

NWCR772

New Millennium Ensemble

H.C.E. (Here Comes Everybody)



Richard Festinger

A Serenade for Six (1993) (15:53)

For flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano and percussion

1. I – Allegro moderato (5:52)
2. II – Andante comodo (3:52)

3. III – Allegro (6:09)

John Cage

4. *Music For...* (1984) (9:27)
For flute, clarinet, violin and piano

Charles Wuorinen

5. *Percussion Duo* (1979) (14:14)
For piano and percussion

Morton Feldman

6. *I Met Heine on the Rue Fürstenberg* (1971) (11:54)
For flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano, percussion and mezzo-soprano*

Robert Morris

7. *Broken Consort in Three Parts* (1994) (19:18)
For flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano and percussion

New Millennium Ensemble: Tara Helen O'Connor, flute; Marianne Gythfeldt, clarinet; Sunghae Anna Lim, violin; Gregory Hesselink, cello; Margaret Kampmeier, piano; Johan Ferrari, percussion; guest artist: Mary Nessinger, mezzo-soprano

Total playing time: 70:49

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Notes

We have borrowed H.C.E., (Here Comes Everybody) from John Cage, who borrowed it from James Joyce in Finnegans Wake. For Cage, the words symbolized an attitude of acceptance of all kinds of music, an excitement about all artistic activity, and a sense of community among artists. H.C.E. reflects our enthusiasm for the wealth of musical styles and sensibilities alive today, from which we have drawn the five works on this recording.

— *The New Millennium Ensemble*

Festinger: *A Serenade for Six* The initial ideas for *A Serenade for Six* originated with my desire to explore the virtually infinite possibilities for instrumental color and effect offered by a mixed ensemble of winds, strings, piano, and percussion. This coloristic mode of expression permeates the work's textures, while thematically, the understated idea at the very beginning provides the melodic shapes and harmonies for most of the serenade's music. The first movement unfolds as two alternating tempi, one twice as fast as the other, compete. Eventually the faster tempo manages to establish itself for an extended period before the opening music returns. The second movement begins *attacca*, resolving the shimmering, unstable, final harmony of the first. This second movement resembles more than anything an entr'acte, a reflective calm between two dramatically charged tableaux, and is cast in a simple ternary form. The third movement is as close as I have come to incorporating elements of my jazz background into a piece of concert music. This is most evident when the

unpitched percussion enters in the middle of the movement with a propulsive edge that, as in jazz, is woven integrally into the fabric of the ensemble.

—Richard Festinger

Richard Festinger (b 1948) is an internationally known composer who has been commissioned by Parnassus, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, the New York New Music Ensemble, the Alexander String Quartet, the Music Teachers National Association, and the Fromm, Koussevitzky and Jerome foundations. His music has also been performed by Speculum Musicae, Composers Inc., the Berkeley and Riverside symphonies, Orchestra da Camera Italiana, soprano Jane Manning, and the Boston Chamber Ensemble, among others.

Mr. Festinger studied composition and conducting at the University of California in Berkeley, and before turning to composing led his own groups as a jazz performer. From 1978–80 he studied in Paris as recipient of the George Ladd Prize. Since 1985 he has been an affiliate of Stanford's Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics. He is a founder and director of Earplay and of the Composition Workshop at the C.S.U. Summer Arts Festival in Long Beach. He has taught at the University of California and Dartmouth College and is now director of theory and composition at San Francisco State University. In 1993 he received the Walter Hinrichsen Award from the American Academy of Arts and

Letters. His music is published by C.F. Peters and Fallen Leaf Press.

John Cage's *Music For . . .* was composed between 1984 and 1987 and was meant to be a continual work-in-progress. Cage composed the piano version first and went on to write parts for strings, flute, clarinet, horn, trumpet, trombone, and percussion. As the title suggests, the piece allows for myriad possibilities. Each part can function as a solo, or can be played with any number of players in any combination of instruments. The version recorded here is *Music for Four*: flute, clarinet, violin and cello.

In accordance with Cage's musical ideals, this piece leaves numerous elements to the will of the individual performers. Each part consists of many sections, which Cage calls "pieces" and "interludes." A "piece" consists of quiet, single tones separated by silence, and/or a passage of more activity, with dynamic extremes, timbral specifications and microtones. An "interlude" contains only a few pitches with no performance indications of speed, color or dynamic. Each player may choose which pieces and interludes to play from among those presented in the published part. Only an approximate time frame is indicated for every section. The players are equipped with stopwatches to time the flow of events within these flexible boundaries.

The performer is also at liberty to interpret the timing of small musical gestures. In place of standard rhythmic notation, horizontal space on the page equals time, and the performer is left to judge the durations of the notes. Cage asks that there be no coordination between players, only individual coordination with the stopwatch. The players should not sit close to each other as in traditional chamber music, but should be spread around the stage and in the hall, emphasizing their independence from each other.

John Cage (1912–1992) is arguably the most influential American composer of the twentieth century. His ideas and works shook the very foundation of western music, posing such fundamental aesthetic questions as: What is music? What is beauty? Although Cage was a student of two iconoclastic composers, Arnold Schoenberg and Henry Cowell, his own artistic trajectory took him well beyond both of their musical spheres. He rebelled against the supreme organization of traditional music by introducing elements of chance and disorder into his pieces. In the face of the ever more complex cerebral music of his contemporaries, he reveled in the beauty of chaos and random events.

Not just a legendary figure in the music world, Cage was also seriously engaged in other art forms, including poetry, prose, visual arts and dance. (In addition, he was a noted collector and identifier of mushrooms and a macrobiotic cook.) His collaboration with Martha Graham and his lifelong artistic and personal relationship with Merce Cunningham are part of dance history. Cage's openness to all forms of art and all musical orientations are perhaps his most inspiring quality. When asked what music he preferred, he would reply, "My favorite music is the music I haven't yet heard."

—*Sunghae Anna Lim*

Wuorinen: Percussion Duo

My Percussion Duo was a joint commission from Steven Schich and James Avery, both then of the University of Iowa. These artists gave the first performance on 20 October 1979 at the University. The work is in an unproblematic single movement, and for most of its length, it treats the two members of the duo as a single sonority. The percussion (vibraphone and marimba only) compensates by having two timbres at its disposal for the fact that its range cannot match that of the

more expansive piano. But through this device, real equality between the two players is achieved.

—*Charles Wuorinen*

Charles Wuorinen (b 1938) is one of the world's leading composers. His many honors include a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship and the Pulitzer Prize (the youngest composer to receive the award). His compositions encompass every form and medium, including works for orchestra, chamber ensemble, soloists, ballet, and stage. Recent works include *The Mission of Virgil*, *The Great Procession*, and *The River of Light* (for the New York City Ballet), *Piano Quintet* (for Ursula Oppens and the Arditti Quartet), *Percussion Quartet*, and *Sonata for Guitar and Piano*

Wuorinen has been described as a "maximalist," writing music luxuriant with events, lyrical and expressive, strikingly dramatic. His works are characterized by powerful harmonies and elegant craftsmanship, offering at once a link to the music of the past and a vision of a rich musical future. Both as composer and performer (conductor and pianist) Wuorinen has worked with some of the finest performers of the current time and his works reflect the great virtuosity of his collaborators. He is professor of music at Rutgers University and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Feldman: *I Met Heine On The Rue Fürstenberg*

This work is a study in sonorities, timbres and colors. With only six instrumentalists and voice (in vocalise), Feldman achieves an astonishing palate of hues, with the flutist doubling on piccolo, the clarinetist on bass clarinet, and the percussionist covering a veritable orchestra of instruments. By unusual pairings of instruments playing in unison, such as voice and vibraphone or voice and violin, Feldman further augments his acoustic possibilities. The resulting work is quintessential Feldman, a transparent, meditative landscape interrupted by occasional, fleeting arpeggios and pizzicati. Only at the very end of the piece does Feldman allow the hint of a melody in the vocal line, but with a haunting emptiness. The unusual title of the work alludes to Heine's meeting with Chopin in Paris.

The music of **Morton Feldman** (1926–1987) is known for its understated, hushed, yet rapturous atmosphere. His critics complained of the "excruciating slowness" of his music; his friend and colleague John Cage called him a "poetic extremist." He is noted for his connection to the visual arts, particularly to the Abstract Expressionists of the New York School (Philip Guston, Jackson Pollack, Mark Rothko, and Franz Kline). His works are often spoken of in the language of paintings - large canvasses, malleable forms, washes of color. Feldman's personality often appeared at odds with the immaterial quality of his music. The *New York Times* described him as "an almost Rabelaisian figure with a pungent Brooklyn accent and an undisguised appetite for sensuous pleasure." He described himself as "a cross between Ludwig Wittgenstein and Zero Mostel."

—*S.A.L.*

Morris: *Broken Consort In Three Parts*

A "broken consort" is the Elizabethan term for a piece for mixed instruments—a consort being a family of like instruments, such as a chest of viols. The "three parts" cut the piece in two ways. There are three instrumental duets and three sections set off by silence.

The three duos are: flute and piano; clarinet and cello; violin and percussion—the instrumental associations connect to my *Traces* for flute and piano and *Pari Passu* for violin and

percussion. Each duo has a “broken” and “unbroken” part; for instance the flute part is for alto, grand, and piccolo flute while the piano is ever the piano. The materials of the three instrumental duets derive from a note cycle broken at three different places. Of the three sections, the outer ones feature instrumental doublings, while the inner one contains little unison writing.

The three sections are broken into eight smaller parts; the first and last each have two parts, and the middle section has four. Six of the eight parts are dominated by one of the three duos while one of the remaining two (the slowest) is based on a prevailing “harmony” for the work and the other, the last (containing certain measures marked “pathological”) embeds linearizations of the “harmony” across the whole ensemble.

Broken Consort in Three Parts was written for and is dedicated to the New Millennium Ensemble.

—Robert Morris

Robert Morris, (b 1943) was born in Cheltenham, England and received his musical education at the Eastman School of Music and the University of Michigan, where he studied composition with John La Montaigne, Leslie Bassett, Ross Lee Finney, and Eugene Kurtz. At Tanglewood he also worked with Gunther Schuller. Morris has taught composition, electronic music, and music theory at the University of Hawaii and at Yale University, where he was chairman of the composition department and director of the Yale Electronic Music Studio. He also was director of the Computer and Electronic Studio, director of graduate (music) studies, and associate professor of music at the University of Pittsburgh. In 1980 Morris joined the faculty of the Eastman School of Music where he presently teaches as professor of composition and music theory.

Morris is the recipient of grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the A. Whitney Griswold Foundation, the American Music Center and the American Council of Learned Societies. He has been guest composer at many festivals and series of new music including: the ISCM Festival of Contemporary Music (Paris, 1975; Boston, 1991); the International Conferences of Computer Music (Rochester, 1984; Urbana, 1987; Tokyo, 1993); Composer’s Symposium (Albuquerque,

1991); Contemporary Music Festival, (Santa Barbara, 1992); “Composer to Composer” (Telluride, 1990). His many compositions have been performed in North America, Europe, Australia, and Japan. Recently, Morris’s music has been performed at the 1993 Kobe International Modern Music Festival, and by the 21 Ensemble of New York.

Morris has written music for a wide diversity of musical forms and media. He has composed over 100 works including computer and improvisational music. Much of his output from the 1970s is influenced by non-Western music and uses structural principles from Arabic, Indian, Indonesian, Japanese, and early Western musics. While such influences are less noticeable in his more recent works, the temporal and ornamental qualities of Eastern music have permanently affected Morris’s style. Moreover, Morris has found much resonance between his musical aesthetics, his experiences in hiking, especially in the Southwestern United States, and his reading of ancient Indian and Chinese Buddhist texts.

New Millennium Ensemble, winner of the 1985 Walter W. Naumburg Chamber Music Award, has emerged as one of the most dynamic young ensembles performing today. Laying claim to music from Bach to Boulez and from Ravel to Steve Reich, the group has brought its energetic eclecticism to audiences throughout the country. The *New York Times* wrote, “The expert young players of the New Millennium Ensemble have an admirable catholicity of taste and the virtuosity to support it.”

The group has premiered over fifty new works since its founding in 1990. In recognition of its dedication to new music, the ensemble was honored with the 1994 CMA/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming. The New Millennium Ensemble has collaborated with composers at Columbia, Princeton, and Stanford universities and at the Eastman School of Music in numerous performances and workshops and has held residencies at Harvard University and the Pittsburgh Chamber Music Society. The New Millennium Ensemble has performed to critical acclaim across the country and in Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center, Merkin Concert Hall, and Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall.

Production Notes

Produced and recorded by Joel Gordon and New Millennium Ensemble.

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