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FULCRUM POINT PRESENTS *OMEGA: EARTH ON FIRE*
Final concert in five-year series, Essential Art: Essential Elements

Fulcrum Point New Music Project presents *Omega: Earth on Fire* on Tuesday, March 18, at 7:30 p.m. at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E. Randolph St. in Chicago. This concert marks the culmination of the critically-acclaimed, five year series, *Essential Arts: Essential Elements*.

Omega features the U.S. premiere of "Inner Demons" by Stacy Garrop as well as the Midwest premieres of "Racconto dall'Inferno" by Louis Andriessen and "Ground Swell" by Steve Mackey. The evening also includes the Chicago premiere of "Continental Divide" by Derek Bermel.

"The culmination of a five-year exploration of music and art inspired by the essential elements—water, earth, wind and fire—continues our music essay about the forces of nature as metaphors for physical, passionate and spiritual energy," says Artistic Director Stephen Burns. "This concert starts with a journey across the continental divide up a mountain and, then, down to the sea as we encounter our inner demons and discover tales from hell."

The evening opens with Bermel's "Continental Divide" inspired by "The Origin of Fate of the Universe" from astrophysicist Stephen Hawking's "Brief History of Time." Instead of moving through physical space the elemental musical "particles" in "Continental Divide" moves through time. As the movement progresses, particles fly away from the center and collide in rapidly increasing entropy. The piece uses jazz and new music notation to imitate the patterns of speech and scat.

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Fulcrum Point Omega/Add one

Derek Bermel has been hailed by colleagues, critics and audiences around the globe for his creativity and theatricality as a composer of chamber, symphonic, dance, theater and pop music, as well as for his virtuosity as a clarinetist, conductor, and jazz and rock musician.

Known for drawing from a variety of genres, he filters sounds of the world through his own musical palette, crafting a singular artistic vision.

Bermel's many accolades include the Rome Prize, awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and Faber Music, and Guggenheim and Fulbright Fellowships. His music is published by Peermusic Classical (US) and Faber Music (UK).

The audience continues along this journey on a mountain path with Steve Mackey's "*Ground Swell*," conceived while he was hiking in the mountains near Aspen.

"The steep uphill climb in the oxygen poor altitude informed *Thin Air*, the third movement—it's full of expectation and a bit giddy," says Mackey. "The stubborn beauty of the rocky landscape above the tree line suggested the austere, suspended fourth movement—*Peak Experience*." He describes the governing metaphor for "*Ground Swell*" as a journey from sea level to Alpine terrain and back again.

Mackey's first musical passion was playing the electric guitar in rock bands in northern California. He later discovered concert music and has composed for orchestras, chamber ensembles, dance and opera. He regularly performs his own work, including two electric guitar concertos as well as numerous solo and chamber works and also is active as an improvising musician.

As a composer, Mackey has been honored with a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, two awards from the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and the Stoeger Prize for Chamber Music by the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, among others. He is Professor of Music at Princeton University where he teaches composition, theory, 20th century music and improvisation. →

Fulcrum Point Omega/Add two

The evening then moves from soaring mountains to "*Inner Demons*" composed by Stacy Garrop. It describes disguised demons, forgiving angels and tortured human souls. "*Inner Demons*" tells the story of a man who thought his actions were guided by good intentions only to discover that he had lost his mind and wreaked havoc on the earth. It uses the dance forms of tarantella, waltz and Appalachian folk hymns to trace the fall from grace, descent into insanity and remembrance of primordial goodness.

Stacy Garrop has received several awards and grants including the 2006-2007 Detroit Symphony Orchestra's Elaine Lebenbom Memorial Award, the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble's 2006-2007 Harvey Gaul Composition Competition, the 2005 Raymond and Beverly Sackler Music Composition Prize, 2005 and 2001 Barlow Endowment commissions, Chicago Symphony Orchestra's 1999-2000 First Hearing Composition Competition, Omaha Symphony Guild's 2000 International New Music Competition, and the New England Philharmonic's 2000 Call for Scores Competition.

Dr. Garrop is an associate professor in Composition at Roosevelt University's Chicago College of Performing Arts.

Louis Andriessen's "*Racconto dall'Inferno*" is based on texts from and around Canto XXI of Dante's *Inferno*. Andriessen says that the complexity, horror, beauty and, above all, irony of the narrative drew him to the work.

In Canto XXI, Malacoda, one of the leading devils, tells Dante and Virgil to take a different route to go to the next circle because a certain bridge has collapsed. They are afraid to follow his advice, so Malacoda offers them an escort comprised of 10 devils. Calling these 10 devils by their names is the core of the composition. After the famous trumpeting of Malacoda, they go on their way with this "ferocious company," musically supported by a kind of medieval March.

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Fulcrum Point Omega/Add three

Louis Andriessen is one of Europe's most influential composers. His music is known for its propulsive energy, economy of material and distinctive tones. Inspired by elements as diverse as jazz, the music of the avant-garde and Stravinsky, his work is performed around the world and published by published by Boosey & Hawkes.

Free Post-Concert Reception to Meet Musicians, Composers

All members of the audience are invited to meet the composers Bermel, Garrop and Mackey, guest artists Hsin Yun Huang, violist; Tony Arnold, soprano; and Stephen Burns at a free post-concert reception sponsored by C'est Si Bon and Vin DiVino.

Tickets to Fulcrum Point's *Omega: Earth on Fire*, are \$20; \$10 for seniors and students. To order, call 312.334.7777.

To learn more about the fifth season of *Essential Arts: Essential Elements*, please visit fulcrumpoint.org.