



*Editors' note: This profile of the Forum's **innova**® record label originally appeared in the North American pages of the November 2003 issue of the British classical music record magazine *Gramophone* and is reprinted here with permission. For more features on recordings of new and old music, visit www.gramophone.co.uk.*

Innovating for Innova:

Ken Smith takes a look inside the Minnesota-based Innova label

To those who preach, 'Think Globally, Act Locally,' innova Recordings would say rather the reverse. Just as its parent organization, the Minnesota Composers Forum, changed its name to the American Composers Forum without leaving home, so, too, has the St. Paul-based label broadened its base without losing its roots. As a result, at a time when similarly idealistic labels like Composers Recordings Inc. (CRI) have shuttered and the recording industry as whole has all but imploded, innova has thrived.

Created in 1975, two years after the Forum's founding, innova had done little other than document local composers who had won fellowships from the Minnesota-based McKnight Foundation. Local figures who gained national prominence through that program included Libby Larsen, Stephen Paulus and Paul Schoenfield. The main agent of change, by all accounts, was the arrival in the early 1990s of program director Philip Blackburn, a singer with a Ph.D. in composition who had stumbled into a job at the Forum.

"My advantage when I came to the position was my complete ignorance of the industry, which I made up for with missionary zeal," says Blackburn. "CDs were new and the prospect of making recordings was appealing. We had a distribution mechanism, such as it was, already in place, and since we were a service organization, I took this as one of our services."

It took others at the organization, though, some time to figure out what Blackburn was up to. After establishing a recording assistance program to loan start-up funding to artists, which would then be paid back through sales, Blackburn had shepherded more than 100 titles into production. "Only recently had we begun tabulating

the sheer number of recordings Philip had been putting out," admits Forum president and CEO John Nuechterlein, "and the catalog was far larger than we'd ever expected."

So, too, was its breadth, which ranged well beyond local composers to an award-winning collection of the works of American iconoclast Harry Partch, which Blackburn produced himself. The label now releases nearly 25 discs a year, divided roughly into contemporary composition, jazz and experimental music. Blackburn's championing of Partch will soon find a companion project in recordings of Henry Brant, another composer long ignored by the musical mainstream. innova's more recent push into jazz, however, came with the arrival a year ago of Chris Strouth, who came to the label as director of artists and product by way of the independent pop music world.

"A lot of what the major labels were doing came down to smoke and mirrors, which became clear when traditional retail started going out of business," says Strouth. "Thankfully, we're not in Manhattan, and we're not in it for the money. If a recording doesn't sell 5000 copies, that's okay, because our structure as an organization makes us less dependent on every sale. We can take as much risk as the artist wants."



"Northern Lights Over the Twin Cities" (1985) and "A Plan of the Air" (1975), two big spatial works by American composer Henry Brant (b. 1913) are included on a new two-CD innova release, the first in a projected series entitled The Henry Brant Collection.



*Quarter-tone works by American composer Mildred Couper (1887-1974) are included on a new innova CD entitled *If Tigers Were Clouds*. The new disc documents eight decades of experimental compositions by women and also includes works by Beth Custer, Annie Gosfield, Eleanor Hovda, Johanna M. Beyer, Yoko Ono and Pauline Oliveros.*

New Year, New Website

As of January 1, 2004, the Forum's website has a brand new look and plenty of helpful new features. We've anticipated some questions about these exciting new changes at www.composersforum.org, and here are the answers:

1. Why is the Forum redesigning and relaunching its website?

It was time for a fresh start, with new content and expanded navigation features developed with input from our members. We think the new website better reflects the Forum's mission, values, and way of doing things.

2. I'm a composer and a member - what's in it for me?

We thought you'd never ask! First off, we've added a new member's listing area, which allows you to create an informational page about yourself. If you already have your own website, you can set up a direct link from our site. The Members section of www.composersforum.org features an easy search function, as well: just type in a name, a phrase, or a keyword, and you'll get a list of all related documents and links. If you're looking for a composer workshop in Boston, for example, just type in "Boston" and "workshop." We're aiming to make it easy for you to provide and obtain information that can help advance your career.

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Sound Bites

Barnett opera awarded Van de Vate Prize

Carol Barnett, a charter member and former director of the Forum, has been awarded the 2003 Nancy Van de Vate International Composition Prize for Opera. The award-winning work is Barnett's 68-minute opera "Snow," with a libretto by its composer based on a short story by Konstantin Paustovsky. The opera is set in one act and five scenes and is scored for six singers and chamber ensemble of eight players. The prize is \$1000 and publication of the winning work.

Composer Carol Barnett.



Barnett, a flutist as well as composer, is a graduate of the University of Minnesota, where she studied with Dominick Argento, Paul Fetler, and Bernhard Weiser. Her works have been performed by the Minnesota Orchestra, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Gregg Smith Singers, the Harvard Glee Club, the Womens' Philharmonic, the Dale Warland Singers, and the Ankor Children's Choir of Jerusalem, Israel, among others. She was composer-in-residence with the Dale Warland Singers from 1992 to 2001, and currently teaches at Augsburg College in Minneapolis.

The Nancy Van de Vate Prize, first awarded in 1996 for orchestral works, is now an annual international competition for operas written by women of any age or nationality. The competition is administered by music publishers Vienna Masterworks (BMI) and Vienna Master Composers (ASCAP). The prize is intended to recognize the difficulty women composers have in finding recognition for their operas and to encourage public production of their works worldwide.

For the 2003 competition, 33 entries were received from four continents and 11 countries: Australia, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, Ukraine, and the USA. Special commendations were awarded to five other composers for their 2003 competition submissions: **Susan Hulsman Bingham** (New Haven, Conn.) for two operas: "Old Befana" and "Rabbi Nachman's Chair"; **Ekaterina Karamessini** (Athens, Greece) for "The Little Prince"; **Elaine Fine** (Charleston, Ill.) for "The Snow Queen"; **Wendy Griffiths** (New York, N.Y.) for "The Quiet American"; and **Gladys Smuckler Moskowitz** (Woodbourne, N.Y.) for "The Fountain of Youth." All scores and sound materials submitted to the competition will become a part of the permanent collection of the International Library of Contemporary Music in Paris.

For more information on the Nancy Van de Vate International Prize for Opera, visit <http://www.xs4all.nl/~gdv/vmm/competition.htm> ♦

Innovating for Innova...

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That's because at innova, artists provide funding for both production and marketing costs. innova is limited strictly to members of the Forum, giving the label a preponderance of Minnesota artists, although many others have joined on the basis of a specific project. While they draw parallels to self-publishing in the book world, Blackburn and Strouth are also at pains to dispel the notion of innova as a vanity label. "We do put out a lot of stuff from the Twin Cities," Strouth admits, "but we'd probably do the same if the music had

come out of Hackensack. Our rule is that if we wouldn't buy it, we won't put it out."

"We do have quality control," says Blackburn. "Our composers generally get financing for projects, but our goal is for them to reach self sufficiency, and we are responsive to members who want to have their say in the project."

As a former door-to-door encyclopedia salesman, Blackburn knows the legwork involved in connecting innova artists with their audiences. As a recording industry veteran, Strouth knows how shorter manufacturing

runs can help achieve that goal more profitably. "We have certain titles that we call innova's 'Short-Run,'" says Strouth. "Only a segment of our audience is going to completely adore any one we thing we do, and it's most cost effective to target them specifically – the artist can make three times what they would with a bigger run."

Most innova recordings, he adds, break even after about 600 copies, after which the profits on sales go entirely to the artist. The creators also control ownership of the material, so there is no fear of recordings winding up deep, and untouchable, in a corporate vault.

While in the composed realm innova has relied on artists coming to them, the label's jazz side has been active in courting musicians. "Part of the fun of running a label is calling all your friends," Strouth says. "After a while, whether through

word of mouth or by seeing what we do, a lot of people have found us. There are whole new currents of experimental jazz which have no other outlets right now."

Particularly with the death of CRI, there will be no dearth of composers in search of a cooperative working model like innova. And likewise, there are plenty of artists whose music has not yet been recorded. Blackburn cites but two projects on the innova horizon, music of the composer Eleanor Hovda and the early Fluxus works of Yoko Ono. "You can see a sort of innova family tree," he says. "Our artists cover a wide range, but they all share a quality of searching and exploration no matter what their genre. There's no proper canon yet for the 21st century, but I think that is very close to what's happening here at the ground level. Right now, we're not too worried about definitions. If it's good for our artists to be here, then it's good for us to have them." ♦

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The innova production and distribution team (left to right): Chris Strouth, Philip Blackburn and Chris Campbell.

Listening Locally, Playing Globally

Other labels may appear, morph, merge and disappear with dizzying frequency, but the Forum's **innova® Recordings** series is both stable and growing. That stability is due in large part to a million-dollar check from the McKnight Foundation. A color photocopy of that check hangs framed on the wall of the innova CD stockroom.

"It's a work of art," says label director Philip Blackburn. "It represents an ongoing hidden benefit to artists who put their work out through innova, making their investment go twice as far and heavily subsidizing the actual costs of releasing and promoting a recording."

As the *Gramophone* magazine feature reprinted on this newsletter's cover page notes, the Minnesota-based McKnight Foundation has supported innova from its "vinyl" beginnings through the advent of compact discs, DVDs and Internet downloads. Composers Libby Larsen, Stephen Paulus, Paul Schoenfield and Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, who appeared on innova's early LP samplers, have gone on to release CDs on the label as well.

Two of the label's most recent releases nicely demonstrate the "think locally, act globally" mantra mentioned in the *Gramophone* feature. "Some horrendous injustices have come to my attention, and I have tried to address them with new releases," deplores Blackburn. "Women experimental composers have been doubly marginalized throughout American music history – but St. Paul-based Zeitgeist's new CD, 'If Tigers were Clouds: Eight Decades of Women in Experimental Music,' leaves no excuses for the history books not to be rewritten," he explains. "Likewise, America's senior maverick, 90-year old Henry Brant,

the composer of over 100 enormous spatial compositions, has next to nothing available on disc. We are now digging through his archives and releasing as many as we can, starting with the 100-minute 1985 epic, 'Northern Lights Over the Twin Cities,' performed by the entire music community of Macalester College with six conductors."

How the Label Works

The Forum's Recording Assistance Program removes many of the usual barriers that composers and performers face when releasing and distributing their recorded works — and, unlike many other labels, allows those artists to retain copyright to their own recordings. The innova label also provides a framework for international distribution both online and in-store, as well as marketing support for all releases.

The application process is competitive. Awards are based on musical and audio quality, a marketing plan prepared by the applicant, and the applicant's willingness to actively promote the release. Applications may be initiated at any time by submitting a recording for approval; to find out more, check the "Apply" section of the innova website.

"We're looking for world-class quality music that doesn't have an obvious home anywhere else," says Chris Strouth, Director of Artists and Product. "Without the commercial pressures of being a major label we are open to a wide range of genre-busting work. Despite the wide range of styles we publish, we stand behind every project we release and will try to make a loyal fan out of anyone who has a broad musical appetite. Artists and label can grow together to reach new ears and minds."

For program participants, manufacturing costs for a 1000-disc run generally amount to \$5,000. For those who can't cover those costs, assistance is available through the McKnight-funded Recording Loan Fund. These continually replenished funds are made available to innova artists as loans with a 6 percent interest rate, to be paid back in quarterly installments over three years and offset by sales income. Once the loan is paid back, the artist receives 100 percent of the album's net profits.

Once a new release arrives from the pressing plant, the work of marketing and distribution begins. "We work with artists to help them realize the potential of their recording and get it out into the world," according to innova Assistant Chris Campbell. "We have a tailored media database that allows us to put each release in the hands of the most appropriate critics and DJs. We try to create a buzz and then make it hard for consumers to say no. We love to get the music out there beyond the artist's back yard, and see where it takes them in their careers."

innova titles are available through record stores and the label's newly revamped website, www.innova.mu, where users can search the label's extensive catalog (including jazz, electronic, experimental, world, and new classical titles). The site's innova Radio streams five stations of audio 24 hours a day, exposing listeners worldwide to the label's extraordinary roster of artists. Listeners can also download tracks from www.emusic.com (and soon from iTunes as well), or hang out and play in the virtual Luditorium, where, Blackburn says "you don't have to pick up your toys afterwards."

innova is funded by The McKnight Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

New website...

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3. How can I add myself to the Forum website's list?

It's simple. Just email webmaster Bob Peskin at bpeskin@composersforum.org to request access. All current ACF members are assigned a login name and password, which allows access to your personal page. There, you can input your bio, add links and list your contact information. If you have access to email and a Web browser, you're ready to go.

4. Who will have access to my information?

Anyone who visits the website. But remember, you can determine how much or how little information you want to put online. You can type in your complete biography and contact info with a comprehensive list of works and recent performances, or simply provide your name and email address.

5. What parts of the new website will be available to Forum members only?

Information on Forum programs will be available to all visitors, but a member password will be required to access the listings we compile each month about competitions, grants, and other opportunities generated by outside sources. We realize that the Opportunities section is one of the most highly valued features of the printed newsletter we mail to members, but the new online version of these listings will be easier to update and correct (when necessary) in a timely manner, and will be free of the vagaries and delays of snail-mail.

6. How often will the Opportunities listings be updated?

All listings will be updated as they are received.

7. Do I have to go online to get the Opportunities listings?

No. If you prefer, we can send you a monthly printout via regular mail on or before the first day of each month for an annual fee of \$15 to cover printing and postage. As a member, you can always access the online Opportunities listings for free.





8. Everybody knows that times are tough in the arts world. Why is the Forum spending money on a Web upgrade?

We're a service organization. It's important for our online service to be as useful and efficient as possible, to benefit composers and all those involved in the field of new music. In addition to the individual and community support the Forum offers through our chapters and national programs, we hope the information and connections available on our new website will prove useful to everyone involved in making new music. The Archibald Bush Foundation agreed with us, and offered their generous financial support. We were also fortunate in finding efficient and cost-effective partners in the design team at Factor UE and Vuzzer.com.

9. Who can I contact with comments, constructive criticisms or suggestions about the new Forum website?

Check in with webmaster Bob Peskin at bpeskin@composersforum.org. ♦

Your new ACF website at www.composersforum.org.

featured member	featured program	composers datebook	upcoming events
 <p>Pam Drews Phillips I am a pianist, conductor, and composer. Compositions include <i>Fatcoat Rules</i>, a musical written through <i>Continental Harmony</i> and a CD of solo piano works. learn more about Pam Drews Phillips</p>	<p>McKnight Visiting Composer Residencies Each year, the Visiting Composer Program underwrites a Minnesota residency of at least eight weeks for two out-of-state composers. While in residence, the visiting artist collaborates on a project with Minnesota performing, presenting, and community organizations. learn more about McKnight Visiting Composer Residencies</p>	<p>Composers Datebook The Forum's daily two-minute radio show, reminding you that all music was once new.</p> <p>Sunday, December 7 Ruggles on the mountaintop</p> <p>Monday, December 8 Bach salutes a Queen</p> <p>Tuesday, December 9 Glinka's Russian operas</p> <p>Wednesday, December 10 Music for Emily</p> <p>Thursday, December 11 Cowell at the Forum</p> <p>Friday, December 12 Henry Brant</p> <p>Saturday, December 13 Berber in Rome (part 1)</p> <p>Sunday, December 14 Berber in Rome (part 2)</p> <p>play today's program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Forum Events ■ New Music Events ■ Member Contributed Events ■ National Lutheran Choir Christmas Concerts This event will premiere a piece commissioned by the National Lutheran Choir by Anne Kilstate, entitled "Children of Peace," based on Matthew 5:9, for SATB divisi, a cappella. ■ Pipa Concerto Tan Dun's music played by Gao Hong ■ Great Winter Festival I Join the Minnesota Sinfonia as it performs music by Clara Lynn Reese, Claude Debussy and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. <p>more events</p>
<p>other Forum sites:   </p> <p>332 Minnesota Street, Suite East 145 St. Paul, MN 55101-1300 Phone: 651.228.1407 Fax: 651.291.7978 ©2003 American Composers Forum. All rights reserved terms of service contact us contribute join site index</p>			

The 2004 Winners' Circle

Essentially Choral Reading Program with VocalEssence

Composers **Jesse Ayers** (Canton, Ohio), **Greg Schaffner** (Saint Paul, Minn.), **John Turner** (New York, N.Y.), **Ben Yarmolinsky** (New York, N.Y.), and **Edward David Zelif** (Upland, Calif.) have been selected as participants in the 2004 *Essentially Choral Reading Program*.

The program provides an opportunity for emerging composers from across the country to develop their skills in writing for choral ensemble with instrumental accompaniment. There were a total of 35 entries from 18 states and Canada. The *Essentially Choral Reading Program* is co-sponsored by the Forum and the Minneapolis-based VocalEssence ensemble, with funding from The Jerome Foundation.

In January, selected composers will have their works read by professional orchestral musicians and the Ensemble Singers, the 26-voice VocalEssence professional choir. In conjunction with the reading session, composers will attend a rehearsal with the Ensemble Singers and a mentoring session with both VocalEssence Artistic Director Philip Brunelle and internationally recognized Swedish composer Sven-David Sandström.

"It's invaluable for a composer to be able to work closely with professional performers and an experienced conductor during rehearsals, to hone and tweak a work, learning subtle techniques that will make the music more effective and more performable," says composer Jesse Ayers. "Add to all that the chance to interact with an internationally recognized composer, and this project becomes an unbelievable professional development opportunity."

The session will take place at Plymouth Congregational Church in Minneapolis on Saturday, January 10, 2004, from 9 a.m.

to 12 p.m. (rehearsal) and from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. (reading). For more information, contact Minnesota Chapter Director David Wolff at 651.251.2833 or dwolff@composersforum.org

Composer Institute Reading Sessions with the Minnesota Orchestra

The winners of this year's *Minnesota Orchestra Reading Sessions and Composer Institute* have been selected from a total of 112 entries from 26 states. The seven composers selected are **Philip Fried** (Saint Paul, Minn.); **Michael Gatonska** (East Hartford, Conn.); **Gregory Hutter** (Chicago, Ill.); **Mark Koval** (Los Angeles, Calif.); **Robert Paterson** (New York, N.Y.); **Eric Samuelson** (New York, N.Y.); and **William A. Ware** (New York, N.Y.).

Three composers were selected as alternates: **Jong Yeoul Chong** (Grand Rapids, Mich.); **Jonathan Russell** (San Francisco, Calif.); and **Cynthia Lee Wong** (Northboro, Mass.). Six additional composers were singled out for honorable mention: **Daniel Bradshaw** (Bloomington, Ind.); **Avner Dorman** (New York, N.Y.); **Jeremy Haladyna** (Santa Barbara, Calif.); **Michael Karmon** (St. Paul, Minn.); **Gene Pritsker** (New York, N.Y.); and **Eric Sawyer** (Amherst, Mass.).

Under the guidance of composer **Aaron Jay Kernis**, composers will have their works read by the Minnesota Orchestra on Monday and Tuesday, May 3 and 4, 2004, on stage at Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis. Minnesota Orchestra Associate Conductor **Giancarlo Guerrero** and Assistant Conductor **Mischa Santora** will conduct the sessions. The reading sessions are open to the public. For more information, contact David Wolff at the number or email listed above. ♦

A Year's Worth of Harmony

2003 Continental Harmony Composers, Communities & Premieres

The Forum's *Continental Harmony* program enables communities large and small to work with a composer of their choice to create a piece of new music reflecting their concerns, experiences, and aspirations. Since its inception in 1998, the program has awarded \$1,103,675 in commissions and travel expenses to 87 composers for 93 projects in all 50 states. Composer stipends range from \$7,500 to \$15,000, depending on the project. Here's a chronological list of the community hosts, composers (with the title of their new works), and performers who participated during 2003:

March 25, 2003 (Solomon Valley Area, Kansas)
Greg Sanders "Dreams and Faith (The Solomon Valley Anthology)"
Hosts: Solomon Valley-Highway 24 Heritage Alliance, Inc.
Performing Ensembles: Eight Solomon Valley-area high school bands

May 10, 2003 (St. Paul, Minnesota)

Geoffrey Stanton: "Reconciliation"

Host: Twin Cities Community Gospel Choir

Performing Ensembles: Twin Cities Community Gospel Choir and additional musicians

June 4, 5, 6, 2003 (Arkansas City and Wichita, Kansas)

Philip Aaberg: "Headfirst into the Blue Fields of Grace"

Hosts: Cowley County Community College, Chamber Music at the Barn and the Winfield Regional Symphony;
Performing Ensembles: Chamber Music at the Barn and soloists

July 4, 2003 (Columbia, South Dakota)

Dan Rager: "Prairie River Reflections"

Hosts: Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge; Aberdeen Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department; Dakota Prairie Museum; and the Aberdeen Community Municipal Band
Performing Ensemble: Aberdeen Community Municipal Band

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A Year's Worth of Harmony...

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July 4, 2003 (Georgetown, South Carolina)

James Clemens: "The Tidelands of Georgetown"

Hosts: Indigo Choral Society; Conway, S.C., School System; Georgetown County School System; Georgetown Public Library System; and the Kaminski House Museum
Performing Ensemble: Indigo Choral Society

August 15 and 16, 2003 (Montpelier, Vermont)

Larry Siegel: "Rumplestiltskin and the Battle of East Milkweed"

Host: Food Works' Two Rivers Center for Sustainability
Performers: Larry Siegel (keyboard) and Peter Sutherland (fiddle)

October 4, 2003 (Charleston, West Virginia)

Paul Halley: "In Sideribus Domi: At Home In the Stars"

Hosts: Clay Center for the Arts and Sciences, West Virginia University at Parkersburg, and the communities of Charleston, Parkersburg, Lewisburg, Buckhannon, and Morgantown
Performing Ensembles: Choirs and instrumentalists from around the state

November 16, 2003 (Grinnell, Iowa)

Craig Naylor: "Roots of Renewal"

Hosts: Falconer Gallery, The City of Grinnell, Grinnell High School Music Department, Grinnell College Music Department, Grinnell Renaissance, Grinnell Area Arts Council, and The Center for Prairie Studies
Performing Ensembles: Grinnell College Singers, Grinnell High School Concert Choir and an all-city community choir

Continental Harmony is a leadership initiative of the American Composers Forum and the National Endowment for the Arts, with additional funding provided by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation, and Marshall Field's Project Imagine with support from the Target Foundation.

For more information on past, present and future projects, including three premieres scheduled for January 2004, visit www.continentalharmony.org ♦

Finding Chamber Music Online

Database Initiative Targets an Untapped Audience for New Music

How would you like to discover a group of music lovers who are extremely passionate about music — who are not familiar, perhaps, with new music, but who are receptive to learning more about it; a group of people who would seek out and play your music and share the experience with fellow musicians, and who might even be so moved as to contact you to commission a work for an upcoming anniversary or birthday?

We're talking about amateur chamber music players—that is, non-professional, but often highly proficient, musicians who play music for the sheer enjoyment of it.

Until the middle of the 20th century, it was common for amateur musicians to play the music of their own time. In fact, much of the music that now predominates in music festivals was originally played by amateurs, and was often written specifically with amateur groups in mind. Despite the waning of this tradition, amateur chamber musicians of today maintain an appetite for contemporary music—a desire to explore new repertory, as well as to explore the music of current times and to better understand recent creative innovations which nourish the musical tradition.

The fundamental hurdle, however, lies in the difficulty of obtaining information about, and access to, new chamber music works.

Richard S. Weinert, president of Concert Artists Guild and a dedicated amateur musician, saw a way to bridge this information gap. Why not create an information resource for composers to list their works, and for amateur players to seek out new music? Weinert found an enthusiastic partner in Renita Kalhorn, the Forum's New York Chapter director. Kalhorn, an accomplished

pianist and Juilliard graduate, approached the Amateur Chamber Music Players (ACMP) with the idea of creating an online resource where chamber music lovers could find access to contemporary, as well as traditional, chamber music—a database tailored to the needs of amateur players. "We were thrilled that ACMP was intrigued by the idea. They provided funding to set up an information database for composers and performers," said Kalhorn.

The database seeks to be a comprehensive, one-stop resource for chamber music works, containing music from Boccherini to Zwilich. (Chamber music is defined here as "music for small ensembles, whose members generally perform one to a part without a conductor.") Difficulty ratings will inform players of the approximate technical skill needed to perform a piece, according to a grading scale of 1 to 5, based on equivalent traditional repertoire. Interactive capabilities will promote the creation of an international online community, where music-lovers can post comments and share their opinions and recommendations.

The database will be actively promoted to the 5,000 members of the Amateur Chamber Music Players, as well as through professional chamber music organizations such as Chamber Music America. The site will not only provide chamber musicians with access to information about new music—it can also become a powerful platform for Forum-affiliated composers to reach out in a direct and interactive way to a largely untapped market of patrons and audiences. This marketing tool is free of charge and available for use by any composer of chamber music works.

With your needs in mind, the Forum has made it quick and easy to upload information about yourself and your chamber music works, as well as links to your website, scores and audio files. Visit www.composersforum.org/programs_professional.cfm for detailed instructions and information. ♦

Chapter Updates

Atlanta

REMIX 2002

The Atlanta Chapter is pleased to announce the release of the "REMIX 2002" CD produced in association with the *REMIX After-School Composer Residency Program*, a partnership that connected the chapter with Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta (BGCMA) and Youth Art Connection, which oversees the Arts Program for the area's clubs. *REMIX* gave BGCMA members a chance to test their



Remix 2002 CD cover

interest in writing music while learning about job skills in the music industry. Composers **Susan Ottzen** and **Miguel Romero** worked with members of two Atlanta clubs to create the eight original songs on the CD. The *REMIX* participants wrote their own lyrics, collaborated on the accompaniment, spent hours rehearsing each piece, and recorded the music in professional studios. One of the participants, Alexis Howell, also contributed drawings for the CD's packaging. Her artwork's rainbow of colors is a vivid visual match for the rhythmic energy in the songs. The *REMIX*

After-School Composer Residency Program was made possible by a generous grant from The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation.

Symphony Celebration

On October 18 the Atlanta Chapter was represented by composers **Nick Demos** and **Gary Motley** at "Symphony Celebration," a musical open house at Symphony Hall sponsored by the Atlanta Symphony Associates, a group that provides volunteer support for the orchestra. The free event was designed to introduce both newcomers and fans to the art of making music and drew a total audience of about 10,000. Motley, a pianist and Jazz Lecturer at Emory University, and Demos, a clarinetist and Coordinator of Composition Studies at Georgia State University, teamed up to present "Composers' Company," an hour-long lecture-demonstration on music theory and composition, demonstrating points on their respective instruments and answering questions from the audience. A repeat "Symphony Celebration" event is planned for 2005. ♦

Minnesota

A Forum with the Forum

On Nov. 11, almost 70 local composers gathered at Open Book in Minneapolis to discuss how the Forum can better serve and support them. Attendees met with new President **John Nuechterlein** and Minnesota Chapter Director **David Wolff** and networked with other creators. This was a much-needed first step in working together to build a sense of community and provide better and more diverse services to local composers. The reception was planned after a recent ACF survey showed there are nearly 600 composers in the Twin Cities metro area. ♦

New Encore Grant

The **Contemporary Chamber Ensemble at the University of Wisconsin-Madison** has received funding to perform "Thinking Flame" by Minneapolis composer **Jeffrey Brooks**. The work, which was presented in November at the UW School of Music, will be performed again at the Wisconsin Music Educators Association in the fall of 2004. "Thinking Flame" was originally commissioned by the California EAR Unit and underwritten by the Forum's *Jerome Composer Commissioning Program*. The Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, under the direction of David Becker, is a student ensemble dedicated to performing new works by contemporary composers.

Composer-to-Composer Premieres

In conjunction with the Minnesota Orchestra and the University of Minnesota, the chapter's *Composer-to-Composer* program allows local composers, students and community members to attend open rehearsals of visiting composers' works and participate in informal roundtable discussions. On Oct. 22, attendees met with **John Corigliano** after hearing his "Mr. Tambourine Man: Seven Poems of Bob Dylan" with soprano Hila Plitmann under conductor Robert Spano. Nov. 12 saw the final rehearsal for the world premiere of Double Concerto for Two Trumpets by **Stephen Paulus** with trumpeters Doc Severinsen and Manuel Laureano, followed by a Q&A session with the composer and both soloists. On Nov. 26, Piano Concerto No. 3 by **Peter Lieberson** with pianist Peter Serkin was followed by a roundtable session with Lieberson and conductor (and composer) **Oliver Knussen**. ♦

New York City

Residency on the Upper West Side

The New York Chapter's *Composer-in-Residence Program* was recently completed at Louis Brandeis High School, a "zone" school on Manhattan's Upper West Side, attended largely by African-American and Latino students who have transferred from other schools around the city. The residency was led by **Daniel B. Roumain**, Ph. D., a Harlem-based composer with extensive experience in teaching composition to under-privileged youth, and his assistant **Joshua Shneider**, a composer with significant experience teaching for the New York Board of Education. Roumain, Shneider and Brandeis music instructor Eva Egolf met with students over the course of 20 class sessions, during which they introduced relaxation (yoga) and confidence-building activities; the fundamental concepts of music composition, theory and performance; and tips on listening and how to be a good audience member. Building on the students' natural affinity for pop culture, the goal of the residency was to compose short works for hip-hop band and chorus using numeric and graphic-based notation. The residency concluded with the students' performance of their pieces for their peers in the school's auditorium. The New York Chapter is very grateful to the Wolfensohn Family Foundation for its funding of the residency, and to Diane Volk for her superlative efforts in making it happen. ♦

Philadelphia

Meetings of Minds

On Nov. 11, Philadelphia composers **Ellen Fishman Johnson** and **Andrea Clearfield** convened a “Meeting of Musical Minds” to offer chapter members the opportunity to present and discuss their music. In addition to presentations by Fishman Johnson and Clearfield, composers **Jennifer Higdon, Paul Epstein, Toby Twining, Paula Diehl, Kevin McCarter, and Paul DiFrancesco** shared recent work with the group. On Nov. 6, over 30 local members and friends attended a roundtable discussion with **Oliver Knussen** as part of the chapter’s *Composer-to-Composer* series. Knussen was in Philadelphia to conduct a program of Purcell/Stucky and Britten as well as his first symphony.

Commissions and Grants

Three chapter commissions were recently awarded: **Greg Wilder** will write a piece for the choir of St. Mark’s, and **Zhou Tian** and **Evan Solot** will each create a new work for the 1427 Salon series. The chapter made 12 *Subito* awards before closing the program until next year. Grants were made to **Andrea Clearfield, Matt Davis, James Jordan, Greg Wilder, Allen Krantz, Ann Lathan Kerzner, David Thomas, Robert Maggio, Emiliano Pardo-Tristan, David Ludwig, Bart Miltenberger, and Francis D’Amico**. Funding projects included an experimental opera based on Dostoyevsky’s “Crime and Punishment” a composer’s first symphony, and several recording projects.

Community Projects

Several of the chapter’s *Community Partners* projects are now well underway. Workshops have commenced in the chapter’s third collaboration with the Sedgwick Cultural Center, where celebrated Philly saxophonist **Benjamin Schachter** has been working with students at the center’s Teen Jazz Workshop to prepare for an upcoming performance. **Sharon Katz** traveled to her native South Africa on a research trip for her project, a new piece of musical theater entitled “Kofifi,” composed in collaboration with Walter Dallas, artistic director of the New Freedom Theater in North Philadelphia.

These Philadelphia Chapter commissions and community projects are funded by The William Penn Foundation. ♦

San Francisco Bay Area

Subito Harvest

On Oct. 26, a vocal music concert titled “A Harvest of Song,” funded in part by a chapter *Subito* grant, was presented at the Berkeley Art Center. The event featured substantial new works for male voices by co-producers **Peter Josheff** and **Allen Shearer**. Josheff’s “Three Hands” sets poet Jaime Robles’ description of male camaraderie during a poker game. Shearer’s is a setting of Shelley’s “Hymn to Gaia.” The program also featured new works by **Pablo Ortiz, Deborah Kavasch** and **Frank Lin**, with an all-star cast of Bay Area new music players conducted by **Mary Chun**.

The chapter announced these new *Subito* grants: to **Mark Vance**, a commission for an original a cappella work for Nevada Union High School’s award-winning Chamber Choir; to **Belinda L. Reynolds**, a grant for commissioning and score preparation of her work “Connections,” involving musicians of the Marin Youth Symphony; to **David Conte** and Thick Description, a San Francisco theater company, for score preparation and musician fees for “Firebird Motel,” Conte’s opera about “the threatening attraction of art, and the even more dangerous attraction of living”; and to **Jess Rowland**, for “Sonic Salon: An Evening of Experiments with Sound and Vision,” which will feature live pre-arranged and improvisational music with video montage. The chapter’s *Subito* grants are funded by The James Irvine Foundation. ♦

Washington, D.C.

New on Board

The chapter is proud to announce the appointment of two new board members. **John Kamman**, a composer, jazz guitarist, freelance Web designer, and former *Community Partners* grantee, currently acts as vice president of Owlsong Productions. He has been an active volunteer with the chapter. **Cindy Geary**, a composer, award-winning film producer, and current president of Harvest Moon Media, has also assisted the chapter for several months. We are honored to have such entrepreneurial leaders join our board of directors.

New Office Space

At press time, the D.C. chapter was scheduled to move into a new office space in the Flashpoint Arts Incubator. The chapter will share an office with seven emerging arts organizations, selected through a competitive process. The Flashpoint Incubator is a project of the Cultural Development Corporation (CuDC). As part of our residency, the chapter will work with CuDC staff to develop and implement a work-plan and participate in roundtables and training sessions with the other resident organizations. Flashpoint is located at 916 G Street, NW, in the historic Mather building, across the street from the MLK Library, at the Gallery Place metro stop.

Come visit us in our new home! On Jan. 21, the chapter will present a *New Music Salon* at the theater at Flashpoint. Check www.composersforum.org/dc for complete details. ♦



Feeling Minnesota?

OK, it gets a bit chilly for about six months of every year, and the state did in fact elect a professional wrestler as governor, but Minnesota is also a very composer-friendly sort of place. For example, if you've been a Minnesota-based composer for a year or longer, you may be eligible for one of the Forum's four annual **McKnight Composer Fellowships**.

This Forum program is funded by the Minnesota-based McKnight Foundation – hence its name, and the residency requirement. A few other restrictions also apply: students are eligible only if they have completed all coursework, and composers who have received McKnight Composer Fellowships within the past three years are not eligible. These prestigious fellowships are intended to reward artistic excellence and support composers who have reached a critical point in the development of their careers. The four awardees each receive an award of \$25,000 in unrestricted funds and may apply for an optional \$5,000 award to carry out a community residency of their own design. The unrestricted portion of the grant may be used for any purpose, including “buying” compositional time, acquisition of equipment, travel, and private study. Funds for the optional, self-designed community projects enable composers to work outside the conventional new-music orbit for at least 25 days. Residencies in schools

and rural areas, with neighborhood organizations or in any other setting where the composer acts as facilitator and educator are especially encouraged.

Since its inception in 1982, this program has provided awards to 110 composers who call Minnesota home. In the past six years alone, it has awarded a total of \$520,000 to 24 of them.

The 2004 McKnight Fellows will be selected by a three-member panel consisting of nationally recognized composers and other musicians familiar with a wide spectrum of musical styles. The application deadline for this year's fellowships is **March 20, 2004**. The four winners will be announced in July. More information on McKnight Composer Fellowships is available on the Forum website, or by contacting Wendy Collins at wcollins@composersforum.org or 651.251.2824.



Photo by Tom Attridge.

Visitor's Bureau

If you're a Forum member who doesn't reside in Minnesota – or even in the U.S.A. — but would like to visit the state in a composerly sort of way, the **McKnight Visiting Composer Program** might be just the ticket. Each year, the program underwrites a Minnesota residency of at least eight weeks for two out-of-state composers. The awards are intended to reward imaginative project design and artistic achievement. The residencies are not intended to specifically involve commissioning projects, though the creation of new work may be an element of the Minnesota sojourn. The program aims to encourage collaboration on one or several projects with Minnesota-based performing, presenting, and community organizations, and to foster interaction with a variety of Minnesota audiences, including rural populations and students. The selection process favors proposals that promise considerable impact for the host community. Visiting composers are required to complete their projects within 18 months of receiving the award.

Each year, two composers are each awarded up to \$14,000 for their Minnesota residencies. Previous participants have led instrument-building workshops, created school music dramas, collaborated with a restaurant workers' union, and constructed an installation in a remote cave. Since the program's inception in 1994, residencies have been awarded to 19 composers from as far afield as New York, Hawaii, Albania, Australia and England. In the past six years, 12 of them received a total of \$152,000.

Applications for the 2004 McKnight Visiting Composer Residencies should include a detailed description of the proposed residency. Specific partner organizations need not be determined at the time of application, unless the success of the project depends on the assistance of a particular organization. Obviously, if you have some prior acquaintance with the state and its various arts communities, or are willing to do some advance homework, this could very well help your application. Where we can, the Forum staff in St. Paul is happy to provide applicants with information to help their residency matchmaking.

Applications are due **March 20, 2004**, and will be reviewed by a three-member panel (in conjunction with the 2004 McKnight Composer Fellowships). The names of two composers selected will be announced in May.

More information on the McKnight Visiting Composer Program is available on the Forum website, or by contacting Wendy Collins at the number or email listed above.