

MICROFEST 2000

NEW MUSIC AND VIDEO

MAY 5, 2000 8:00 PM
Lyman Hall, Pomona College, Claremont

— P R O G R A M —

Part I: Live performances

"Palace Music" from <i>Young Caesar</i>	Lou Harrison
John Schneider — guitar	
<i>Three Themes</i>	Kraig Grady
Kraig Grady — meta-slendro vibraphone	
<i>Lament</i>	John Schneider
John Schneider — guitar	
A Noiseless Patient Spider	Joe Monzo
Joe Monzo — intoned voice	

— I N T E R M I S S I O N —

Part II: Microtonal Film Scores

<i>Openings</i>	Scores by Stephen James Taylor
<i>Windsong</i>	Score by Harry Partch
Excerpts from Three Films of James Broughton	Scores by Lou Harrison
Static Cling	Bill Alves

Be sure to attend the other concerts in the MicroFest 2000 series: Sunday, May 9, 7:30 PM at Pierce College, Woodland Hills; Friday May 12, 8:00 PM Neighborhood Church, Pasadena; Sunday May 14, 7:00 PM Brand Library and Arts Center, Glendale.

Special thanks to the Garrett Fund of Harvey Mudd College Department of Humanities and Social Sciences.
Thanks also to Pomona College Department of Music, Joseph Brennan, Joel Singer.

Palace Music. Lou Harrison's "Palace Music" was originally written for solo harp to accompany scene IX of his puppet play *Young Caesar* (1971/88), transcribed here by the performer.

Lou Harrison. Born in Portland in 1917, Lou Harrison is now recognized as one of the greatest living American composers. He studied with the great composers Henry Cowell (who ignited his interest in music of other cultures and new American music) and Arnold Schoenberg. Harrison pioneered the use of "found" instruments and staged the first percussion concerts with John Cage in 1930s San Francisco. In 1940s New York, Harrison became a protégé of composer/critic Virgil Thomson, and conducted the 1946 premiere of Charles Ives' Third Symphony, which won Ives the Pulitzer Prize. In the 1950s, Harrison pioneered the use of just intonation, and he has continued to be in the forefront of the use of alternate tunings. With his partner, Bill Colvig, he built the first American gamelan and as a teacher, performer and composer helped popularize this Indonesian music in the West. As classical music has embraced melody and world music influences, Harrison's music has become justly popular and is available on dozens of CDs. Harrison has worked with distinguished choreographers from Martha Graham to Mark Morris, and his music has been performed by major symphony orchestras and soloists such as Keith Jarrett, Yo Yo Ma, and the Kronos Quartet.

John Schneider is an internationally recognized guitarist, composer, author and broadcaster whose weekly television and radio programs have brought the sound of the guitar into millions of homes for the past fifteen years. He holds a Ph.D. in Physics and Music from the University of Wales, music degrees from the University of California and the Royal College of Music [London], and is past President of the Guitar Foundation of America. For the past two decades, the artist has performed almost exclusively on the Well-Tempered Guitar which uses different patterns of fretting according to the key, or the tuning system required. A specialist in contemporary music, Schneider's *The Contemporary Guitar* (University of California Press) has become the standard text in the field. He has performed in Europe, Japan and throughout North America, and has been featured soloist at New Music America, and on NPR's "Performance Today" and PRI's "New Sounds". Most recently he has been featured in New York's American Festival of Microtonal Music, Denver's Microstock '95 and '97, California's annual Mozart Festival, the Da Camera Society's Chamber Music in Historical Sites, and Southwest Chamber Music's Radical P.A.S.T. He works as a music Professor at Pierce College in Los Angeles, is music critic for Soundboard magazine, and is the artistic director of MicroFest.

John Schneider's recording of the guitar music of Lou Harrison was released by Etcetera Records [Holland] in 1990, and his recording *Just West Coast* [Bridge Records BCD 9071] was chosen "CD of the Year" by CD Review in 1994. In 1995, his chamber trio *Just Strings* was invited by the Japanese Embassy to present a series of lectures and concerts throughout Japan under the auspices of the prestigious Interlink Festival which annually selects one American ensemble to represent new trends in American Music. The group's latest CD *Sasha Matson: Range of Light* was released by New Albion Records in 1997.

Three Themes. Out of the music for the shadow play *Black Eye Meru*, emerged this condensation of musical events for solo meta-slendro vibraphone. We hear the "The Gate to the Garden of Desire," "A Pleading to the Great Stone Face," and "A Lake Laments its Departed Spirit." In between we have their dissolutions and formations as if they are all of the same subject. Musically the piece exploits "pentatonic" sonorities that produce beat and wave patterns that vary according to the environment in which it is performed. Each performance results in an unfolding of the music in a wholly unique way.

Kraig Grady. While still in his teens, Kraig Grady realized he had an overwhelming urge to be a composer. After studies with Nicholas Slonimsky, Dean Drummond, Dorence Stalvey (all briefly) and Byong-Kon Kim (longer), he produced his earliest compositions. Since meeting Erv Wilson in 1975, he has composed and performed in alternative tunings of Wilson's. In the 80's Kraig Grady (along with Keith Barefoot) became one of the first to revive the combination of live music with silent film. He was responsible for the films as well as the music. During this period he took part in the LA Philharmonic's American Music Weekend as well as New Music America. In 1990 with the opera *War and Pieces*, film retreated to a background for live performers. Soon afterwards occurred his first exposure to the music of Anaphoria Island, where he took up residence on and off for a period of three years. On his return he found himself asked to act as a liaison between Anaphoria and North America. In this role he has produced numerous solo and ensemble works and three shadow plays, *Ten Black Eye I & II*, and the most recent *Black Eye Meru*.

Lament. The composition of this piece fulfilled an old aspiration of mine to write solo guitar music of several parts with tightly chromatic voice-leading and a constantly developing thematic structure. Though not strictly programmatic, the music does describe the tension and separateness of two seemingly irreconcilable forces (two perfect fifths, G#/D# and C/G) which, through a process of gradual transformation, finally reach resolution and eventual unity. The piece uses the 'Pythagorean' circle of pure fifths (Bb-D#), which traditionally produces unusually harsh major thirds, making tonal resolution virtually impossible - except for one delicious anomaly, which closes the piece.

"A Noiseless Patient Spider," by Walt Whitman, has been my favorite poem ever since I read it in 1983. In February 1999, Johnny Reinhard invited me to perform a piece on Microthon!, the day-long concert that was to be a part of the 1999 American Festival of Microtonal Music, and I jumped at the chance to compose a musical setting of the Whitman poem. The poem is in 2 verses, each of 5 lines. The piece is in five sections:

1. Introduction
2. A Noiseless Patient Spider (verse 1 of the poem)
3. Weaving (transition to part 4)
4. Meditation
5. You, O My Soul (verse 2 of the poem)

The performance includes a poster of a spider and its web, which may be interpreted as a stylized representation of the complicated lattice diagram of the pitches in parts 1, 2, 3, and 5, on one side of the stage; and a poster of a lattice diagram of the rectangular and symmetrical 13-tone 5-limit just intonation system used in part 4, on the other side. The poem is intoned as poetic speech, and the performer should personify a combination of Walt Whitman and myself. The themes portraying the poet's observance of the spider's diligence in spinning its web, in parts 1, 2, 3, and 5, are tuned in a combination of 12-tone equal temperament and just intonation. Parts 1 and 2, setting the first verse, are intended to convey the "patience" of the spider in the initial stages of weaving the web, with interspersed sonic images of its spatial isolation, while Part 3 portrays the spider's mounting industriousness as it completes the web.

Whitman's use of "patient" at the beginning of the first verse and "speeding" at the end of it reflects precisely the stages of a spider's activity, and covers the passage of about an hour — the length of time it takes for a spider to build its web. Since he turns to self-examination in the next verse, it seemed that a long contemplative phase would fit the piece well. The "Meditation," where the poet's thoughts turn inward, is tuned to the symmetrical 5-limit system centered on A portrayed on the prime-factor lattice diagram — one kind of ultimate rational understanding of musical harmony — with a very soft drone on a low A. The entire section uses only three main instrumental parts which each hold a pitch for six very slow beats as they move around the lattice. Part 5, which presents the 2nd and final verse of the poem, has the musical function of a recapitulation of the gestures in Parts 1, 2, and 3, but also including the entire Meditation section within it. The piece ends with an allusion to the final part of the Introduction, finishing off the metaphor equating the poet's soul with the spider's activity.

Joe Monzo

Born January 5, 1962 in Philadelphia.

Studied clarinet, recorder, oboe, bassoon, theory

Graduated Ocean City High School (NJ) 1979.

Attended Manhattan School of Music (NY) for two years, majoring in music composition with Elias Tanenbaum.

Spent a trippy summer in Venice Beach in 1981.

Played keyboard in rock bands Meanstreak and Midnight Riders in Williamstown NJ in early 1980s.

Became interested in microtonal music through Partch's book *Genesis of a Music* in 1982.

Another trippy summer in Wildwood NJ 1983.

Licensed as a craps dealer (NJ) 1985.

Became a real-estate appraiser (NJ) 1985.

Bought a house in Philadelphia 1990; working on microtonal software.

Played keyboard in Top-40 band One Night Affair in early 1990s.

Wrote first draft of *JustMusic: A New Harmony* 1994-5.

Started web site and online Tuning Dictionary 1998.

Spent summer in Phoenix then moved to San Diego 1998.

Moved back to Philly 1998 and back to San Diego 2000.
Currently associated with Sonic Arts (Jonathan Glasier).

Openings is a compilation of opening scenes from 4 of the films I've scored using microtonal music. The first selection is from *Olivia's Story*, a short film made by Dai Sil Kim-Gibson about the relationship between a young Korean woman and her grandmother, a survivor of the Korean War. The scale used was 12-tone Pythagorean (a chain of perfect fifths). The second excerpt is from *The Giving*, a film written and directed by Eames Demetrios. Shot all in black and white, this is a film about a banker who becomes so obsessed with the homeless problem that he ends up homeless himself. The picture is scored almost entirely with Erv Wilson's Hebdomekontany, which consists of combination product sets derived from the master set of 1-3-5-7-9-11-13-15. This produces a matrix of 70 tonal identities (58 discrete pitches per octave). The third film is Charles Burnett's *The Final Insult*, which was scored using a scale based on the fibonacci series (1,2,3,5,8 etc.) carried out to the first 23 places. The last film is another Eames Demetrios' *The Biology of Limbo*, in which he employs many innovative film techniques in the opening credits. This picture was scored using another Erv Wilson scale comprised of a chain of 2 different sized neutral thirds carried out to 17 places.

Stephen James Taylor has a unique musical identity. His style represents a blend of classical, rock, blues, gospel, African, and avant garde. His scores include most of Charles Burnett's films, including the film version of August Wilson's *The Piano Lesson* (1995) and the TV series *I'll Fly Away* (1993, for which he received an Emmy nomination). Other recent credits include the 1998 Warner Brothers feature, *Why Do Fools Fall In Love* (featuring occasional use of 23 tone fibonacci scale), the 1999 cable movie *Passing Glory*, and the PBS movie *Brother Future* (1991), for which he also received an Emmy nomination. His most recent feature score is for *Blessed Art Thou*, which screened in the competition at the Sundance Festival in 2000. The score features elaborate vocal writing and microtonal harmony using a Pythagorean 17 tone scale. He has done a great deal of work in animation, providing the underscore and main title for Disney's *Mickey Mouseworks* and scores for episodes of Steven Spielberg's *Tiny Toon Adventures* and Disney's *Raw Toonage* (which also received an Emmy nomination). His scores for *The Lion King's Timon and Pumbaa* included a 7-tone scale based on balafon tunings from Mozambique, and one episode's score was nominated for a Daytime Emmy.

After graduating from Stanford University in 1976 with a B.A. in music, he studied composition for four years with Henri Lazarof, professor of music at UCLA. Taylor's second chamber symphony was commissioned and premiered by the Pasadena Chamber Orchestra in 1983. It was later performed by the Detroit Symphony in 1990. His various chamber works have been performed throughout the country. In 1996 he was commissioned to write music for Opening Ceremonies of the Olympics and was one of the conductors of the Atlanta Symphony for that occasion. At present he is developing his skills as a fretless guitar player. His ongoing projects include co-writing and producing songs with his wife Mary Lou, for a sequel to their 1991 children's album, *Little Binky Baker*, as well as working on a microtonal pop album and recording with his experimental women's vocal group called Brides of The Wind. The latter group can be heard on many of his scores.

Excerpts from Three Films of James Broughton. It is unfortunate that Lou Harrison's beautiful film scores are rarely heard. Harrison was good friends with experimental filmmaker James Broughton and over the years composed original scores for three of his films. *Nuptiae* (1968) is Broughton's meditation on the mystery of marriage, and Harrison's score represents this yin and yang musically through the use of instruments from the East and West, the pairing of instruments, and the use of different modes. The score includes violin, harp, suling (a Javanese bamboo flute), and gongs from a Filipino kulintang ensemble, all played by Harrison, Richard Dee, and Bill Colvig. *Devotions* (1983) is a moving portrait of commitment and love among gay men, including Lou Harrison and his partner Bill Colvig (who passed away this past March). Harrison and Colvig appear in the film, along with composer and critic Virgil Thomson, playing duets on suling. *Scattered Remains* (1988) is a kind of autobiographical scrapbook of Broughton, accompanied by entrancing ostinatos on harpsichord, flute, metallophone, and drum that evoke the change and common themes on different levels that ran throughout Broughton's life. An adaptation of this score has been separately published by Harrison under the title *Air for the Poet*.

James Broughton was a poet, playwright, and a pioneer in American experimental film. He was born 1913 in Modesto, California and graduated from Stanford University in 1936. In the 1950s, Broughton was

a fixture in the San Francisco beat arts scene, and his films brought him wide recognition, including a special jury prize at the 1954 Cannes Film Festival. His films from the 1960s and 70s are among his most famous, including *The Bed* (1968), *Dreamwood* (1972), and *Testament* (1974). In 1989 the American Film Institute presented a lifetime achievement award to him. James Broughton passed away in 1999.

Windsong. In 1957, Harry Partch met the experimental filmmaker Madeline Tourtelot, and they immediately began to explore the possibility of collaboration. Tourtelot had by that time completed some short "film poems" on nature themes and some shots of herself and a sculptor friend running across the dunes of Lake Michigan. When Partch saw these unedited shots, he was immediately reminded of the Greek legend of Daphne and Apollo, and Tourtelot agreed to turn the final film into an evocation of that myth. In a later lecture, Partch described the story thus: "In ancient myth, Cupid shot arrows like a juvenile delinquent, seemingly intent on creating even more erotic havoc than the race was already heir to. Anyway, Apollo got an arrow, but Daphne didn't. And she turned into a green laurel tree in order to avoid Apollo's assault. In the contemporary version, when assault threatens, Daphne does not turn into a live tree, but into a gnarled and weathered dead tree at the top of a Michigan sand dune." To Partch, the choice of the dead tree was symbolic of contemporary American sexual ethic, which was also reflected in the arid starkness of the music. Partch's score is tightly integrated with the film, which was edited in conjunction with the composition of the score. The music uses many of the instruments that Partch had built and are all performed by him through overdubbing on tape, including the Boo, Diamond Marimba, and Bass Marimba (all associated with Apollo's pursuit, as is the tonality based on the 16/9 pitch), the Adapted Viola, Harmonic Canon, and Kithara (all associated with Daphne, as is the 3/2 pitch center), and the Chromelodeon. Later, Partch renamed the score *Daphne of the Dunes*. [Much of this information comes from Bob Gilmore's fine book, *Harry Partch, a Biography*, Yale University Press, 1998.]

Harry Partch was a revolutionary composer, instrument-maker, and dramatist whose book, *Genesis of a Music*, blazed a path for composers of alternate tunings in the twentieth century. Born to former Chinese missionaries in 1901, Partch grew up in rural Arizona amidst Asian culture and the American West. In 1920 he enrolled in music at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, but soon left in disgust at the stifling academicism. He earned a living at odd jobs, learning instead through the public library and his good ear. He came to the remarkable conclusion that European music had followed the wrong path since the time of the classical Greeks, divorcing melodic expression from the tones of the spoken voice, performance from its powerful ritual roots, and harmony from the natural beauty of the harmonic series. To reintroduce the harmonic series, or just intonation, to music, he began to build or adapt his own instruments so that they could play in just scales that used up to 43 tones per octave. Despite a 1934 Carnegie grant to further his research, his ideas were almost entirely ignored by the musical establishment, and, during the Great Depression, Partch was often a hobo. His experiences riding the rails during this time he later memorialized in pieces such as *Barstow* (1941-42) and *U.S. Highball* (1943). However, Partch's real voice lay in drama and what he saw as a resurrection of the power of ancient ritual and classical tragedy in such works as *King Oedipus* (1951), *The Bewitched* (1955), *Revelation at the Courthouse Park* (1960), and *Delusion of the Fury* (1965-66). Some of these works were performed through temporary residencies Partch had at the University of Illinois, the University of Wisconsin, UCLA, and San Diego State, but for the most part Partch continued an itinerant life, his music and ideas largely unaccepted by the musical establishment until his death in 1974. Though some experimental musicians admired the recordings that Partch had released on his Gate 5 label in the 1960s and 70s, his legacy as a theorist and composer in just intonation has continued to grow as his works are rerecorded and *Genesis of a Music* reaches a new generation of composers.

Static Cling (2000). I have been interested in the resonant patterns that emerge from the chaos of our world, in the same way in which you can start to see interesting patterns and shapes in the static screens of interstation tuning. In this piece, I have used a computer to transform the sounds of the nightly ritual chaos of local news broadcasts into abstract timbres and static images into patterns of visual resonance (inspired by my association with computer animation pioneer John Whitney, Sr.). In both cases, the patterns are based on harmonic proportions, known in musical tuning as just intonation. The computer allows me to create tunings which are not fixed, but vary according to the musical context. With this "free style" just intonation, I was able to create various tunings based on the harmonic and sub-harmonic series, contrasted in ways that reflect the transformation of the images. *Static Cling* was created on the Macintosh with Csound computer music language and POVray computer animation language.

Bill Alves is a composer based in California who has written extensively for acoustic and electronic instruments as well as mixed media, including the integration of music and computer video, robot choreography, and web art. His works have been presented at many festivals, radio and television shows, and other venues in the USA, Europe, and Asia. A CD of his computer music, *The Terrain of Possibilities* is available on the EMF label, and works of his are included on other recordings, including *tuning@earthamills.edu* and *ICMC 1999*. In 1993-94 he was a Fulbright Senior Scholar Fellow in Indonesia, a culture whose music has especially influenced his writing. He currently teaches at Harvey Mudd College in Claremont, California, where his courses include Computer Music, World Music, and The Harmony of Sound and Light.