of the Whale) for Jean Laurendeau, clarinet, Genevieve Grenier, Ondes Martenot and the Ensemble Contemporain de Montréal under Veronique Lacroix and *Régions éloignées* (Distant Regions) for 18

musicians, tape and live electronics, first performed in Lyon in 1995. In 1994 the Emile Nelligan Foundation awarded him its Serge Garant Prize for his work as a whole. He has been a member of the program committee of the Société de Musique Contemporaine du Québec for many years. Since 1997 he has taught composition and analysis at the Conservatoire de Musique du Québec in Montréal.

The subtitle is "Monodies and carillons to draw near to Julian Carrillo". The two types of music are easily perceptible, the carillons occupying the final minutes of the work and the eight monodies developing a limited number of rhythmic and melodic cells, often without accompaniment and presented always in new contexts.

In general I tried to reproduce "Natural" intonation using the possibilities of sixteenth tones. Although the adaptation is not mathematically exact, it is nevertheless very close to the smooth sonorities typical of natural intonation.

The work was commissioned by Bruce Mather with the aid of a Canada Council grant and is dedicated to him. It is an homage to the Mexican composer Julian Carrillo (1875–1965) who conceived and produced a whole family of incredible microtonal pianos.

— Michel Gonneville

Bruce Mather*Two Pieces (2004)*

Bruce Mather was born in Toronto in 1939 but has made Montréal his home since 1966. He studied piano with Alberto Guerrero and composition with Oskar Morawetz at the Royal Conservatory and at the Faculty of Music of the University of Toronto completing his Bachelor of Music degree in 1959. Post graduate studies took him to France where he worked with Darius Milhaud (composition) and Olivier Messiaen (analysis). He then completed a Master's degree at Stanford University and a doctorate at University of Toronto.

From 1966 to 2001 he taught composition, analysis and harmony at McGill University and directed the Contemporary Music Ensemble starting in 1981. As a pianist he actively promotes contemporary music and has performed widely with his wife Pierrette LePage as the Mather-LePage piano duo.

He has been commissioned by many important orchestras and contemporary music organizations at home and abroad. In 1979 and again in 1993 he was awarded the

Jules Léger Prize for new chamber music. His first opera, *La Princesse Blanche* was premiered in Montréal in 1994. In the year 2000 the Emile Nelligan Foundation awarded him its Serge Garant Prize for his work as a whole.

Two Pieces for Ondes Martenot and Piano in Sixteenth of Tones (2004)

The first performance of this work took place in Montréal on December 14th, 2005 with Jean Laurendeau, Ondes Martenot and the composer at the piano.

Since the Ondes Martenot has a very large range and the sixteenth tone piano a range of only one octave, I restricted the Ondes Martenot to two and one half octaves.

Although the Ondes Martenot has a keyboard in semi-tones it is able to produce quarter tones with the aid of a special button. The piano part uses quarter tones with various types of ornamentation in sixteenth tones.

— Bruce Mather

John Beckwith

Fractions (2006)

John Beckwith (b. Victoria BC, 1927) came to Toronto in 1945 for piano studies with Alberto Guerrero. He spent a year in Paris (1950-51) as a composition student of Nadia Boulanger. Among other musical influences he recalls those of John Weinzwieg and Mieczyslaw Kolinski. He retired in 1990 after a thirty-eight-year association with the faculty of music of the University of Toronto, seven of them as dean and five as founding director of the faculty's Institute for Canadian Music. His more than 130 compositions include four operas, orchestral, choral, and chamber works, keyboard music, and solo songs. *Keyboard practice* (1979), *Eureka* for nine winds (1996), and *A New Pibroch* (2003) were all commissioned and premiered by New Music Concerts. Among major works since his University retirement are *Round and round* for orchestra (1992), the opera *Taptoo!* (1993-5), the song cycle *Stacey* (1997), *Basic Music* for children's choir and orchestra (1998), *Workout* for percussion ensemble (2001), *Merton duets* for two singers and violin (2005), and *Back to Bolivia* for four clarinets (2006). His restoration (1989-91) of the early Canadian musical comedy *Lucas et Cecile* by Joseph Quesnel has been produced in both Montreal and Toronto. His orchestral transcriptions (1993-7) of all forty-five chorales in J. S. Bach's *Orgelbüchlein* were introduced by Symphony Nova Scotia under the late Georg Tintner.

Active in his early career as a newspaper reviewer and radio programmer, Beckwith has contributed critical and research articles to journals in Canada and the U. S. A. Publications include volumes 5 and 18 of *The Canadian Musical Heritage* (Ottawa 1986, 1996); *Music papers: articles and talks by a Canadian composer, 1961-1994* (Ottawa 1997); and *In search of Alberto Guerrero* (Waterloo 2006).

He holds honorary degrees from five Canadian universities, and is a member of the Order of Canada. His eightieth birthday in March was marked at the University of Toronto by a one-day symposium, "Perspectives on John Beckwith," and a concert of his music. He is currently working on a commission from the Mississauga Choral Society.

Fractions for Carrillo piano and string quartet (2006)

Alternative tunings had long struck me as perhaps the least-explored territory for new composition. Invited in 1990 to write for an ensemble of early instruments, I found I could divide them into two different tunings, about a quarter-tone apart. A few years later, admiring Bruce Mather's *Saumur*, for a harpsichord with manuals tuned a quarter-tone apart, I followed his example in two works, one for harpsichord solo and the other for harpsichord and a violin using quarter-tones. Around 1999 or 2000, Mather played me a recording of a work he wrote for the Carrillo piano, and it appealed to me as a medium rich in possibilities. In Montreal in 2005, I had a hands-on encounter with the instrument. I studied the notational chart, and listened to further recordings kindly loaned by Mather, and from calculations made in odd moments eventually got down to writing *Fractions*.

The instrument's ninety-seven pitches lie within the single octave rising from middle-c. This is less of a restriction than it may seem. By some sort of aural illusion, with so many minute intervals in between, the low notes around d and e-flat take on as different a timbre from the high ones around a and b-flat as a bassoon in relation to a flute. Nevertheless, to widen the pitch-spectrum I thought of including lower and higher instruments, and a string quartet not only suited this purpose but also offered microtonal capabilities. Two of the quartet members tune a quarter-tone higher than the other two.

Fractions may evoke the image of the elevator pictographs "Open Door" and "Close Door." It opens with the pianist's arms extended to the instrument's lowest and highest notes, forming the perfect octave 'c' to 'c', and sounding this several times like a loud bell. When it closes, the pianist's arms converge at the exact middle of the keyboard, on the unison note f-sharp, with further loud bell sounds.

A prominent melody occurs first with a recurrent slow “logo” of a whole tone, then in versions with half, one-and-a-half, and two tones. Decorative detail for the strings moves through successive intervals from one to six half-tones, and for the piano through the delicate smaller divisions – one-sixteenth, one-eighth, three-sixteenths, and so on. The piano is often one-eighth tone distant from the strings.

While working on *Fractions*, I happened to be using the Chopin Ballades for my daily piano workout, especially the Second. The piece’s rhetorical or quasi-narrative flavor may be the unintended but inescapable result.

– John Beckwith

Jack Behrens

For John Beckwith’s 80th (2007)

Jack Behrens earned Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees (Composition) from the Juilliard School and a PhD in Composition from Harvard University. His composition teachers included Peter Mennin, Vincent Persichetti, William Bergsma, Leon Kirchner and Roger Sessions; at the Aspen Festival he studied with Darius Milhaud. Dr. Behrens has received commissions from the Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council and the CBC; many of his scores are available from the Canadian Music Centre – some are published by Conservatory Canada and the Canadian National Conservatory (July 2007). He has been recorded as composer and/or pianist on the Echiquier, McGill, Musicworks, Opus One and Orion labels and is a regular reviewer of new books for Choice.

This less than two minute Quartet movement was composed as a surprise birthday gift for John Beckwith with whom I have enjoyed a cordial friendship for three decades. The material is based on those Beckwith letters (B-flat, E, C, H) which equate to staff notation and which are transposed both up and down a minor third. (The “left over” pitches are used primarily as pedal trills or clusters).

The eighth note = 80 tempo indication is to increase by one every March 9th until 2027 when (on the occasion of Beckwith’s 100th birthday) it will revert back to 80. (This is to suggest that John Beckwith shows no indication of “slowing down”).

– Jack Behrens

Jean Laurendeau

Following his studies on the Ondes Martenot in Paris with Jeanne Loriod and Maurice Martenot, Jean Laurendeau returned to Canada in 1965. Since then he has toured for the Jeunesses Musicales and given concerts with the Société de Musique Contemporaine du Québec as well as being guest soloist with orchestras in Chicago, Montréal, Los Angeles, Boston and Paris. In 1977 he founded the Ensemble d’Ondes de Montréal. Also a clarinetist, he was for fifteen years a member of the Quintette à Vent du Québec. He taught both clarinet and the Ondes Martenot at the Conservatoire de Montréal. In 1990 he published a book on the musician, pedagogue and inventor Maurice Martenot.

Pierrette LePage

After studying with Constantine Klimoff in Québec and with Alberto Guerrero in Toronto, Pierrette LePage continued her musical studies in Paris with Lazare Lévy. Returning to Canada in 1962, she toured Canadian universities under the auspices of the Canada Council. She taught at the University of Toronto for several years and in 1966 joined the Faculty of Music of McGill University. As a duo pianist with her husband, Bruce Mather, she has given concerts in Canada, the USA, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, France and Belgium and has made many recordings of contemporary music.

Accordes

Accordes evolved out of a string quintet that was formed in 1975 to perform a composition by John Beckwith, commissioned by the Toronto Symphony Women’s Committee. Frequently heard on CBC radio, they have performed on the Roy Thomson Hall Chamber Music Series and constitute the core string players of the New Music Concerts Ensemble. Always searching for new repertoire, Accordes has commissioned works, as well as regularly premiering new compositions on the New Music Concerts series. This concentration on contemporary music has allowed them to give the Canadian, and sometimes world premieres, of works by such composers as Elliott Carter, Ben Johnson, Peter Paul Koprowski, Brian Cherney, Peter Michael Hamel, Ann Southam and Hope Lee. They have recorded extensively for the Canadian Music Centre label, Centrediscs, including discs devoted to the music of Harry Freedman (Spirit Song), Harry Somers (Somers String Quartets) and Alexina Louie (Dénouement). Their recoding of NMC co-founder Norma Beecroft’s Amplified String Quartet with Tape was nominated for a Juno award in 2004.

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