Roulette and the SoundArt Foundation present

The Flexible Orchestra 2011

@ Roulette in Brooklyn, November 9th, 2011 performs:

**Adagietto-ed** - Daniel Goode

**Second Moon** - Kamala Sankaram

**Accordingly** - Barbara Benary

Intermission

**Suite for Accordion and Flexible Orchestra** – Guy Klucevsek

Flexible Orchestra 2011, performers

Accordions:

Art Bailey

Guy Klucevsek

Nathan Koci

Robert McMahan

Kamala Sankaram

Melissa Tong – violin

Kate Dillingham – cello

Kevin Ray – contrabass

Andrew Bolotowsky– flute

Barbara Merjan – percussion

Kamala Sankaram - soprano

Tara Simoncic – conductor

**Adagietto-ed**

I composed *Adagietto-ed* for the Flexible Orchestra in 2011, which is the 100th year after the death of Gustav Mahler, whose “Adagietto” from the 5th Symphony forms the basis of my piece. But any year would be a good one to express a continuing interest in his music and ideas. For one thing, he used unusual instruments from non-classical sources: cow bells, sleigh bells, mandolin, huge hammer. So accordions as the basis for the Flexible Orchestra in 2010 and 2011, simply extends an idea of unusual instruments for a “classical orchestra.” The rest of the orchestra contains, this year, three strings, flute, and vibraphone.

**Daniel Goode** is founder and artistic director of the Flexible Orchestra, co-director of the DownTown Ensemble (begun 1983), and a founding member of Gamelan Son of Lion (in 1976).

**The Flexible Orchestra** **principles:**

1. It should sound like an orchestra. That means at least one—probably only one—section of multiples of a single instrumental type. And like an orchestra there are also different timbres from a few other instruments used both for contrast and emphasis.
2. It should have flexible orchestration, meaning it should change its section of multiples and the contrasting group of instruments every so often, let’s say every year or two, not every two hundred years (and more) as with the official Western orchestra.
3. It must be economical, that is, accomplish its sound concept at a reasonable cost. So if the Flexible Orchestra caps at fifteen players, there might be twelve for the section of multiples and three for the contrasting group; or perhaps eleven and four, etc.
4. Such a type of orchestra could spring up anywhere and make use of the instrumental strengths of a community or geographical area. Let’s say San Francisco proper has a surfeit of double basses, while the Peninsula has lots of violas… Cincinnati may have many trumpets. Those could be the multiples in each of these communities that make up cores of flexible orchestras in each place. [DG]

The Flexible Orchestra’s first concert was in April 2004 with an ensemble of twelve cellos, flute, clarinet, and trombone.

**Accordingly**

One day, while browsing the internet for poems or texts about the future, I came upon these words by Stephen Roxborough, a poet once a New Yorker, now based in Washington State. In addition to it's online publication on the site poemhunter.com, the poem is included in his recently published volume "this wonderful perpetual beautiful" (NeoPoiesis Press, 2011). And behold, there in the text were accordions! I thought at once of the Flexible Orchestra and proposed it as a match:

someday everyone will be wise in the future   
everyone will be sensible and forward thinking   
wear sensible shoes and act accordingly in the future   
wise action according to everyone will be the act   
of the future everyone will be futuristic someday   
according to god according to everyone and their shoes   
in the future everyone will be godless and free   
act accordingly in the future or else   
play accordions wisely in your godless future   
in the future accordions will play themselves   
  
act three in the future: there will be no accordions   
everyone will get nostalgic for the accordion god   
and act as if they were wise in the future   
everyone will be according to god   
in the future everyone will not act accordingly   
wisdom is unholy in the future   
to act accordingly is to stay out of trouble   
in the future jails will be bigger and much better   
everyone will need some punishment in the future   
thinking of accordions will be a crime   
  
lawrence welk is a revolutionary in the future   
to act accordingly is to act with wisdom   
everyone will act as one in the future   
accordingly for everyone to act   
in the future everyone will be discredited   
everyone must act now to avoid the future   
be wise and dont act accordingly   
play accordions in the street the future cannot   
wait for wisdom and forced accord   
one chord might save the future

**Barbara Benary** began composing and playing violin during her childhood on Long Island. Composition and new music came together for her during her years of teaching at Rutgers University. There, together with Daniel Goode and Philip Corner, she co-founded Gamelan Son of Lion, a new music collective and repertory ensemble based in New York City since 1976. A major focus of her career has been performing, presenting and writing new music for gamelan instruments, including over thirty concert pieces, two full-length operas with Javanese shadow puppets, and various dance scores for gamelan ensemble which have been performed by her ensemble and by other groups in the US and internationally. She also writes chamber music for conventional western instruments which have been performed by ensembles including Relache, Zeitgeist, the DownTown Ensemble and Flexible Orchestra.She has written theatre and dance scores for a number of companies including New York Shakespeare Festival, LaMaMa E.T.C., Balam Dance Theatre, Lenox Arts Theatre, Odyssey Theatre, Laura Pawel Dance Co. and Bali-Java Dance Theatre. Her pieces may be heard on two CDs: "Dragon Toes" by Gamelan Son of Lion (GSOL4), and "Sun on Snow," chamber pieces (New World Records 80646-2). **Second Moon** was inspired by the recent discovery of evidence that the Earth may have actually had two moons. The idea of a second moon has fascinated astronomers for centuries. This piece is inspired by each of these ideas of the second moon. The first section is Lilith, a moon that travels in the same path as our Moon, and can only be glimpsed from behind the larger Moon. The second is Cruithne, a satellite that travels in a spiral bound to the Moon’s orbit. The third is the second moon- a smaller moon that begins with a separate orbit, but gradually collides into and becomes a part of the larger Moon. In each section, the soloist (Guy) is the moon moving in relationship to the larger force of the orchestra. The middle section is written using Chandranandan, a raga created by Ali Akbar Khan to exemplify the bliss of the moon.

**Kamala Sankaram**. Praised for its “sheer power” (TimeOut NY), Kamala Sankaram’s music has been performed as part of American Opera Projects “Opera Grows in Brooklyn” series, at HERE Arts Center, the Stone, the Bang on a Can Summer Festival, the Santa Fe New Music Festival, the Lucerne Festival, the Kurba Center: Kiev, and the Flea Theater, among others.  She had the featured commission on the 2009 21C Liederabend, one of Time Out's 10 Best Classical Concerts. Her music for SOUNDING (directed by Kristin Marting) was praised as "gorgeous pop-rock interludes" (Time Out NY). She is a resident artist at HERE Arts Center and a 2011 Con Edison/Exploring the Metropolis Composer-in-Residence. As a performer, Kamala Sankaram has collaborated with and premiered pieces by the Philip Glass Ensemble, the Wooster Group, Anthony Braxton, John Zorn, eighth blackbird, Daniel Goode, Phil Kline, David T. Little, Corey Dargel, Taylor Ho Bynum, the Albany Symhony, and Anti-Social Music, among others.  She can be heard on recordings with Anthony Braxton (TRILLIUM E: Braxton House), Phil Kline (Around the World in a Daze: Starkland Records), End (The Sick Generation: Hymen Records), Death Comet Crew (Dominatrix), Anti-Social Music (The Future of Everything: Peacock Records), and the Albany Symphony Orchestra.

**SUITE FOR ACCORDION AND FLEXIBLE ORCHESTRA (2007-2011)**

The *Suite for Accordion and Flexible Orchestra* consists of five pieces I have written over the last four years. Nos. 2, 3, and 5 were born as accordion solos, but I have long wanted to adapt them for a larger ensemble.  And what better setting could an accordion player ask for than an orchestra which includes a **choir** of accordions?!  Nos. 1 and 4 are premieres. The Suite, as a whole, is *dedicated to Daniel Goode,* my dear friend for 30 years, and a longtime friend and champion of downtown music.

1. **The Asphalt Orchid** (2011)

*in memory of Astor Piazzolla*

One of my favorite pieces of music is the Aaron Copland *Clarinet Concerto* (1947-49). I love that Copland opens the concerto with  a slow movement, it is so counter-intuitive and audacious. Since I first heard that piece, I was determined that, if I ever had a chance to write a piece for solo accordion and orchestra, I would begin with a slow movement.

**2. Ratatatatouille** (2009)

*dedicated to Basque trikitixa (accordion) master, Kepa Junkera*

Kepa Junkera is one of the most astounding diatonic button players I have ever heard. One of his most brilliant techniques is rapid-fire repetitions of a single note; that, plus his beautiful melodic sense, is what inspired this piece.

**3. My Walk with Ligeti** (2007)

*in memory of György Ligeti*

We suffered a huge loss with the passing (in 2006) of this remarkable composer, perhaps the last of his kind. For me, no composer bridged the gap between the modern and post-modern world more graciously and beautifully than he. I have made no attempt to sound like Ligeti in this piece; if it is a portrait, it certainly says more about the artist than the subject. But what I love about Ligeti’s music is the teeming energy which exists even within seemingly-static passages, and that is the aspect of his music which I hope to capture here. I have based this entire piece on the most basic chord progression in western music, the V-I cadence; but within that simple harmonic movement, I have tried to create a microcosm of it’s own.

**4. Waltzing at the Edge of Dawn** (2011)

*inspired by the long line of amazing French musette players, from Jo Privat to Richard Galliano*

**5. Meet Me on the Midway** (2008)

*in memory of Johnny Vadnal*

This piece is part of a score I composed as live accompaniment to the classic George Méliès silent film, *A Trip to the Moon,* with writer/illustrator Brian Selznick reading the titles and providing sound effects. This music accompanies the final scene of the film, a welcome-home ceremony for the spaceship travelers. As I was writing this piece, Johnny Vadnal, Slovenian/American accordionist/band-leader, and one of the musical heroes of my youth, died. This is dedicated to his memory.

**Guy Klucevsek** has been composing for solo accordion, chamber ensembles, bands, modern dance, theatre and film, since 1972. From 1980-90 he served as composer, accordionist and music advisor with Relâche:  the Ensemble for Contemporary Music.

He has toured worldwide as a soloist and with his groups, Ain’t Nothin’ But a Polka Band, Accordion Tribe, The Bantam Orchestra, and duos with Alan Bern and Phillip Johnston.

He has composed for choreographers Karen Bamonte, Martha Bowers, David Dorfman, Anita Feldman, Helmut Gottschild, Victoria Marks, Bebe Miller and Stuart Pimsler.

His music/theatre scores include *Chinoiserie* and *Obon*, for Ping Chong & Company, *Hard Coal* for the Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble, *Industrious Angels* for Laurie McCants, C*irque Lili,* for French juggler/circus artist, Jérôme Thomas,and, for Dan Hurlin, *The Heart of the Andes,* a 2001 BESSIE-award-winning piece.

Films which use his music include *Family Secrets* (Pola Rapaport), *Accordion Tribe:  Music Travels* (Stefan Schwietert), *Cover Up* (Victoria Marks, for the BBC),  *Donau* (Goran Rebic) and *Mar Nero* (Federico Bondi).

  Klucevsek has released 21 recordings as soloist/leader/co-leader, on Winter & Winter,  Tzadik, CRI, Starkland, Intuition, Review Records and XI.

He is the recipient of a 2010 United States Artists Collins Fellowship.

**Tara Simoncic** holds the positions of Assistant Conductor of the Harrisburg Symphony Orchestra (PA) Music Director of the Harrisburg Symphony Youth Orchestras, Conductor of the Flexible Orchestra (NYC), and Assistant Conductor of the Greenwich Symphony Orchestra (CT).

Ms. Simoncic previously spent nine years with the Norwalk Youth Symphony (CT) where she was Music Director as well as Conductor of the Principal and Chamber Orchestras. Ms. Simoncic led NYS on international tours through Prague, Budapest, Salzburg, Vienna, and Italy. She performed with the Principal Orchestra at Carnegie Hall and Seiji Ozawa Hall at Tanglewood. With the Chamber Orchestra, which she founded, Ms. Simoncic led the orchestra in educational concerts, performing for elementary and middle schools in the Norwalk area.  Ms. Simoncic’s past conducting positions include assistant conductor with the Martha Graham Dance Company for performances and recordings at the New Haven International Festival of Arts and Ideas, Conductor of the Seminar Orchestra at the C.W. Post Music Festival, and Cover Conductor at The Manhattan School of Music.

As a guest conductor, Ms. Simoncic has worked with the Brooklyn and Bergen Philharmonic Orchestras, In 2011/12, Ms. Simoncic will guest conduct the Two Rivers Chamber Orchestra (WV) where she is a finalist for the position of Music Director and the Petrozavodsk Opera and Ballet Theatre Orchestra (Russia) in two performances of the Nutcracker. She will also conduct the Harrisburg Symphony Orchestra in performances of Carnival of the Animals with Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet, as well as the Motown Pops Concerts, and the Family Concert Series.

Most recently, Ms. Simoncic was one of seven conductors, out of 120 applicants, invited to study with Marin Alsop at the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music in California. In her spare time, Ms. Simoncic enjoys singing jazz and is an avid cyclist.

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