

UCSB DEPARTMENT *of* MUSIC

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UCSB ENSEMBLE FOR CONTEMPORARY MUSIC PRESENTS “THE UBIQUITOUS GESTURE”

Program includes works by Jolivet, Corigliano, Honegger, Messiaen, and more

SANTA BARBARA, CA, February 28, 2017—The Ensemble for Contemporary Music (ECM), the probing, investigative new music ensemble at UCSB, returns to action **Wednesday, March 8, 2017 at 4 p.m.** with a look at gesture in music. “The Ubiquitous Gesture” presents nine wide-ranging selections with the accent on wordless, musical communication. Unfolding at 4 p.m., it is a matinee concert and one that is free to UCSB students with a valid ID. The venue is the comfortable Lotte Lehmann Concert Hall at the Department of Music.

“As the concert material began to gel, I couldn’t help but notice how so much of the music—as it’s all instrumental—ties back to gestures, some time-honored, others new,” said ECM Director Jeremy Haladyna. “And in one case, *General Bass* by Mauricio Kagel, we couldn’t perform the piece without a lot of signaling back and forth to each other!”

American composers on the program range from those in a neo-tonal style, such as John Corigliano, through to the high-modernist miniatures of Ursula Mamlok. Along the way, Meyer Kupferman offers a work for alto sax alone, inspired by newer jazz.

European contributions range from an early duo by Messiaen, to a late duo by the Romanian Mihalovici, with the aforementioned Kagel work pairing trombone with organ. There are three French contributions for trumpet and/or cornet, all with piano, by Honegger, Damase, and Jolivet.

An adopted Canadian rounds out the show: it is a newer piece by Michael Colgrass based on that country’s Inuit traditions. Graduate flutist Cynthia Vong tackles this *tour de force* of interpretive gesture, which sees her literally transforming into a crazed *shaman* both paranoid and violent. The end of the piece makes the gesture of his death rattle, even as an appalled Anglo observer witnesses all.

No less gestural is John Corigliano's concerto, *The Red Violin*, based on his film score of the same name. Here is a case of a concerto following a film into existence, not unlike what happened with Erich Korngold. Some of the music in *The Red Violin* comes directly out of the film, such as that tied to doomed Anna, wife of the violin builder, and the theme for Moritz, the modern violin antiquarian who discovers the instrument's mystery. Other music was added later to suitably lengthen the piece into a full-fledged concerto. Sara Bashore is featured in an abridged performance suitable for the ECM format.

Kathryn Carlson steps out on cello with a beautiful, yet virtually unknown miniature by the Romanian Marcel Mihalovici, who died in 1985. *Canto notturno*, or *Night Song*, was his contribution to an anthology of new music for the instrument. This prolific composer of over 150 scores could be an internationalist or, as here, could offer melodic cues (gestures) that trace back to the folk song of his native country.

The modernist tongue spoken by Ursula Mamlok is put to service in what would normally be a humorous vein, with her *Five Bagatelles* for compatible trio of clarinet, violin, and cello. The chattering, often imitative dialogue of the trio is full of playfulness in these five abbreviated panels. But sadly, it serves as a memorial to its composer, who died just at the end of ECM's last season in May 2016. In this performance, the ensemble offers a high-spirited tribute. Mamlok was a long-time faculty member at the Manhattan School of Music, who visited both UCSB and ECM. Featured clarinetist is Hiroko Sugawara, joining violinist Sara Bashore and cellist Kathryn Carlson.

Meyer Kupferman, who died in 2003, was the perfect person to subsume the gestural language of jazz into the classics, which he did in numerous works, including a *Jazz Symphony*. ECM's young saxophonist Brian Leal offers the first of his *Symphonic Jazz Etudes* for sax alone, from the year 1982. This beautifully plastic movement is rich with cues drawn from the blues.

The Lotte Lehmann Concert Hall pipe organ will be opened briefly to service Mauricio Kagel's strange work, *General Bass*, mixing music with a bit of theater. Two earnest and serious interpreters trade a bass line back and forth in an effort to share what—in the era of Bach and Handel—would only have been the property of one. The result is a unique timbral essay that can only unfold with the liberal use of physical signals—here done by trombonist Nick Mazuk and director/organist Haladyna.

The French contingent is saved for last: Messiaen's 1932 *Thème et variations* was a wedding present for his first wife, violinist Claire Debos, a gift which he penned at age 24. Its five variations on an odd, compelling theme are highly varied but consistently rich in pitch texture, making liberal use of his beloved second mode of limited transposition (the octatonic scale). The grandiloquence of the last variation is the essence of the summation gesture in music. David Fickes is violin soloist.

Much lighter in tone are all three trumpet/cornet solos, which are scattered like bon-bons through the evening's program. French-Swiss Arthur Honegger's *Intrada* is a staple of the trumpet's repertoire and will be used, just as intended, as entrance music in the competent hands of trumpeter David Nakazono. André Jolivet's *Air de bravoure* is short and sassy, unusual for a composer given to a more mystical bent. Jean-Michel Damase (1928-2013) contributes the lyrical *Prologue* that will serve (in a wry twist) as the program's closer. David Nakazono delights with the cornet as per the composer's intentions here.

"The Ubiquitous Gesture" offers a colorful, comprehensible, and international tour of recent music that is communicative without words.

Ensemble for Contemporary Music presents “The Ubiquitous Gesture”

Wednesday, March 8, 2017 / 4 p.m. / Lotte Lehmann Concert Hall

Event link: <http://music.ucsb.edu/news/event/967>

Tickets: general (\$10), non-UCSB students with ID (\$5), UCSB students with ID (FREE), children under 12 (FREE). Tickets may be purchased at the door, at the UCSB Associated Students Ticket Office window (UCEN Room 1535, across from Corwin Pavilion), online at music.ucsb.edu/news/purchase-tickets, or by calling the UCSB Associated Students Ticket Office at **(805) 893-2064**.

About the UC Santa Barbara Department of Music

From an institution that began life dedicated to training the next generation of music educators, to what is now a fully established research and professional graduate program, graduates of the UC Santa Barbara Department of Music have distinguished themselves both nationally and internationally. Many have gone on to teaching, either privately or in outstanding secondary school positions, and in more recent years, graduates have joined the faculties of major colleges and universities in the United States and abroad. A number have become widely recognized and published scholars; some are now prize-winning and frequently performed composers, while others are writing for television and film. Alumni are also establishing fine reputations as conductors of orchestras, opera, and choruses. Graduates of the instrumental programs have gone on to solo and orchestral careers with leading orchestras, and our singers can be heard in opera companies around the world.

With over 200 events presented annually, the UC Santa Barbara Department of Music offers something for every music lover. The department boasts 26 unique performing ensembles, each with a quarterly concert calendar. Chamber music, large ensembles, opera, contemporary groups, world music, and jazz ensembles make up the department's rich performance calendar, along with lectures, master classes, and presentations from the ethnomusicology, musicology, theory, and composition programs. For a complete listing of performances and lectures for the quarter, please visit the UC Santa Barbara Department of Music website, at www.music.ucsb.edu.

For additional information, photos, or to request an interview with an artist, please contact Adriane Hill at ahill@music.ucsb.edu or **(805) 893-3230**. To sign up for the Department of Music's newsletter, please [click here](#). Follow the Department of Music on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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