

JACK
Quartet

November 17 2007
the Tank
NYC

Presented by AMP--
Thanks to Mike and the rest of the staff at the Tank--

program

Josquiniana (Arr. Wuorinen).....Josquin des Prez
(c. 1450-1521)

String Quartet No. 1.....Cristian Amigo
(world premiere)

- I. antes/before
- II. after/despues
- III. and then.../entonces...

- break -

Twilight in Turkey (Arr. Woolf).....Raymond
Scott
(1908-1994)

“Il Sogno di Empedocle”Roberto Rusconi

6 Moments Musicaux (op. 44).....György Kurtág
(b. 1926)

- I. Invocatio
- II. Footfalls
- III. Capriccio
- IV. In Memoriam György Sebök
- V. a Tabea Zimmermann ...rappel des oiseaux...
- VI. Les Adieux

JACK Quartet

John Pickford Richards (viola)
Ari Streisfeld (violin)
Christopher Otto (violin)
Kevin McFarland (cello)

The **JACK Quartet** formed with an appetite for today's most demanding string quartet repertoire. Comprised of violist John Pickford Richards, violinists Ari Streisfeld and Christopher Otto, and cellist Kevin McFarland, the quartet has given high-energy performances in Europe and North America including appearances at Carnegie Hall, the Lucerne Festival, University of California at San Diego, and Festival Internacional de Música Contemporánea de Michoacán.

The members of the JACK Quartet met while attending the Eastman School of Music where, in addition to learning standard repertoire, they pursued period, non-western, and popular performance styles. The quartet has studied with the Arditti Quartet at the Pro-Bio Foundation Summer School for Contemporary Quartet Music and members of the Ensemble Intercontemporain at the Lucerne Festival Academy and worked closely with composers Helmut Lachenmann, Matthias Pintscher, Samuel Adler, and Robert Wannamaker.

- ABOUT THE PERFORMERS -

John Pickford Richards holds degrees from the Interlochen Arts Academy and Eastman School of Music where his primary teachers were David Holland and John Graham. He is a member of Payton MacDonald's Super Marimba Project and Alarm Will Sound, bringing him into close contact with such composers as John Adams, Wolfgang Rihm, Meredith Monk, and Steve Reich at venues including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and The Roxy. John has performed as soloist with the Pasadena Symphony Orchestra, Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra, Ossia New Music, The All-American Rejects on MTV's TRL, and recently performed the solo part to Luciano Berio's *Chemins II* at the Lucerne Festival Academy under the direction of Pierre Boulez. He taught for three years at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania and has also taught at summer camps, in city and rural public schools, and in continuing education.

Ari Streisfeld began playing the violin at age six. He grew up to the sounds of the Philadelphia Orchestra, studying with members Paul Arnold and Yayoi Numazawa, and went on to study with Zvi Zeitlin at the Eastman School of Music, where he worked with such composers as Steve Mackey, Bernard Rands, Robert Morris, Carlos Sanchez Gutierrez, Ricardo Zohn Muldoon, and David Liptak. As a member of Chicago-based Dal Niente, Ari has performed Morton Feldman's Piano and String Quartet at the 2006 Chicago Sound Field Festival and Salvatore Sciarrino's Six Caprices at New Music Chicago's Sonic Impact Festival. Ari attended the Music Academy of the West, New York String Orchestra Seminar, Kent/Blossom Music, and the Lucerne Festival Academy. As a composer, he was a recipient of the 2000 ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award. Ari currently studies at the Northwestern School of Music with Almita Vamos.

Christopher Otto studied composition at the Eastman School of Music with Martin Bresnick, David Liptak, and Robert Morris and has been pursuing a degree at the University of California at San Diego. As a violinist, Christopher has premiered many compositions and worked with such composers as Harrison Birtwistle, Pierre Boulez, Helmut Lachenmann, and Steve Reich. Christopher has participated as composer and performer in such contemporary music festivals as the Lucerne Festival Academy, Internationale Musikinstitut Darmstadt, Karlheinz Stockhausen Courses, Institute and Festival for Contemporary Performance at the Mannes College of Music, June in Buffalo, and Festival Internacional de Música Contemporánea de Michoacán.

Kevin McFarland received a Bachelor's Degree in Composition from the Eastman School of Music. While a student there he was a highly active performer of contemporary music, including frequent concerts with the school's Ossia New Music and Musica Nova ensembles, and over one hundred premieres of works by faculty and students. He is a member of the Tarab Cello Ensemble, a group dedicated to the commissioning and performance of new music for cello octet. He currently lives in Pennsylvania where he works as a math tutor and enjoys making electronic music in his free time.

- ABOUT THE WORKS AND COMPOSERS -

Josquiniana-----

Josquiniana is a medley of vocal works by the Franco-Flemish composer **Josquin des Prez**, arranged and recast for string quartet by the New York based composer **Charles Wuorinen**.

Josquin wrote many polyphonic works for voices in both sacred and secular styles. *Josquiniana* is derived from the latter, comprising five chansons and one frottola, which were popular Renaissance songs of French and Italian texts, respectively. Wuorinen's arrangements are faithful to Josquin's original rhythms, and voice leading. However, he uses pizzicato, tremolo, and ponticello timbres to accentuate certain voices at times.

Josquiniana was written for the Brentano Quartet in 2002.

(notes by Kevin McFarland)

Charles Wuorinen (b. 1938, New York) has been composing since he was five and he has been a forceful presence on the American musical scene for more than four decades. His many honors include MacArthur Foundation Fellowship and the Pulitzer Prize (the youngest composer to receive the award). His compositions encompass every form and medium, including works for orchestra, chamber ensemble, soloists, ballet, and stage.

Wuorinen has been described as a "maximalist," writing music luxuriant with events, lyrical and expressive, strikingly dramatic. His works are characterized by powerful harmonies and elegant craftsmanship, offering at once a link to the music of the past and a vision of a rich musical future.

Wuorinen is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

(from the composer's website)

-----*String Quartet No. 1*-----

The meaning of this string quartet is not programmatic; the ideas that inspired it are meant to set an emotional tone. There are no specific sounds that resonate with linguistic symbols or with specific images. The ideas that inspired the quartet were a way into the piece for me, and perhaps this will also be true for the listener. The starting point for this string quartet was a meditation on violence - in particular, acts of violence committed upon innocent people - a never-ending human reality. However, I did not choose to dwell in the pornographic act itself. Instead, I chose the time before and after, thus pointing to the violence through its material absence and through its effects.

In writing this piece I faced the old fear that art may, in fact, be unable to effect any change in the world. But that remains to be seen, and as I write these words, I am more optimistic.

The quartet was completed in New York City on December 19, 2006.

I would like to thank the College of Staten Island (CUNY) Foundation for commissioning this piece.
(notes by the composer)

Cristian Amigo is a New York-based composer, guitarist and writer who produces music for film, dance, theater, installation, and live performance. His work combines elements of world music, Latin American music(s), electronics, new music (experimental, composed, improvised), jazz and interdisciplinary/intercultural artistic work. Cristian is the recipient of a 2006-2007 Juggenheim Fellowship in music composition, and was awarded the 2003 - 2004 Van Lier Fellowship from Meet the Composer.

Cristian has a Ph.D. in ethnomusicology from UCLA (2003). He is currently a visiting scholar and adjunct faculty member at the NYU Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, and an adjunct professor at the College of Staten Island/City University of New York.

He lives in New York with his wife Dana Whitco and two cats (Edie "Fish" and Fio Monster").

(from the composer's website)

-----*Twilight in Turkey*-----

Born as Henry Warnow in Brooklyn on September 10, 1908, **Raymond Scott** adopted his name from a Manhattan telephone book, explaining that “it was a nice sounding name. It had good rhythm.”

Though he never wrote specifically for cartoons, Scott's music is perhaps best known through its many tunes adapted by Carl Stalling and others for Warner Brothers. These tunes were perfectly suited to accompany animation, owing to a combination of playful melodies, cat-chase-nouse rhythms, and springboard syncopation, which can be heard underscoring the antics of Daffy Duck, Bugs Bunny, Tweety and Sylvester, the Road Runner, and others. More recently, Scott's music has been quoted by Devo, They Might Be Giants, and Jim Thirwell of Foetus and has been used to underscore the *Ren and Stimpy* cartoons.

Randall Woolf's arrangement of *Twilight in Turkey* was commissioned for the Kronos Quartet by Hancher Auditorium / University of Iowa.

(notes through Kronos Quartet)

Randall Woolf was born in Detroit. He discovered classical music for himself in college, having spent high school in the usual garage-rock bands. He studied composition privately from 1982 to 1987, taking 3 years of counterpoint and harmony lessons in the Schoenberg tradition with noted microtonalist and jazz visionary Joseph Maneri. He studied orchestration and composition privately with David Del Tredici. In a moment of weakness, he entered the Ph. D. program at Harvard in 1987, and escaped as quickly as possible, in 1990. In 1989, he was a fellow at Tanglewood, studying with Lukas Foss and Oliver Knussen. He resides in Brooklyn with his wife, pianist and chanteuse Kathleen Supové.

His music ranges from the purely traditional classical media such as string quartet and orchestra to the entirely electronic and theatrical, though he is happiest between these extremes. It is frequently performed throughout the United States by groups such as the Seattle Symphony

The title of Venetian composer **Roberto Rusconi**'s work translates to “The Dream of Empedocles. reference to the Presocratic philosopher best known for the four-element theory of matter (fire, air, earth and water.) His works have only survived in fragments, and have been compiled into two larger works: *Nature* and *Purifications*. In the latter, Empedocles, following in the tradition of Pythagoras, describes a process known as the transmigration of souls, or reincarnation. Sins such as violence as well as meat-eating cause a separation of the human soul from the gods, but through a series of reincarnations, becoming one of the earthly forms of life in turn, the soul can be purified, achieving a status of perfection and divinity.

This composition is inspired by this striving for perfection, as well as the inevitable failure that ensues in its pursuit. Out of a single note, melodic fragments are formed that strive to become realized or vocal melodies. Microtonal inflections of pitches reflect and expand the instability of major and minor intervals as many of the harmonies strive toward “perfect” intervals only to evaporate out of existence or mutate into a new texture upon their realization. An underlining thread of a rhythmic pulse underlines the work, although the tempo is unsteady and constantly changing, and the rhythmic surface of the work is often dense and complex. The piece embodies the struggle of the artist to say something new and beautiful, to be affected by the weight of history as well as the awareness of the imperfections of human nature.

(notes by Kevin McFarlane)

-----*6 Moments*-----

Musicaux

Like many of **György Kurtág**'s other works, *6 Moments Musicaux* is comprised of short vignettes or fragments. Each movement is a world unto itself, exploring a limited but focused set of ideas. The first movement, *Invocatio*, juxtaposes an exposition of violent chords against a hushed but tense middle section in which a single melody is built out of sustained notes passed between the players. The second movement, *Footfalls*, is rather self-explanatory. It is evocative of the sound of cautious footsteps like those made by a stalker or spy. (There is an accompanying poem in Hungarian, but I am at a loss for a proper translation.) The third movement, *Capriccio*, is a boisterous but muted scherzo built out of very short and quiet sounds but constructed with a driving rhythmic energy. The fourth movement, *In Memoriam György Sebök*, is an elegy for a friend of the composer, featuring moments of dense harmony as well as points of release where sounds dissipate into the ether. The fifth movement, *a Tabea Zimmermann ... rappel des oiseaux...*, is an etude in harmonics, drawing upon memories of birdsong for inspiration. Both natural and artificial harmonics are amalgamated into an elusive rhythmic tapestry, punctuated by moments of solemnity and severity using sustained stopped pitches. The last movement, *Les Adieux*, is an ephemeral goodbye which sums up the atmosphere of contrast and contradiction set up by the previous movements. Heartfelt sonorities give way to sustained uncomfortable dissonances. Fleeting moments of restrained passion are couched in a deathly silence. The work ends solemnly with an impossibly quiet dirge in the lower voice out of which hopeful motives in the violins barely shine through as the sound wanes into emptiness.

(notes by Kevin McFarlane)

Windsor New Music Ensemble, the Paul Dresner Ensemble, Bang On A Can/SFTI Orchestra, Northern Kentucky Symphony, California EAR Unit, American Composers Orchestra, Fulcrum Point, twisted tutu, Music at the Anthology, Basso Bongo, Cleveland Chamber Orchestra, Kansas City Symphony, New Millennium Ensemble, Dinosaur Annex, Boston Musica Viva, American Baroque, Dogs of Desire chamber orchestra, Northern Kentucky Symphony, Meridian Arts Ensemble, and the Society for New Music, among others.

(from the composer's website)