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## June in Buffalo

by Jan Jezioro

### UB's flagship modern music festival expands its already broad horizons

Alex Ross, the noted music critic for *The New Yorker* magazine, recently wrote: "Having appeared in Spring for Music [at Carnegie Hall], the Buffalo Philharmonic will return home for June in Buffalo, which this year presents a particularly fascinating lineup of resident composers as well as a new, contemporary-oriented Performance Institute under the direction of Eric Huebner."

In just one sentence, Ross has managed to capture the essence of the current Buffalo classical music scene: The BPO is indeed now home, after its triumphant Big Apple gig, and scheduled to appear at the closing concert of the world-renowned June in Buffalo new music festival.

JIB begins earlier than usual this year, due to the creation of its new partner, the June in Buffalo Performance Institute. UB professor of piano Eric Huebner, director of the Performance Institute, says, "We have invited performer participants with an interest in contemporary music to study with our faculty and ensembles-in-residence. They will rehearse chamber music and attend master classes and seminars in contemporary music performance as well as attend composer lectures, concerts, and composer workshops, and perform on the June 7 evening concert and the June 8 afternoon event."

The inaugural June in Buffalo Performance Institute performance will take place inside One M&T Plaza on Thursday, May 30 at 7pm, and is presented in association with Music in Buffalo's Historic Places, a new series inaugurated this year by Eric Huebner that seeks to connect the work of UB's departments of Music and Architecture. The classic modernist building, designed by architect Minoru Yamasaki, will host the JACK Quartet's performance of Morton Feldman's evening-length *String Quartet No. 1*.

A highlight of the Friday concert in Slee Hall at 7:30pm is the world premiere of *Psychomechanochronometer*, a new solo piano work by composer Eric Wubbels, commissioned by the Mikhashoff Trust for New Music and performed by Huebner. UB professor of cello Jonathan Golove, performing on both cello and theremin cello, will join Huebner in a program that also honors Elliott Carter, who died earlier this year at the age of 103, by including his 1948 masterpiece, the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*.

Saturday's 7:30pm performance in Slee Hall by the Talujon Percussion Ensemble will feature two recent works by Marc Mellits and Ross Bauer, as well as Charles Wuorinen's *Marimba Variations*, performed by UB professor and Talujon percussionist Tom Kolor.

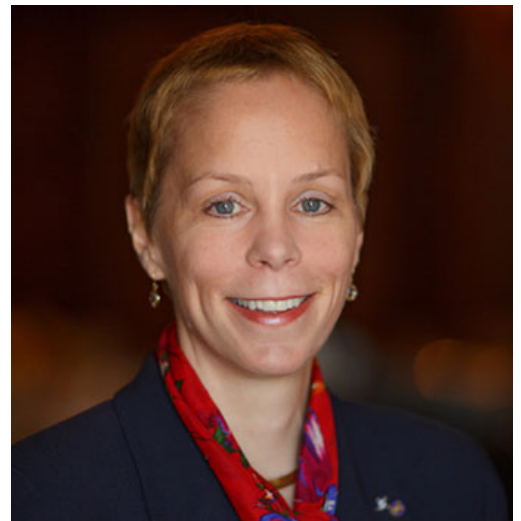
One of the highly unusual things about June in Buffalo is that it is both a music festival and a conference dedicated to composers. This year's strong roster of senior composers includes French composer Raphaël Cendo, British composer Brian Ferneyhough, and three noted American composers, Augusta Read Thomas, Charles Wuorinen, and Yehudi Wyner, along with festival director David Felder.

In addition to the established, senior composers at the festival, dozens of young, aspiring composers submit examples of their compositions to a carefully vetted selection process. The handful of emerging composers selected enjoy the rare opportunity both to work with the senior composers and to have a composition performed by the world-class musical ensembles featured at the festival, which this year includes the BPO, the Ensemble Linea, SIGNAL, the Slee Sinfonietta, and the Talea Ensemble.

Felder is again back as artistic director of the festival, after celebrating both his 25th anniversary as artistic director last year and the recent, well received premiere of his *Les Quatre Temps Cardinaux*, in an April concert inaugurating a new UB tradition called the Signature Series.

June in Buffalo proper gets underway on Monday, June 3, when Talujon will perform works by emerging composers in Slee Hall. The concert starts at 4pm, as do all the afternoon concerts at the festival, and there is no admission charge for any of these concerts. Talujon will later return to Slee along with the JACK Quartet for the 7:30 event, the starting time for all evening events, to perform Felder's *Stuck-stücke* for string quartet, Ferneyhough's *String Quartet No. 2*, and Augusta Read Thomas's *Rise Chantings*.

SIGNAL appears in the Drama Theater of the Center for the Performing Arts Tuesday afternoon, performing works including the intriguingly titled *This Will Rub Against My Grid* by James Bean. The evening performance in Slee Hall is an all Charles Wuorinen affair, featuring his *Piano Quintet* and a performance of *It Happens Like This*, with the Slee Sinfonietta conducted by the composer.



Augusta Read Thomas. (photo by Jason Smith)

Baird Recital Hall is the location of Wednesday afternoon's performance by the JACK Quartet of works by new composers including Andrew Greenwald's *A Thing Is a Hole in a Thing it Is Not*. The evening performance in Slee Hall by the Linea Ensemble includes Felder's *Requiescat*, Wyner's *Refrain*, Ferneyhough's *Incipits*, *Caprice* by Augusta Read Thomas, and Raphaël Cendo's *Décombres*.

The Thursday afternoon concert by the Talea Ensemble in Slee Hall includes Osnat Netzer's *Pang Spindle* and *Skizzen* by Eric Stewart. The evening performance by Ensemble Linea in the Drama Theatre includes Ferneyhough's *Mnemosyne* and Cendo's *Rokh I*.

The Ensemble Linea returns to the Drama Theatre of the CFA on Friday afternoon for a concert featuring the works of several young woman composers, including Turkish composer Esin Gündüz, who says *States of Iron*, her new work for voice, bass flute and bass clarinet, "makes use of three Turkish proverbs on iron, a mineral first found and processed in ancient Anatolia. My piece aims to evoke the sounds of those states that iron goes through during striking, smelting and so on, as well as incorporating a quote from the 12th century epic Persian poem 'Conference of the Birds' by Farid ud-Din Attar." Also on the program are *Fifty Pairs of Eyes* by Jenny Beck and *Step in Front of the Darkness* by Valentina Velkovska.

The evening program in Baird Recital Hall is not to be missed, as it features a rare solo appearance by the legendary, eponymous founder of the Arditti String Quartet, violinist Irvine Arditti, in a program to be announced.

The Saturday afternoon concert in Baird Recital Hall features cellist Golove in *Sonnet XX* by Ursula Kwong-Brown and *Montage* by Jonghee Kang, as well as *Untitled* by Megan Beugger, featuring dancer Melanie Aceto. Brad Lubman conducts SIGNAL in Slee Hall that evening in a concert featuring violinist Irvine Arditti. The program includes Thomas's *Carillon Sky*, Wyner's *Passage*, Ferneyhough's *Terrain*, and Wuorinen's *Big Spinoff*.

The festival winds up in Slee Hall on Sunday afternoon at 2:30pm, when BPO music director JoAnn Falletta leads the orchestra in Felder's boisterously exuberant *Linebacker*, a Buffalo audience favorite. The title of Augusta Read Thomas's 2013 work *Aureole* "alludes tangentially to certain fundamental tonal centers" of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*, and it was "designed specifically to precede a performance of the work," according to the composer. Geoff Burleson will be the soloist in Wyner's *Piano Concerto "Chiavi in Mano."* "Chiavi in mano," Wyner explains, "is the mantra used by automobile salesmen and realtors in Italy: Buy the house or the car and the keys are yours. But the more pertinent reason for the title is the fact that the piano writing is designed to fall 'under the hand,' and no matter how difficult it may be, it remains physically comfortable and devoid of stress."

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