

# THIRD COAST PERCUSSION

WITH PIANISTS AMY BRIGGS AND DANIEL SCHLOSBERG

PRESENTING SERIES

**TEDDY EBERSOL PERFORMANCE SERIES**

**SUN, SEP 15 AT 2 P.M.**

LEIGHTON CONCERT HALL

DeBartolo Performing Arts Center

University of Notre Dame

Notre Dame, Indiana

## MAKRO-AMERICAN: CRUMB & REICH

David Skidmore (b. 1982) *Ritual Music* (2004) (6')

George Crumb (b. 1929) *Music for a Summer Evening (Makrokosmos III)* (1974) (35')

- I. *Nocturnal Sounds (The Awakening)*
- II. *Wanderer-Fantasy*
- III. *The Advent*
- IV. *Myth*
- V. *Music of the Starry Night*

## INTERMISSION

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Steve Reich (b. 1936) *Sextet* (1984) (28')

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### See Third Coast Percussion on TV

A one-hour documentary about the world premiere of Third Coast Percussion's "Resounding Earth" will be broadcast on WNIT 34.1 on Sunday, October 13 at 3pm and Saturday, October 26 at 4pm. Also, on 34.2 on Thursday, September 19 at 10pm.

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## **An 'overture' for percussion.**

David Skidmore is a member of Third Coast Percussion and a prolific composer of music for percussion. David's compositions are performed regularly in concert halls and universities across the country. In 2011, his multi-movement work *Common Patterns in Uncommon Times* was commissioned from Frank Lloyd Wright scholar Sidney K. Robinson to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Taliesin, home of the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture. In May 2007 his piece, *Unknown Kind*, was premiered at Carnegie Hall. David was awarded first prize in the 2005 Percussive Arts Society Composition Contest and second prize in the 2004 contest.

*Ritual Music (Variations on the Numbers 2 and 4)* was composed for the Chicago dance company Raizel Performances and was premiered in collaboration with that group in spring of 2005.

*I used the numbers two and four to bring order to the primeval timbres and violent counterpoint of the piece. The pitches in the marimba part, the rhythmic motifs and the structure of the phrases were all determined numerically. A friction is created between the mechanical simplicity of the structural elements and the abandon with which the instruments shout, shriek, groan and wail. The ritual is tightly controlled with respect to its numeric foundations, yet it is also an incantation of things far more frantic and powerful. Thus the piece can act as a sort of 'overture' for percussion. –David Skidmore*

## **The ancient idea of music as a reflection of nature.**

Born in Charleston, West Virginia, George Crumb has enjoyed a long career as one of America's most distinct and respected musical voices, winning the Pulitzer Prize in 1968, a Grammy in 2001, and dozens of other awards as well.

Crumb's works have the deeply spiritual air of man considering nature and his universe, and his meticulously detailed and unconventional scores give a visual impression akin to an ancient religious text. Crumb cites Debussy, Bartok and Ives as his major influences, but as a percussionist, it is hard not to hear John Cage's influence in Crumb's spacious scores and love of unique percussion timbres.

*Perhaps many of the perplexing problems of new music could be put into a new light if we were to reintroduce the ancient idea of music being a reflection of nature. Although technical discussions are interesting to composers, I suspect that the truly magical and spiritual powers of music arise from deeper levels of our psyche. I am certain that every composer, from his formative years as a child, has acquired a 'natural acoustic' which remains in his ear for life. The fact that I was born and grew up in an Appalachian river valley meant that my ear was attuned to a peculiar echoing acoustic; I feel that this acoustic was 'structured into' my hearing, so to speak, and thus became the basic acoustic of my music. I should*

*imagine that the ocean shore or endless plains would produce an altogether different 'inherited' acoustic. In a broader sense, the rhythms of nature, large and small—the sounds of wind and water, the sounds of birds and insects—must inevitably find their analogues in music.*

—George Crumb, "Music: Does it have a future?"

*Music for a Summer Evening* was composed in 1974, and is the third installment of Crumb's *Makrokosmos* series, the rest of which are for piano alone (two hands and four), The name "Makrokosmos" is a reference to "Mikrokosmos," Bela Bartok's 6-volume series of progressive piano studies.

Crumb also borrows the instrumentation of this work (two pianos and two percussionists) from Bartok's *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* (1937), In contrast to Bartok's selection of standard orchestral instruments, Crumb's percussion arsenal includes everything from temple bowls and African thumb piano (kalimba), to slide whistles, stones and a jug. In the spacious, often dreamlike atmosphere of the work, Crumb constantly plays with our sonic memory: at times mimicking the sounds of nature and at other times mimicking the sound of previous musics. The fifth movement, for example, features a direct quotation of Bach's D minor fugue from *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, played on piano but accompanied by a ghostly echo on the vibraphone.

The complete arc of the piece can be seen in the following poetic quotations Crumb includes in the printed score, which he says were very much in his thoughts as he first sketched out this piece:

Movement I: Nocturnal Sounds

*"Odo risonanze effimere, oblió di piena note nell'acqua stellate."*

—Quasimodo

("I hear ephemeral echoes, oblivion of full night in the starred water")

Movement III: The Advent

*"Le silence éternel des espaces infinis méffraie"*

—Pascal

("The eternal silence of infinite space terrifies me")

Movement V: Music of the Starry Night

*"Und in den Nächten fällt die schwere Erde aus allen Sternen in die Einsamkeit, Wir alle fallen, Und doch ist Einer, welcher dieses Fallen unendlich sanft in seinen Händen hält."*

—Rilke

("And in the nights the heavy earth is falling from all the stars down into loneliness. We are all falling. And yet there is One who holds this falling endlessly gently in His hands.")

"Our greatest living composer."

—*New York Times*

Considered by many to be America's most influential living composer, Steve Reich is a pioneer of 'minimalist' music—a term which, like many other musical style designations, is borrowed from the visual arts and applies better to some of Reich's compositions than others. Reich borrows harmonies from jazz great John Coltrane and interlocking rhythms from the drums of Ghana. The result is music of long, sustained harmonies, clear driving pulse and ecstatic energy.

*Schoenberg gives a very honest musical portrayal of his times. I salute him—but I don't want to write like him. Stockhausen, Berio, and Boulez were portraying in very honest terms what it was like to pick up the pieces of a bombed-out continent after World War II. But for some American in 1948 or 1958 or 1968—in the real context of tail fins, Chuck Berry, and millions of burgers sold—to pretend that instead we're really going to have the dark-brown Angst of Vienna is a lie, a musical lie...*

—Steve Reich

*Sextet* was commissioned by Laura Dean Dancers and Musicians and by the French Government for the percussion ensemble Nexus. The five movements, which go directly from one into the next, are arranged in an 'arch form': A, B, C, B, A. The first and last movements consist of fast, rhythmic music; calm, groovy, sinewy interlocking lines on the keyboards characterize the second and fourth movements; and the third movement is both the slowest and the most visceral.

Many trademarks of Reich's style figure prominently in this piece. Rhythmic and melodic patterns are gradually built up one player at a time. These repetitive patterns are often played in a musical canon, where two or more players repeat the same pattern, but with each player beginning their pattern on a different beat, creating a multi-layered musical echo-effect. Reich also manipulates the listener's perception of the pulse through emphasis of different rhythmic groupings. At many points in the piece, for instance, a listener can tap his or her foot every two notes, every three notes, or every four notes and though each speed of toe-tapping feels quite different, each speed also fits perfectly with the music.

The result of these rhythmic games is a whirlwind of sound and ecstatic energy—a true masterpiece of the 20th century.

### THIRD COAST PERCUSSION

Hailed by *The New Yorker* as “vibrant” and “superb,” Third Coast Percussion explores and expands the extraordinary sonic possibilities of the percussion repertoire, delivering exciting performances for audiences of all kinds. Since its formation in 2005, Third Coast Percussion has gained international attention with concerts and recordings that meld the energy of rock music with the precision and nuance of classical chamber works.

These “hard-grooving” musicians (*New York Times*) have become known for groundbreaking collaborations across a wide range of disciplines, including concerts and residency projects with engineers at the University of Notre Dame, architects at the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture, astronomers at the Adler Planetarium and more. The ensemble enhances the performances it offers with cutting-edge new media, including free iPhone and iPad apps that allow audience members to create their own musical performances and take a deeper look at the music performed by Third Coast Percussion.

Third Coast Percussion is the ensemble-in-residence at the University of Notre Dame’s DeBartolo Performing Arts Center. They have the honor of being the first ensemble at the University of Notre Dame to create a permanent and progressive ensemble residency program at the center. The ensemble performs multiple recitals annually as part of the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center’s Presenting Series season. Third Coast Percussion assumed the position of ensemble-in-residence at Notre Dame in 2013.

The ensemble champions the awe-inspiring music of John Cage, Steve Reich, George Crumb, Arvo Pärt, Gérard Grisey, Philippe Manoury, Wolfgang Rihm, Louis Andriessen, Toru Takemitsu and Tan Dun, among others. Third Coast has also commissioned and performed world premieres by many of today’s leading composers, including Augusta Read Thomas, Timothy Andres, Glenn Kotche, David T. Little, Marcos Balter, Ted Hearne and ensemble member David Skidmore.

Third Coast’s recent and upcoming concerts and residencies include the University of Chicago Presents, Atlas Performing Arts Center (Washington, D.C.), Ensemble Music Society of Indianapolis, the Museum of Modern Art (New York), the Austin Chamber Music Festival, Millennium Park “Loops and Variations,” the Kennedy Center’s Millennium Stage, and more. Third Coast has introduced percussion to chamber music audiences in Texas, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Illinois, securing invitations to return to many of these series.

Third Coast’s passion for community outreach includes a wide range of residency offerings while on tour, in addition to a long-term residency with the Davis Square Park Community Band on Chicago’s South Side. In addition to its national performances, Third Coast Percussion’s hometown presence includes an annual Chicago series, with

four to five concerts in locations around the city. The ensemble has collaborated in concert with acclaimed ensembles Eighth Blackbird, Signal and the Garth Newel Piano Quartet, pianists Amy Briggs and Lisa Moore, cellists Nicholas Photinos and Tobias Werner, flautist Tim Munro, vocalist Ted Hearne, and video artists Luftwerk.

The members of Third Coast Percussion—Sean Connors, Robert Dillon, Peter Martin and David Skidmore—hold degrees in music performance from Northwestern University, the Yale School of Music, the Eastman School of Music, the New England Conservatory and Rutgers University. Third Coast Percussion performs exclusively with Pearl/Adams Musical Instruments, Zildjian Cymbals, Remo Drumheads and Vic Firth sticks and mallets.

## DANIEL SCHLOSBERG

Daniel Schlosberg has been described as an “expert pianist” (*Boston Globe*), and his performances have been praised for their “intellect and passion” (*Washington Post*). As a collaborative pianist, Tim Smith of the *Baltimore Sun* wrote: “Daniel Schlosberg was a model accompanist, bringing out the remarkable richness of the piano writing.”

Mr. Schlosberg recently was a featured soloist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in subscription performances of Messiaen’s “Trois Petites Liturgies,” for which he garnered critical praise. He can be heard in recording on Stephen Andrew Taylor’s “Quark Shadows” (Albany) with Masumi Rostad, viola (Pacifica Quartet), Oto Carillo, horn (Chicago Symphony) and bassist Michael Cameron. This year saw the release of “Crackpot Hymnal” (Bridge), where he was the soloist in composer Dmitri Tymoczko’s piano concerto. He also recently released his solo debut, “Child’s Play” (Centaur), featuring works by Schumann, Pärt, Lachenmann and Debussy.

In past seasons, Mr. Schlosberg has given solo and chamber music recitals at Bargemusic (Brooklyn), Austrian Cultural Forum (New York City), Sundays Live (Los Angeles), Dame Myra Hess Series (Chicago), Phillips Collection, and at the embassies of Romania, Israel, Austria and Germany in Washington, D.C. He appears frequently on radio stations nationwide.

He is an avid proponent of new music and has collaborated with Third Coast Percussion, the International Contemporary Ensemble, Ensemble Dal Niente, Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, pianist Amy Briggs and the University of Illinois New Music Ensemble. In 2009, he gave the U.S. premiere of renowned composer Kaija Saariaho’s “Calices” with violinist Austin Wulliman.

Another particular interest is song accompaniment, and Schlosberg has a long-standing duo with the baritone Ryan de Ryke. In 2007, he curated and performed in a series of six concerts nationwide exploring the early chamber music and lieder of Erich Wolfgang Korngold, and each October he directs and performs in the Baltimore Lieder Weekend.

On harpsichord, he has participated in the world premiere of Anna Clyne’s “Of Sudden

Shut" on MusicNOW, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's new music series, played the continuo/recit for *Le Nozze di Figaro* for Opera Notre Dame, and performed excerpts from Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons" with Itzhak Perlman at Carnegie Hall (Zankel).

He has served as a staff accompanist for two prominent music festivals: the Perlman Music Program (Shelter Island, NY, and Sarasota, Fla.), and for the vocal program of the Steans Music Institute at Ravinia. In the summer of 2000, Mr. Schlosberg held the Leonard Bernstein Fellowship in Piano at Tanglewood. The same summer, he took part in a special collaboration with the Paul Taylor Dance Company at the Jacob's Pillow Festival in performances of solo Debussy. He also appears frequently with ensembleND.

Mr. Schlosberg grew up in Los Angeles, and studied at the Peabody Conservatory (B.M., M.M.) with Ann Schein and at Stony Brook University (DMA) with Gilbert Kalish. He also took supplementary courses in song accompaniment on full scholarship at the Britten Pears Institute (Aldeburgh) and the Franz Schubert Institut (Baden). He also holds a B.A. in history from Johns Hopkins University, where he graduated with highest honors.

He has been artist-in-residence in the music department at the University of Notre Dame since 2005.

## AMY BRIGGS

Amy Briggs has established herself as a leading interpreter of the music of living composers, while also bringing a fresh perspective to music of the past. She recorded three volumes of David Rakowski's Piano Etudes on Bridge Records to much critical acclaim, and will record a fourth volume in June 2014. Based in Chicago, she is a featured soloist and chamber musician on the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's MusicNOW series, where she has worked with composers such as Pierre Boulez, Oliver Knussen, David Lang, Tania Léon, Esa-Pekka Salonen and Augusta Read Thomas. In the 2005-06 season, she played the world premiere of Knussen's *A Fragment from Ophelia's Last Dance* for solo piano. She was awarded a stipend prize at the 2000 Darmstadt Internationale Fereinkurse für Neue Musik.

The *Chicago Tribune* has called "extraordinary" Briggs's "mastery of what lay on the dense, printed page and beyond," and the *Chicago SunTimes* called her a "ferociously talented pianist." *Classics Today* said of volume one of the Rakowski Etudes project, Briggs "does a splendid job projecting the music's wit, and her unflappable virtuosity makes even the densest writing sound effortless... a marvelous disc that piano fanciers should snap up without hesitation." In addition, the *New York Times* praised her 2008 Lincoln Center performance of Berio's *Sequenza* for Piano for its 'livewire intensity.' Amy Briggs has appeared as a soloist and chamber musician in the United States, Europe, Asia and Africa. In 1993, she was selected by the United States Information Agency to tour Africa and South Asia as a United States Artistic Ambassador. Her highly acclaimed concerts combined traditional repertoire with contemporary American music.

Today, her recital programs connect composers from all eras and nationalities. She has performed with the Callisto Ensemble, the Chicago Contemporary Players, Chicago Pro Musica, the Chicago Chamber Musicians, Klang and the Emyrean Ensemble, and as an extra keyboardist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. She has also been a prize winner in the Joanna Hodges International Piano Competition and the Frinna Awerbuch International Piano Competition.

Amy Briggs has appeared as soloist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Chamber Orchestra, New Hampshire Philharmonic and the Symphony Orchestra of Sri Lanka, among others, and her live and recorded performances have been featured on radio stations around the United States and Europe. Recent performances include the New York Philharmonic's Day of Berio in Lincoln Center, solo and chamber performances with Grammy award-winning eighth blackbird at the 2009 Ojai Festival in California, and performances with Ursula Oppens and the Mark Morris Dance Company in Chicago, Toronto, Washington D.C. and Auckland, New Zealand. Recently released recordings include a collection of solo piano tangos from the 20th and 21st centuries for Parma Records, a disc of multi-piano works of Edgar Varèse and Morton Feldman for Wergo, and performances on a Conlon Nancarrow retrospective on Wergo called *As Fast As Possible*. Upcoming engagements include the world premiere and recording of David Rakowski's new piano concerto (written for Amy) in January 2014 with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, concerts with pianist Daniel Schlosberg and Third Coast Percussion in Indiana and Chicago, and the recording of volume four of David Rakowski etudes in June 2014. Ms. Briggs earned her doctor of music degree at Northwestern University, where she studied with Ursula Oppens. She was appointed director of chamber music and lecturer in music at the University of Chicago in 2009. Ms. Briggs is a Steinway artist.

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