

vermont composers festival 2005



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Saturday

Trinity United Methodist Church, 7pm

Margaret Meachem: *Fusions*, electronic playback

Dennis Báthory-Kitsz: *Spammung*, extended voice and electronic playback

*Peggy Madden: *Arctic Fire*, electronic playback

Dennis Báthory-Kitsz: *Memento Mori, for Noah Creshevsky*, extended voice and electronic playback

Margaret Meachem: *Journey to a Distant Galaxy*, electronic playback

John Levin: *Trout Lily*, synthesizer performance

Eric Lyon: *Stem Cells*, Max/MSP laptop performance

Sunday

Unitarian Church of Montpelier, 7pm

Brian Johnson: *Autobiography: The Solo Percussionist at Fifty-Something* (2005)

Brian Johnson, bass drum, wind gong, voice

William Mayer: *Piano Fantasia (First Movement of Piano Sonata)* (1960)

Michael Arnowitt, piano

William Mayer: *Subway in the Sunlight and Other Memories: Subway in the Sunlight; Bird-Cage; Feeding Pigeons; The Stream that Knew Sadness; Out of Breath; Cold of the Moon; Rude Bird* (1968-1993)

Michael Arnowitt, piano

David Fuqua: *Once again, once again/I am for you/A star (with references to J.*

S. Bach's English Suite no. 2 in A minor; title from a poem by Velimir

Khlebnikov) (1989/1996)

Michael Arnowitt, piano

David Gunn: *Forbidden Flute* (2004)

Kiely Griffin, flute, Cathryn Gaylord, piano

David Gunn: *Shebango* (1998/2005)

Zoe Christiansen, clarinet, Jillian Marshall, trumpet, Cathryn Gaylord, piano

[Intermission]

Lydia Busler-Blais: *Fanfare and Processional* (2002)

Lydia Busler-Blais, horn

*Dennis Báthory-Kitsz: *Sweet Ovals* (2005)

Lydia Busler-Blais, horn

*Peggy Madden: *Midnight River Run* (2005)

Bill Keck, tuba

Lydia Busler-Blais: *Appalachia* (1992)

Lydia Busler-Blais, horn

Thomas L. Read: *Eclogues Among the Ruins* (1999)

Thomas L. Read, violin

Brian Johnson: *C Scale*

Brian Johnson, crotales and triangle

The composers and performers group improvisation

*premiere performance

performers and composers program notes

Michael Arnowitt

<http://www.sover.net/~arnowitt/>

As a teenager, Michael Arnowitt was active as a composer in addition to performing on the piano. At age 16, he was a winner in the BMI International Awards to Student Composers, and at age 13 he performed piano at the 1976 World Music Days festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM). His musical skills led to his being selected as a Presidential Scholar in the Arts in a White House ceremony; he performed his own compositions as part of a performance at the Kennedy Center. He has studied composition with faculty at the Juilliard School of Music, the New England Conservatory of Music, the Fontainebleau School in France, Indiana University, Yale, and the Aspen Music School.

As an adult, he has continued his deep interest in contemporary music, performing many major piano compositions of recent decades such as Milton Babbitt's *Reflections* for piano and tape, selections from Gyorgy Ligeti's *Etudes* for piano books I and II, Frederic Rzewski's *Four North American Ballads*, Clarence Barlow's "...or a cherish'd bard," Dennis Bathory-Kitsz's *Rough Edges*, and Larry Polansky's variation set *Suite from Lonesome Road*.

Michael Arnowitt has appeared at festivals and concert series devoted to contemporary music in the northeastern United States, and has performed piano solo new music programs in Belgium and Holland. Together with the percussionist Beverley Johnston, he developed a duo program of music by composers from around the world, which they have performed in Canada and the United States.

Dennis Bathory-Kitsz

<http://maltedmedia.com/bathory/>

Dennis Bathory-Kitsz has made work for sound sculptures, soloists, tape & electronics, stage shows, orchestras, dancers, interactive multimedia, acoustic installations, and performance events. He directs Il Gruppo Nuke Jitters, and has received more than 100 commissions.

His music ranges widely: He helped initiate the chamber opera resurgence with *Plasm over ocean* at the World Trade Center in 1977, using instruments of his own design; he presented the solo interactive performance work *Echo* with handmade instruments, sound sculptures and computers in Vermont in 1985; *In Bocca al Lupo*, an early composition for quasi-intelligent systems, opened in Montana's Yellowstone Art Center in 1986; the Vermont outdoor interactive installation *Traveler's Rest* was a 1991 collaboration with sculptor Fernanda D'Agostino; in

1999, he was the first American composer commissioned for Prague's legendary Mánes Museum, conducting *Zonule Glaes II* for string quartet & electronic playback; a full concert exploring his music was held in Amsterdam in 2003; and his techno-overture *Icecut* was premiered by the Vermont Symphony Orchestra in 2004.

He has advocated for contemporary nonpop music for 30 years, from his co-founding of the Trans/Media arts cooperative in 1973 through his present work as co-host of the radio/cyber show *Kalvos & Damian's New Music Bazaar*, which won the ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award in 2000. He has been project director for festivals from the 1974 Delaware Valley Festival of the Avant-Garde through the 2001 Ought-One Festival of NonPop, and co-founded the NonPop International Network of new music shows.

A curse of the turn of the millennium was spam—unsolicited email advertisements that rose from an annoyance to a choking flood. I kept a mailbox stuffed full of my favorite spam subject lines, and in a tip of the hat to Karlheinz Stockhausen's meditative *Stimming*, I created the madcap **Spammung**. The subject lines are read by IBM text-to-speech software in eight languages—regardless of the source language, making a bizarre incantation of meaninglessness or suggestiveness. Each of these eight lines was separately transformed into a mockery of clanks and hoots and bells, and remixed with the live performer trying to stanch the flood. (The original mix is in four channels.)

Memento Mori, for Noah Creshevsky. The music of Noah Creshevsky was an inspiration when I discovered it quite late in my musical life. His ideas and his colors unabashedly based on earlier forms (psychologically, not theoretically) inspired a work of a great hubbub of voices, little slices of the words 'memento mori' whipped into a slow, encompassing tornado—with the single voice crying in the eye of silence.

The challenge of a short time for composition and a long-term love of the French horn resulted in **Sweet Ovals**, premiered here by Lydia Busler-Blais. It is a kind of call-and-response song for solo horn, alternating presence and distance.

Lydia Busler-Blais

Lydia Busler-Blais began her compositional education in high school at Lawrence Academy in Groton, Mass., where she studied an independent curriculum in horn performance, theory, and composition. She studied electronic music and arranging with Peter Hazzard as well as studying composition privately at Groton Center for the Arts and Indian Hill Arts in Massachusetts. She has studied theory, counterpoint, and composition with Steven Peisch and Steve Savage at New England Conservatory and the same at Thayer conservatory at Atlantic Union College with Margery Ness, and the University of New Hampshire with Neil Sir, Christopher Kies, and Peter Urquhart. Lydia composed *Villa After the Storm* for two clarinets, horn, and cello, *Andantino Spiritoso* for horn and piano, and *Minuet* for two violins and cello while in college and many electronic works while still in high school, most of which have been used in modern dance performances. *Appalachia* for horn alone (1992) has been performed at the University of New Hampshire and her *Frost Cycle* for soprano, horn, and piano (1998) has been performed by different

groups in Boston and around Vermont. Another work for horn alone, *Fanfare and Processional*, was written and performed in 2002 for Catherine Orr as a processional for the church choir of the Unitarian Church of Montpelier. Lydia has also had many arrangements of holiday and sacred music for horn and organ, and wind and brass quintets performed repeatedly. Busler-Blais' other vocal works include several short pieces for three and four voice choir including *For the Autumnal Equinox* and several ballads for voice and mixed instrumentation such as *For My Love on His Birthday* for voice, horn, 'cello, and vibes, and *Where is the Sun?* for voice and cello. In 1991 Lydia Busler-Blais received a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council to write *Townsend Common* for woodwind quintet, written for the town of Townsend.

Busler-Blais also performs new works of other composers as often as possible. Her world premieres of other composer's music include Pamela Marshall's *Colored Leaves* for horn at the 1994 Annual Bates Festival of New American Music, many large scale orchestral and chamber works of John Rutter, David Soldier, and David Amram in with various groups in New York City, works for horn and piano of Brian Lounsbury, and a simultaneous worldwide premiere of Yehudi Wyner's *Horntrio* for violin, horn, and piano at Merkin Hall, NYC, while other trios performed around the world. When not performing as soloist or chamber soloist works or composing, she teaches horn and has performed as part of the Manhattan Chamber Orchestra, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the Jose Limon Dance Company, the New York City Ballet, the Rome Festival Opera Orchestra, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Appalachia was composed in 1992 (the year of her marriage to Bob Blais) as sort of a scholarly work and first performed that year. ***Fanfare and Processional*** was written in 2002 for Catherine Orr as a processional for the church choir.

zoe christiansen

Well, due to the fact that she is 16 years old, there is not much to say in this biography of Zoe Christiansen [says she about herself]. She began piano at an early age under the instruction of her father, and later began to play clarinet, which she played with the Vermont Youth Orchestra Association for five years. In March, she also performed in Gunnapalooza, a concert of music by David Gunn that benefited the VYO. Zoe graduated from U-32 High School a year early, and is incredibly unsure of plans for the future, but she is sure that music will be part of it.

David Fuqua

David Fuqua was long associated with Frog Peak Music, first as administrative director, and later as computer and design consultant, and designer for the Frog Peak/Johanna Beyer Project. In addition to being a composer and administrator, he is a highly skilled computer music copyist. Several years ago, he moved to Asia, where he now lives as a monk.

Once again, once again/I am for you/A star, played by Michael Arnowitt, is an intriguing work, based on sections of Bach's *Second English Suite*, asking for the pianist to transition gradually between through-composed sections. The transitions

are in the style of Steve Reich's minimalist process music, but the improvised character creates an exciting and almost mechanical atmosphere. The title is from the Russian futurist writer Velimir Khlebnikov.

kiely griffin

Kiely Griffin, 19 years old, has been playing flute for eight years and piano for 12. A resident of Shelburne, Vermont, she was an active member of the Vermont Youth Orchestra Association for several years, participating in Vermont Youth flutes, VYSinfonia and the VYO. A 2004 graduate of Champlain Valley Union High School, Griffin participated in District, All State, New England and National festivals. She just finished her first year at the Hartt School of Music in West Hartford, Conn., where she is studying Flute performance and Music Management. Griffin continues to play throughout the state, playing weddings, concerts, assisting the VYOA, and teaching. She premiered *Forbidden Flute* in March and will be working with David Gunn on other works throughout the summer.

david gunn

<http://weaselworld.org/>

David Gunn began his musical training at Settlement Music School in Philadelphia, studying piano and percussion. He later graduated from the Ohio State University with a degree in music composition. In 1992, the Vermont Contemporary Music Ensemble commissioned him to write *A Song, a Dance and a Spizder* for the New Music Across America Series. Since then, the ensemble has performed his music dozens of times in concert and on public radio. In 1997-98, VCME recorded a CD of 16 of his chamber music compositions entitled *Somewhere East of Topeka*, which Albany Records released in January of 2003. Brisk sales are anticipated any day now. Gunn has also been commissioned by the Vermont Symphony Orchestra, the Vermont Youth Orchestra, Ethel, Essential Music, the Montpelier Chamber Orchestra, Acolade and Social Band, among others. The Onion River Chorus, Bayley-Hazen Singers, Sounding Joy! and Social Band have performed his vocal music. His compositions have earned him an ASCAP pecuniary award every year since 1997. And in 2004, the Vermont Arts Council awarded Gunn its Citation of Meritorious Service to the Arts which, unlike his other citations, added no points to his driver's license. Gunn currently co-hosts the award-winning weekly radio show, *Kalvos & Damian's New Music Bazaar*, now in its tenth and final year. He is also a writer and humorist, and was, until this very moment, covert emissary from the planet Zombocartumia in the Crab Nebula. He lives simultaneously in Barre, Vermont, and in hope of, in order, peace on earth, good will towards men, and a pile of cash in the bank.

Forbidden Flute is a flute and piano tour de force, some of whose passages are so dangerous that the performers are issued Kevlar padding to guard against serious injuries.

Shebango is a tango that is equal parts fandango and mango, inspired by the tropical rhythms and cocktails of Pango Pango.

brian johnson

<http://kalvos.org/johnsob.html>

Percussionist/composer Brian Johnson (b. 1953, New York) has appeared as soloist and ensemble musician in many of the major venues for new and experimental music throughout the U.S., and has made frequent appearances in New Music America festivals. As a soloist, he has premiered works by leading figures of the American avant-garde including John Cage, Alvin Lucier, Joseph Celli, and Stuart Saunders Smith. Johnson has initiated a major project to develop the solo percussion repertoire involving single or few instruments. Resultant works include *Silver Streetcar for the Orchestra* for solo triangle by Alvin Lucier, "a stunningly beautiful work" premiered at New Music America in Miami; and *Songs I-IX for Actor/Percussionist* by Stuart S. Smith, a theater piece for voice and table of kitchen items.

Brian is a member of the International Percussive Arts Society, a BMI composer, and is on the Board of Directors of the New Music Alliance. He received his Bachelor of Music in Percussion from the Hartt College of Music. From 1986-90, Johnson was the Curator of Music at Real Art Ways, Hartford, Conn., a nationally recognized presenter of new and experimental music.

Autobiography: *The Solo Percussionist at Fifty-Something* is for bass drum, wind gong and voice.

C Scale is for crotales and triangle.

bill keck

BME, Eastman School of Music, MME, VanderCook College of Music. Bill studied tuba with Arnold Jacobs and was principal tuba with the Mexico City Philharmonic while teaching at the National Conservatory of Music. His extensive background includes performances with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the New York City Ballet Theaters, and the Radio City Music Hall Orchestra. He has toured internationally with Emerson, Lake and Palmer. He became a member of the Constitution Brass Quintet in 1992 and is the band director at Montpelier High School.

john levin

<http://www.sover.net/~john/>

I became a Vermont composer 15 years ago, when I moved to Brattleboro in 1990. I have been making minimal, slowly changing, drone-based music for vintage analog synthesizers since about 1982, but, with a few notable exceptions, I have only been performing it in public for the past 9 months or so!

I have been a regular guest on *Kalvos and Damian's New Music Bazaar* practically since its inception. The hosts, Dennis and David, have always gently chided me for failing to name my electronic compositions. To avoid being scolded again before this concert, I have decided to name the pieces I perform publicly after my favorite wild flowers, which behave a bit like my electronic pieces. Both poke their heads

up rather unobtrusively, make their contribution to the local ecosystem, and then disappear until their next time around. Tonight's performance, *Trout Lily*, is the first in this series.

eric Lyon

<http://arcana.dartmouth.edu/~eric/>

Eric Lyon composes in digital, acoustic and hybrid media. He is a founding member of the annual Bonk Festival of New Music. His compositional aesthetic is dedicated to non-linearity and extra-terrestrial reference. Lyon has taught computer music at Keio University, the Academy for Media Arts and Sciences (Gifu, Japan), and in the Dartmouth Electroacoustic graduate program.

Stem Cells is a Max/MSP piece created for an invited performance at Ars Electronica 2004. Simple electronic materials are evolved during performance. For contrast, a short vocal sample is incorporated, taken from a prank call to Julie, the computer-generated Amtrak reservation taker.

peggy madden

<http://www.madtrax.com/>

Peggy Madden (music composition BA, Johnson State College, 1996) assembled her first computer based project studio in 1988 and secured commercial work scoring videos. Her interest in sound manipulation developed into the creation of electro-acoustic works. Subsequently she became affiliated with the Vermont MIDI Project as an online composer-mentor and this inspired her to compose for more traditional instruments. Peggy currently works as a music technology consultant at Hartford High School and a composer artist-in-residence with various schools throughout Vermont.

She writes, "Do I choose to write music, or does the music choose me as a vehicle for its own self-expression? When I begin creating a new piece of music, there is no particular formula I follow. A bass line, a melody, the timbre of a particular sound, a dream—any of these may be a worthy basis for a new composition. I add a part here and a part there. Hardly realizing it is happening, a relationship is formed between myself and the composition. There develops passion, commitment and the desire to resolve inherent problems. As a teenager I had the desire to do exactly what I do now with music. But alas, the computer was just barely being developed, and sequencing and MIDI were still fantasies in the techno-musical mind. So I danced off to the beat of my own erratic drummer, eventually coming full circle to return to this musical path."

Midnight River Run was inspired by an interest in composing a piece for solo tuba and the opportunity for a collaboration with Bill Keck. The piece took on aspects of being carried downstream with changing currents and obstacles, yet the constancy of the river. This piece embodies the various moods of such an adventure with enjoyment and contentment, but also anticipation, surprise and uncertainty. *Midnight* also implies a metaphor for dreaming where delving into the river of the psyche

can evoke rapidly changing moods.

Arctic Fire came about as a result of being introduced to a fire organ. The sounds of this unique instrument were so intriguing that I recorded and electronically manipulated them, and this became the basis for much of the composition. Other source material originated from samples taken from a recording of Bri Carpenter singing a fire song. As the piece developed, I became aware of a sensation of slowly shifting ice caps and labored movement in subzero temperatures. The title Arctic Fire demonstrates this polarizing effect.

william mayer

William Mayer has had a wide-ranging career. Born in New York City on November 18, 1925, he entered Yale with the notion of becoming a writer and graduated in 1949 with equal affinities for music and language. A tilt toward music became evident as Mayer continued his training at Juilliard and at the Marines College of Music, studying with Roger Sessions and Felix Salzer, and later with Otto Luening. Yet his love for the written word never left him. He has fashioned his own libretti and, at times, composed music to original poems and texts.

Again and again, Mayer's scores evoke the distant past. Even the titles—*One Christmas Long Ago*, *Abandoned Bells*, and that of an all-Mayer recording, *Voices From Lost Realms*—reveal this reaching back through time. Some works look back to his personal past. *Of Dream's End*, the New York Times wrote, "This instrumental sextet was written to memorialize a young family member, and its blend of pain, joy, and acceptance is very moving." The composer has been drawn to the far reaches of space no less than that of time. Transparent textures and remote key relationships suggest this vastness in *Two Pastels for Orchestra and Inner and Outer Strings*, recorded, respectively, by Stanislaw Skrowaczewski and Gerard Schwarz.

The New Grove Dictionary of American Music ("Amerigrove") also comments on this juxtaposition of opposites: "Mayer's style is characterized by a contrasting of transparent textures with humorous, highly rhythmic, and densely scored passages." No work better illustrates this duality than *Octagon for Piano and Orchestra*, which also quite separately shows off Mayer's delight in sheer sound. In his vocal-chamber endeavors this sensitivity to instrumental timbre has combined with a gift of song to produce some of the composers most memorable scores—*Fern Hill*, *Eight Miniatures*, *Distant Playing Fields* (recorded by the Chamber Orchestra of St. Luke's), and the familiar *Enter Ariel* among them.

Somewhat surprisingly, Mayer is almost as well known for his humor as for his lyricism. This humor is a shade dark in *Brief Candle*, a six-minute opera in three acts twitting the brevity of life. But in *Overture for an American*, an orchestral salute to Theodore Roosevelt, the humor is joyous and robust. Mayer's piquant core to A.A. Milne's fanciful text Good King Wenceslas demonstrates the composer's "unusual flow of fancy and wit," as Joseph Machlis remarks in his Introduction to Contemporary Music. The little-known Milne text is a tongue-in-cheek (but also

touching) exploration of the Good King's identity. First performed in orchestral form by conductor Paul Dunkel and narrator Robert Sherman, who commissioned the score. It has found favor with adults and children alike.

Often singled out for his lyricism. Mayer was praised in the magazine *Fanfare*, where James A. North observed, "[He] has written superbly lyrical music, and is still doing so." His opera *A Death in the Family*, in which Jake Gardner and Dawn Upshaw took the leading roles, is a repository of such lyricism. So are two oratorios, *The Eve of St. Agnes* and *Spring Came on Forever*, commissioned and premiered by the New York Choral Society; and the orchestral works *Andante for Strings* and *Of Rivers and Trains*, which looks back in time to the early days of river transportation.

Mayer's many awards and honors include two NEA grants, a citation from the National Institute for Music Theater for contributing to the advancement of American musical theater - his opera *A Death in the Family* was specifically cited - and from the Ford Foundation and the New York and Michigan State arts councils. He has been honored with an award for life achievement in music from the Center for Contemporary Opera.

Artists performing his works reflect the wide range of his music and include Leopold Stokowski, Lukas Foss, Gerard Schwarz, Max Rudolf, Morton Gould, Edwin London, Dawn Upshaw, Eleanor Steber, Heidi Grant Murphy, Burl Ives, and William Masselos. Mayer's compositions are presently available on Albany Records, Arabesque, CRI, Koch International, Newport Classics, Phoenix, and Preiser records. His primary publisher is Theodore Presser; other publishers are Boelke-Bomart, Boosey & Hawkes, Carl Fischer, and Lawson-Gould.

William Mayer lives in New York and Vermont with his wife, the artist Meredith Nevins Mayer.

Piano Fantasia, played by Michael Arnowitt

Subway in the Sunlight and Other Memories, played by Michael Arnowitt

Margaret Meachem

Margaret Meachem ... completed her studies later in life due to personal obligations as well as the prejudices of her time. Beginning her training at Bennington College as a music major, she found little support for her creative aspirations and left school to find work while continuing to take piano and composition privately with Henry Holden Huss in New York (who played the Tchaikovsky B-flat concerto when the composer visited the United States.) Finally after marriage and two of her three children were in school, she was able to return to Bennington, and she completed her bachelors degree in 1962 studying with several composers including Pulitzer prize winner Henry Brant. She took theory at Williams College with Robert Barrow (student of Hindemith) and then obtained her masters in composition at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and finally her DMA in composition at the University of Maryland in 1982 at the age of 60. Meachem studied with Nadia Boulanger in Paris in 1976 and she received her electronic musical training from Joel Chadabe in 1975 and 1976 at the Bennington College studios.

Born in rural Vermont, the composer draws on the richness of her natural environment for much of her inspiration. *In Wildness is the Preservation of the Earth* (1991) for soprano, orchestra, narrator, and tape features loon calls and other natural sounds complemented by the descriptive poetry of Henry Thoreau, Robert Bridges and others. The piece was premiered in New York at Merkin Hall with Phyllis Bryn-Julson as soprano soloist. Another work, *In Icy Moonlight* from a Haiku poem (1982) for soprano, chamber orchestra, and tape uses recordings of vocal fragments, temple blocks, timpani, flute and the plucking of piano strings to create a crisp and “crunchy” accompaniment evocative of the cold and snowy night. She has written a short piece for solo flute and orchestra for Julius Baker, master flutist. Also a professional flutist, Meachem has spent much of her career teaching this instrument privately and teaching composition and theory at the Pittsfield, Mass., Music School and at the University of Maryland. (Adapted from the biography by Elizabeth Hinkle-Turner)

Journey to a Distant Galaxy

This electronic piece is an imaginary journey from our Galaxy to another simulating reactions to the voids of space and the visions of other planets and stars.

Fusions is a study in timbres. The opening section in the low register is repeated in a higher register. Different levels of pitch and articulations fuse into others. For example some legato sounds become staccato, timbres of brass nature become mellow and those of instrumental character become bell like and drop sounds. White noise has been changed rhythmically and timbrally by digital delay. The dance performance is by Rachel List’s company from New York University at a seminar at Burr & Burton’s gymnasium, now a concert hall. Ms. Kaufman is the choreographer. She added a clapping section at the beginning and ending of the piece which I think is very effective.

Thomas L. Read

<http://ThomasLRead.com/>

Thomas L. Read, DMA, composer and violinist, is Professor of Music at the University of Vermont. He has composed music for a variety of media and almost entirely on commission—music for small ensembles, full orchestra, solo voice, chorus and musical theater. He has been a recipient of several Arts Council and university stipends, and has won awards, grants and fellowships from organizations such as the American Federation of Teachers, the MacDowell Colony, The Charles Ives Institute, and the Johnson Composers Conference. Recent premieres include *Enchorial Landscape* for tuba and piano at the University of Arizona, *Alcyone* for narrator, chorus, accordion, marimbas, steel drums and synthesizer at the Barbican Centre, London, with subsequent performances at Harvard and Wesleyan Universities, and various movements of *Piano Partita* in New York City and at the Warebrook Music Festival. In February, 2004, a full concert of his music, presented in his honor by the Vermont Contemporary Music Ensemble, included the premiere of *Chamber Concerto*. A recording of *On October Ground*, performed by Philharmonica Bulgarica, was released in March 2004 by ERM Media Masterworks Recordings. C.F. Peters, Tunbridge Music, Tuba Euphonium Press and the American Composers Edition publish his work.

In Spring of 1999 I wanted to write a large-scale millennium piece. As no practical invitation to do so was forthcoming, I decided to write, instead, a violin soliloquy. My summer's work produced six variously interconnected pieces, five of which I collected together as a *Second Suite for Solo Violin*. The fanciful title ***Eclogues Among the Ruins*** was attached after composition, and the following commentary is, only lately, the result of my growing familiarity with the music.

Altogether the movements represent a kind of musical dialogue, and not just in a thematic or contrapuntal sense. There are exchanges of diatonic and chromatic textures, of directed motion and of stasis; there is a confusion of precise and ambiguous harmonic function, and of rectilinear and circular time.

Each of the five movements incorporates conventional melodic and rhythmic fragments having pastoral, rustic qualities. The final movement is an expanded and varied reprise of the first. The inner movements, outwardly independent of one another, are all, almost as much as the first and the last, taken-up with "ending gestures"; that is, with cadential figures. Finally, the music seems to gather together material from our culture's field of ruins: archetypes and motives whose expressive potential must be exhausted by now. In my effort to revitalize, or at least to reexamine, such "used up" material, but, also, not wanting its presence and use to seem self-consciously contrived, I encouraged its emergence, as it were, from generative processes that are as impersonal as I could devise.

In her superb essay, "The Concept of History," Hannah Arendt says, "the world we have now come to live in...is more determined by man acting into nature, creating natural processes and directing them into human artifice." This seems resonant with some of my intuited goals. Still, the same essay explores ideas that have troubling implications. One example: "If by starting natural processes, we have begun to act *into* nature, we have manifestly begun to carry our own unpredictability into that realm which we used to think of as ruled by inexorable laws."

After all is said, though, it will be fine if, through performance and listening, the nice tunes in the first three movements of my Suite, being superseded by a rhythmically propulsive, virtuosic *Presto*, find culmination in the lyrical final movement with its apparently positive, E major conclusion!

vermont composers festival 2005

Presented by the Consortium of Vermont Composers
<http://vermontcomposers.com/>

Coordinators

Dennis Báthory-Kitsz
David Gunn

Special Assistance

Wally Gunn

Special Thanks to:

Trinity United Methodist Church
Unitarian Church of Montpelier

The performers and composers and their spouses and partners

The Consortium of Vermont Composers was founded in 1988 to get new music out there from in here. Did you know that nearly 250 composers live and work in Vermont, with music ranging from the straightforward song to the electronic edge? Yes, they do! We're the most composer-friendly state in the U.S.! The Consortium occasionally publishes *Consorting*, a newsletter of musical ideas, jousts, reviews & announcements, and will have a new issue out in the summer of 2005. Becoming a member of the Consortium is inexpensive—go to VermontComposers.com and fill in the form! Large sums of money, artistic contributions, lip-slathering commissions and general bewilderment are also welcome. The Consortium of Vermont Composers can be reached for scores, recordings, and music samples.

Composers from the Consortium are featured regularly on

Kabos & Damian's New Music Bazaar

which can be heard every Saturday from 2:30 to 4:30 pm on WGDR-FM 91.1