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Classical Music Notes

June in Buffalo Returns

by Jan Jezioro

The New Music Festival continues at UB

With the month of May drawing to a close, the annual June in Buffalo Music Festival is rapidly approaching. June in Buffalo was founded in 1975 by the composer Morton Feldman, then a UB faculty member. *New York Times* critic Alex Ross once described Feldman, who died in 1987, as a “lonely giant of American music,” but his reputation and influence have only increased in the intervening years. David Felder, professor of composition in the UB Department of Music, has been the artistic director of June in Buffalo since 1985, and he continues in that capacity for this year’s festival. Felder is also the director of the Robert and Carol Morris Center for 21st Century Music at the UB, which is presenting the festival along with the UB Department of Music.



Julia Wolfe (photo by Peter Serling)

The week-long June in Buffalo Festival is that rare thing: a music festival dedicated to composers. Aspiring young composers from all over the world submit samples of their works and the lucky ones who are chosen are invited to

attend the festival and work alongside the senior, established composers at the festival. The works of the student participants are featured on the weekday afternoon performances, which are free and open to the public, while the ticketed evening performances feature the works of the senior faculty composers. The senior composers at this year's Festival are Robert Beaser, David Felder, Fred Lerdahl, Steven Stuckey, and Julia Wolfe. The Festival runs from Monday, June 4 through Sunday, June 10. Besides the concert events, a free daily lecture series at 10am in Baird Recital Hall will feature the following: Monday (10:30am), Roberto Fabbriciani; Tuesday, Fred Lerdahl; Wednesday, David Felder (Lippes Concert Hall); Thursday, Steven Stuckey; Friday, Robert Beaser; and Saturday, Julia Wolfe.

In addition to UB-based groups, such as the Slee Sinfonietta, the UB Percussion Ensemble, and the Genkin Philharmonic, several visiting high-profile new music performance groups—including Ensemble Interface, New York New Music Ensemble, and Signal, with conductor Brad Lubman—are performing at this year's festival, while the final concert on June 10 features JoAnn Falletta and the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra. Special guests include the Italian flutist Roberto Fabbriciani and the world renowned American guitarist Eliot Fisk.

On Monday, June 4 at 4pm the UB Percussion Ensemble, under its director Tom Kolor presents a program of student works in Slee Hall, while in Baird Hall at 7:30pm Roberto Fabbriciani performs a solo flute recital that includes works by Brian Ferneyhough, Paolo Cavallone, and Henri Pousseur. Fabbriciani, who has previously performed to critical acclaim at UB, is the inventor and primary player of the hyperbass flute, and he has appeared as a soloist with the London Symphony, London Sinfonietta, the Academia Santa Cecilia in Rome, and the Munich Philharmonic.

Tuesday at 4pm Brad Lubman and Signal will perform a program of student

works in Room B-1 of Slee Hall. At the 7:30pm concert in Lippes Concert Hall the UB Percussion Ensemble is featured in Iannis Xenakis' *Persephassa* and Julia Wolfe's *Dark Full Ride*, while the Slee Sinfonietta moves to center stage for Steven Stuckey's *Album Leaves*, featuring pianist Steven Beck and a pair of works by David Felder, *November Sky*, with solo flutist Barry Crawford, and *Canzone XXXI*, with Jon Nelson and Tim Leopold, trumpets.

Baird Recital Hall is the location on Wednesday at 4pm for a performance under conductor James Baker by the New York New Music Ensemble of student works. The concert in Slee Hall at 7:30pm, under conductor Scott Voyles, will feature the Buffalo debut of Ensemble Interface. Founded in 2009, Ensemble Interface is comprised of young musicians from all over Europe who are dedicated to integrating contemporary music and culture in Germany. Their program includes, appropriately enough, a performance of *For Frank O'Hara*, by festival founder Morton Feldman, as well as *Imbrications* by Fred Lerdahl, *Gaspra* by Beat Furrer, and *Zilver* by Louis Andriessen, the best known contemporary Dutch composer.

Conductor Scott Voyles and Ensemble Interface return to Slee Hall on Thursday at 4:00pm for a concert of works by student composers. The 7:30pm concert in Slee Hall features conductor James Baker, who is well known to UB audiences for his almost uncanny ability to make even the most outer-edge new music work, leading the New York New Music Ensemble in three selections from Felder's "Rare Air" series: *Blews*, *Boxmundottir*, and *Boxmunsson*. Also on the program, *Ad Parnassum* by Stuckey, *Time After Time* by Lerdahl, and Beaser's *Variations*, as well as *Come Round* by the sometimes underappreciated Jacob Druckman, one of JoAnn Falletta's teachers at Juilliard.

While there is no afternoon performance on Friday, the evening performance at 7pm at the Burchfield Penney Art Center at Buffalo State College is a first for this

long-running music festival. The truly unclassifiable and always original Genkin Philharmonic, a kaleidoscopically changing musical group, led by founder Jon Nelson, professor of trumpet at UB, will maintain its innovative tradition by offering a program featuring works by composers ranging from Renaissance Italy (Carlo Gesualdo) to 20th-century America (Frank Zappa, a favorite of the group) with stops along the way featuring Schönberg, Webern, Bartok, and Prokofiev. If that's not enough to pique your interest, guitarist Eliot Fisk will be the soloist in a performance of Robert Beaser's *Shenandoah*.

The Saturday concert in Baird Hall at 4pm features various June in Buffalo performers in a program of chamber music by student composers. Conductor Brad Lubman and his group Signal return to Slee Hall at 7:30pm for the final evening performance in this year's Festival, in a program featuring two big works, *Impatience* by Julia Wolfe, and *La Passione*, a double concerto featuring soprano Jamie Jordan and violinist Courtney Orlando, by Louis Andriessen. Based on the *Canti Orfici* of Dino Campana (1885-1932), the texts of the prose poems used in *La Passione* illuminate the troubled spiritual condition of their creator, incorporating images that are fantastic and sometimes gruesome, with unpredictable collages of futuristic dreams, reflecting the mind of the author who spent the last 14 years of his life in a mental institution.

The festival concludes on Sunday at 2:30pm with a performance by the BPO under the baton of its music director JoAnn Falletta. Guitarist Eliot Fisk will be the soloist in Robert Beaser's *Guitar Concerto*, and the program includes performances of David Felder's *Incendio*, Fred Lerdahl's *Cross-currents*, and Steven Stuckey's *Jeu de Timbres*.

All lectures and afternoon concerts, except on Sunday, are free. Evening concerts: \$12/\$9/\$5. For more information, call 645-2921 or 645-0624, or visit www.music21c.org.