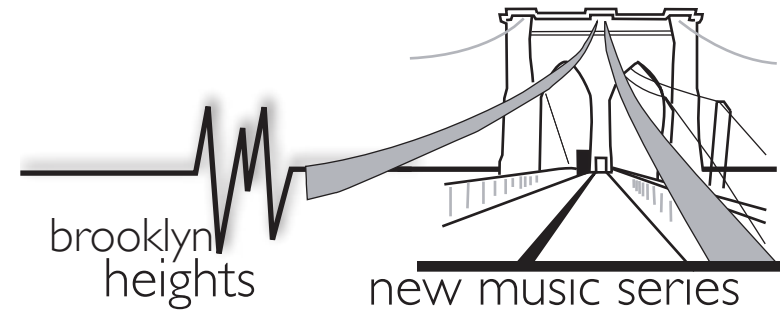


## Fifteen theses on contemporary art

1. Art is not the sublime descent of the infinite into the finite abjection of the body and sexuality. It is the production of an infinite subjective series through the finite means of a material subtraction.
2. Art cannot merely be the expression of a particularity (be it ethnic or personal). Art is the impersonal production of a truth that is addressed to everyone.
3. Art is the process of a truth, and this truth is always the truth of the sensible or sensual, the sensible as sensible. This means : the transformation of the sensible into a happening of the Idea.
4. There is necessarily a plurality of arts, and however we may imagine the ways in which the arts might intersect there is no imaginable way of totalizing this plurality.
5. Every art develops from an impure form, and the progressive purification of this impurity shapes the history both of a particular artistic truth and of its exhaustion.
6. The subject of an artistic truth is the set of the works which compose it.
7. This composition is an infinite configuration, which, in our own contemporary artistic context, is a generic totality.
8. The real of art is ideal impurity conceived through the immanent process of its purification. In other words, the raw material of art is determined by the contingent inception of a form. Art is the secondary formalization of the advent of a hitherto formless form.
9. The only maxim of contemporary art is not to be imperial. This also means: it does not have to be democratic, if democracy implies conformity with the imperial idea of political liberty.
10. Non-imperial art is necessarily abstract art, in this sense : it abstracts itself from all particularity, and formalizes this gesture of abstraction.
11. The abstraction of non-imperial art is not concerned with any particular public or audience. Non-imperial art is related to a kind of aristocratic-proletarian ethic : Alone, it does what it says, without distinguishing between kinds of people.
12. Non-imperial art must be as rigorous as a mathematical demonstration, as surprising as an ambush in the night, and as elevated as a star.
13. Today art can only be made from the starting point of that which, as far as Empire is concerned, doesn't exist. Through its abstraction, art renders this inexistence visible. This is what governs the formal principle of every art : the effort to render visible to everyone that which for Empire (and so by extension for everyone, though from a different point of view), doesn't exist.
14. Since it is sure of its ability to control the entire domain of the visible and the audible via the laws governing commercial circulation and democratic communication, Empire no longer censors anything. All art, and all thought, is ruined when we accept this permission to consume, to communicate and to enjoy. We should become the pitiless censors of ourselves.
15. It is better to do nothing than to contribute to the invention of formal ways of rendering visible that which Empire already recognizes as existent.

### Special thanks to:

Jeanne Barnes and her daughter Judith  
Anahti and Phil GlasMusica Bella Orchestra



## Contemporary Chamber Music

### Featuring

Caleb Burhans  
Rebecca Comerford  
Michael Ibrahim  
Anna Dagmar Johnson  
Dan Lippel  
Michael Mizrahi  
Sara Phillips  
Jody Redlage  
Yegor Shevtsov



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# program



Quartet Op. 22 for violin, clarinet, tenor saxophone and piano (1929).....Anton Webern

- I. Sehr mäßig
- II. Sehr schwungvoll

Caleb Burhans, violin     Sara Phillips, clarinet  
Michael Mizrahi, piano     Michael Ibrahim, saxophone

Crucials Blue Curve Crystal (2004).....Adam Mirza,

Michael Mizrahi, piano

Puddles to Pearls (2004) .....John Altieri

Rebecca Comerford, mezzo-soprano  
Anna Dagmar Johnson, piano

Sequenza IX (1980).....Luciano Berio

Sara Phillips, clarinet

Sonate pour saxophone alto et piano (1970).....Edison Denisov

- I. Allegro
- II. Lento
- III. Allegro moderato

Michael Ibrahim, saxophone  
Michael Mizrahi, piano

## Intermission

Unfoldings (2004).....Mikel Kuehn

Dan Lippel, guitar

Interludes (2004).....Adam Mirza

Michael Ibrahim, soprano saxophone

Songs for soprano, clarinet, violin, and cello (2004).....Jody Redhage

- I. The Botticellian Trees
- II. This is Just to Say
- III. Poem

Caleb Burhans, violin  
Sara Phillips, clarinet  
Jody Redhage, cello and voice

## Michael Ibrahim (Saxophone)

Michael is a single Canadian classical saxophonist. He has performed across North America and Europe. Apart from his interpretation of transcribed, traditional, and contemporary repertoires, he also works with funk and improvisation. Michael plays on Vandoren 3 1/2 reeds and wears Calvin Klein underwear.

## Anna Dagmar Johnson (Piano)

Anna was born in England, and grew up in Massachusetts. Her musical studies have included classical and jazz piano, as well as song writing and vocal lessons. A graduate of the Eastman School of Music, Anna has lived in NYC for three years, and performed around the northeast and internationally. She has released two independent albums of original songs titled “One More Time in the Air” and “Solo Songs.” In addition to solo concerts, her current collaborations include accompanying mezzo-soprano Rebecca Comerford, a duo with cellist/song writer Martha Colby, and improvisation with sitarist Ikhlaz Hussien. Information on upcoming performances can be found at [www.AnnaDagmar.com](http://www.AnnaDagmar.com).

## Daniel Lippel (Guitar)

Dan was born in Brooklyn Heights, and spent the first year of his life a stone’s throw from here, in an apartment at 35 Clark Street. He is attracted to contemporary repertoire because of the possibility of finding new ways to express essential truths. Dan is currently struggling to finish his dissertation for a doctoral degree at the Manhattan School of Music, and can be found on the web at [www.danlippel.com](http://www.danlippel.com).

## Adam Mirza (Composition)

Adam is a composer and tutor living in New York City. He believes that the two fundamentally human activities are creation and education; and, that in all aspects of life, we must heroically attempt to both understand and define the world in which we exist. He also plays competitive Ultimate Frisbee.

## Sara Phillips (Clarinet)

Sara performs frequently as a recitalist and chamber musician. Her main focus is recent and contemporary music, emphasizing newly-emerging composers. Sara recently received her Master of Music degree in clarinet performance from Yale University, where she studied with David Shifrin. She has appeared as soloist with the American Symphony Orchestra and the Woodstock Chamber Orchestra, and has premiered many works, including Kyle Gann’s Last Chance Sonata and Judd Greenstein’s The Sirens, for bass clarinet. Sara is a performer and founding director of the NOW Ensemble, a New Music quintet dedicated to the commissioning and performing of fresh new works.

## Jody Redhage (Cello, Vocals, Composition)

Jody loves playing chamber music of all sorts, and enjoys playing a variety of musical styles. She is currently finishing her masters degree in cello performance at the Manhattan School of Music. She is working to compile a repertoire for her voice and cello, both works herself and by other composers. Next year Jody will study composition and 20th century cello repertoire in NYC and Amsterdam.

## Yegor Shevtsov (Piano)

Yegor was born in Lviv, Ukraine. He performs a broad range of solo and ensemble repertoire, concertizing in New York City and the surrounding areas. Mr. Shevtsov performs with several contemporary music ensembles, such as Tactus, The Claremont Ensemble, Manhattan Percussion Ensemble, Alarm Will Sound, and others. He is the founding member of the Spirals saxophone-and-piano duo performing works written for this medium. He is also an avid meditation practitioner. A proud student of Nina Svetlanova, he graduated cum laude with the Bachelor of Music degree from Manhattan School of Music, and is now pursuing his Master of Music studies at MSM. He expects to graduate in May 2005.

They were delicious  
So sweet and so cold

### III. Poem

As the cat climbed over the top of the jam closet  
First the right forefoot carefully  
Then the hind stepped down  
Into the pit of the empty flowerpot

#### **John Cage**

Nocturne for violin and piano

John Cage is a complex figure. According to Schoenberg, Cage was a genius—just not a musician. Despite Schoenberg, and despite the apparent relationship with performance art, his work is fundamentally concerned with time and sound, the pure time and sound that is fundamental to music. However tonight we present a different side of Cage. He was asked to write the most beautiful thing ('beautiful' in the traditional sense of the word) he could imagine.

#### **Caleb Burhans**

In Time of Desperation

We live in desperate times. I began this piece the day Luciano Berio passed away. I finished it on the anniversary of my Father's passing. In a way, this piece is a reflection of being caught up in a single moment. Written in the key of B-flat minor, I also pay my dues to a Mr. Samuel Barber.

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## bios

#### **John Altieri** (Composition)

John is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music and the University of Arizona where studies in performance, education, and composition have sculpted his recent professional endeavors including international performance, commissioned works, and teaching at Meyer Levin Intermediate School here in Brooklyn.

#### **Caleb Burhans** (Violin, Composition)

Caleb is a violinist, violist, countertenor, composer and improviser hailing from Manhattan. He does everything from baroque opera to noise music. On an average day you'll find him singing at church in the morning and making loops at a club in the east village by night. In his spare time he likes to make more music and hang out with his wife Martha and their lizard Buddha. Caleb is very active in the New York area; for more info check out his website at [www.calebburhans.com](http://www.calebburhans.com).

#### **Rebecca Comerford** (Mezzo-soprano)

Mezzo soprano Rebecca Comerford is a native of Maine completing her Masters in Voice at Manhattan School of Music this spring. Rebecca has always had a great interest in singing contemporary music and finding ways to interpret fresh characters that haven't been born or experienced before and because of this has sung a wide variety of modern opera and contemporary song. While studying at Eastman she had the pleasure to sing pieces by a variety of composers there, amongst one of her favorites, John Altieri.

In Time of Desperation in memory of Luciano Berio and my father (2003) ..... Caleb Burhans  
Caleb Burhans, piano

Nocturne for violin and piano (1947) ..... John Cage  
Caleb Burhans, violin  
Yegor Shevtsov, piano

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## notes

#### **Anton Webern**

Quartet Op. 22 for violin, clarinet, tenor saxophone and piano

Arnold Schoenberg wrote the following as an introduction to Webern's Six Bagatelles for String Quartet. If the Bagatelles described here differ in certain aspects from the Quartet, Schoenberg's sermon nonetheless remains a powerful synopsis of Webern's broader aesthetic—and perhaps more.

While the brevity of these pieces is their eloquent advocate, such brevity stands equally in need of advocacy. Think what self-denial it takes to cut a long story so short. A glance can always be spun out into a poem, a sigh into a novel. But to convey a novel through a single gesture, or felicity by a single catch of the breath: such concentration exists only when emotional self-indulgence is correspondingly absent.

These pieces will only be understood by someone who has faith in music as the expression of something that can be said only musically. They can no more withstand criticism than this faith can, or any other. If faith can move mountains, disbelief can refuse to admit they are there. Against such impotence, faith is impotent.

Does the performer now know how he is to play these pieces—the listener, how he is to take them? Can any barriers remain between performer and listener, when both are men of faith? But how is one to deal with the heathen? With a fiery sword, they can be kept in check, bound over: but to be kept spell-bound—that is only for the faithful. May they hear what this stillness offers!

[see Style and Idea: Selected Writings of Arnold Schoenberg. Ed. Leonard Stein with translations by Leo Black. Originally published: New York: St. Martins Press, 1975]

#### **Adam Mirza**

Crucials Blue Curve Crystal  
Interludes

These two works are the latest of recent efforts to write for solo instruments. This has been a challenge! I am still and always amazed that Bach achieved four-part counterpoint for the violin that was virtuosic and idiomatic, immediate and complex. That is the ideal.

From cyberspace:

Clouds are not spheres, mountains are not cones, coastlines are not circles, and bark is not smooth, nor does lightning travel in a straight line." -Benoit Mandelbrot

...

The attractor will continue weaving back and forth between the two wings, its motion seemingly random, its very action mirroring the chaos which drives the process. Lorenz had obviously made an immense breakthrough in not only chaos theory, but life. Lorenz had proved that complex, dynamical systems show order, but they never repeat. Since our world is classified as a dynamical, complex system, our lives, our weather, and our experiences will never repeat; however, they should form patterns...

[see Manus J. Donahue III, An Introduction to Mathematical Chaos Theory and Fractal Geometry, <http://www.duke.edu/~mjd/chaos/chaosh.html>]

### John Altieri

Puddles to Pearls

I am paused,  
My moment struck like lightning slicing halves of air destined to return  
ferociously to  
one another...  
Our bodies as thundermasses, your unescapable face finding refuge in my hands  
taking flight in my laughter.  
Our stomping feet turn sudden puddles to pearls dancing about our kissing bodies  
as our  
drenched love balls up as a wet shirt thrown hastily to a carpet.  
Fast rain attempting to scream but succeeding only in whispering,  
revealing secrets and treasures trapped in a web of suspended pearls that disperse  
when  
touched,  
splashing to tinier droplets,  
vanishing to infinity,  
each time

### Luciano Berio

Sequenza IX

Italian Composer Lucian Berio wrote several Sequenzas, or Sequences, the earliest for flute in 1958, and the final, preceding his death by a year, for cello in 2002. Each Sequenza is uniquely conceived but all are virtuosic modern essays into the soul of the particular instrument. Sequenza VIIa is psychologically complex: a discursive or even free-associative progression of the lyrical, alienated, superficial, dense, and explosive, an inner dialogue between the abstract and the concrete.

### Edison Denisov

Sonate pour saxophone alto et piano

The classical saxophone is the black sheep of orchestral instruments (Berio called it the whore of the orchestra because it would "go with anything"). Invented in the 1840's by Adolphe Sax, it

was a few decades too late to be integrated materially and psychologically into the classical music symphonic apparatus. While the saxophone was a huge success in jazz, classical saxophonists had to wait out an entire era of bad French music and then beg for quality pieces to be written for their instrument. The Denisov Sonata is one of a few canonical works in the uncomfortable repertoire of the classical saxophone. The sonata offers a fitting dialectic between tradition and innovation. Here, Denisov draws from an eclectic array of material—including jazz—to create a compelling and substantial musical work.

### Mikel Kuehn

Unfoldings

Kuehn's Unfoldings was commissioned and premiered by Daniel Lippel in 2004. The work explores sonority and resonance on the guitar, creating a large formal arc out of three sections which accumulate energy, followed by a reflective coda.

### Jody Redhage

Songs for soprano, clarinet, violin, and cello (Poems by William Carlos Williams)

I wrote these three songs for several friends and myself to perform in May, 2003. Although I've been writing songs for about 5 years, these are the first songs that I sang and played; always before I got a soprano friend to sing and I just played cello. I've chosen some of my favorite William Carlos Williams poems as texts, several of which are recognizable.

#### I. The Botticellian Trees

The alphabet of the trees  
is fading in the song of the leaves  
The crossing bars of the thin  
letters that spelled winter  
and the cold have been illumined  
with pointed green  
by the rain and sun—  
The strict simple principles of stright branches  
are being modified by pinched-out ifs of color  
devout conditions  
the smiles of love  
Until the stript sentences  
move as a woman's limbs under cloth  
and praise from secrecy quick with desire  
love's ascendancy in summer—  
In summer the song sings itself above  
the muffled words

#### II. This is Just to Say

I have eaten  
The Plums  
That were in the icebox  
And which you were probably saving for breakfast  
Forgive me