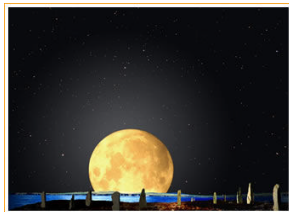


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FULCRUM POINT NEW MUSIC PROJECT BEGINS FINAL YEAR OF ESSENTIAL ARTS: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS WITH *ALPHA: IN THE BEGINNING*



Fulcrum Point New Music Project presents *Alpha...In the Beginning* on Tuesday, January 29, at 7:30 p.m. at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E. Randolph St. in Chicago. This concert launches the fifth and final year of the critically acclaimed Essential Arts: Essential Elements series.

Alpha features the world premiere of *Lux Solis Aeterna* by Geoffrey Gordon, the Midwest premiere of *Nightmaze* by Sebastian Currier, the Midwest premiere of *River of Light* by Richard Danielpour and *The River Suite* by Duke Ellington.

“The culmination of a five-year exploration of our planet’s basic elements—water, earth, wind and fire—culminates with the forces of nature as metaphors for physical, passionate and spiritual energy,” says Fulcrum Point Artistic Director Stephen Burns. “This music portrays elements as generators of renewal and a force in both the creation and destruction of civilization.”

The concert opens with the multimedia performance of *Nightmaze*, based on a text by Thomas Bolt in which the protagonist dreams he is rushing along a dark, enormous highway, where strange road signs loom-up only to disappear into the night. Sandra Binion, an interdisciplinary artist and Chicagoan, will read Bolton’s text. Sage Marie Carter collaborated directly with the composer and the author to create the video interspersed throughout the 30-minutes work.

Currier combines live instrumentals, spoken voice, digitally processed sound and video. The music’s incessant motion underscores the road’s changing rhythm as the dreaming protagonist is confronted with warnings, instructions, physics and cosmology.

Fulcrum Point, Alpha/Add one

While Currier's music is rich and dynamic, the video is spare, showing only the empty highway and its strange signs, which emerge from the distance and rush past overhead as the baffled dreamer speeds on into the night.

The 2007 Grawemeyer Award recipient's music has been performed at major venues worldwide by acclaimed artists and orchestras. *The New York Times* described Currier's work as "rich and imaginative music (that) sets the right tone, with its fractured and dissonant baroque-like gestures leading off like highway exits into the void and hinting at distant reservoirs of emotion and yearning." *The Washington Post* reported his work as "lyrical, colorful, firmly rooted in tradition, but absolutely new."

The world premiere of *Lux Solus Aeterna* begins as a musical exploration of eternal light, the heart of the communion chant for a Requiem Mass. Inspired by Dr. John N. Bahcall's study of neutrinos and the creation of sunlight, the powerful imagery in the scientific text and the multiple meanings of the word, "sun," are woven together by a composition that morphs the sacred roots of the composition into bebop jazz.

Geoffrey Gordon's list of works includes orchestral and chamber music including scores for theater, film and dance. During 2007, Gordon's works were performed more than 50 times on three continents. He has been honored with many top awards for chamber music composition and his work is funded by Barlow Endowment, National Endowment for the Arts, MacArthur Foundation and many others.

Richard Danielpour, commissioned by the Isaac Stern Charitable Foundation, was inspired by Stern's luminous tone and timeless artistry when he composed *River of Light*. In this 10-minute elegy, Danielpour employs the notion of the river as a symbolic boundary that separates the "here" and the "hereafter." The composition is arch-shaped, beginning with an ethereal, mystic tone and gradually building a rhythmic momentum and expanding in range.

Fulcrum Point Concertmaster Sharon Polifrone, violin, and Kuang-Hao Huang, piano, perform *River of Light*.

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Fulcrum Point, Alpha/Add two

Danielpour is recognized as one of the most accomplished composers of his generation. Busy with commissions, awards and grants from the most distinguished quarters, he also has enjoyed the success of hundreds of performances of his work. Sony Classical recently released the first recording of Danielpour's *Elegies*, an orchestral song cycle written for mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade with Richard Nierenberg conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

Duke Ellington composed the music for *The River* in 1970. At its premiere in 1971, with choreography by Alvin Ailey, it was called *Seven Dances from a Work in Progress Entitled "The River."*

Although 10 movements were finished by then, only seven of them were ever staged, in spite of *The New York Times'* Clive Barnes' praise of the score as "the most considerable piece from Mr. Ellington since his *Black, Brown and Beige Suite*."

Born 1899 in Washington DC, composer, bandleader and pianist Edward Kennedy ("Duke") Ellington was recognized in his lifetime as one of the greatest jazz composers and performers. Nicknamed "Duke" by a boyhood friend who admired his regal air, the name stuck and became indelibly associated with the finest creations in big band and vocal jazz.

His genius for instrumental combinations, improvisation and jazz arrangements brought the world the unique "Ellington" sound that found consummate expression in works like *Mood Indigo*, *Sophisticated Lady* and the symphonic suites *Black, Brown, and Beige* (which he subtitled "a Tone Parallel to the History of the Negro in America") and *Harlem* ("a Tone Parallel to Harlem").

Free Post-Concert Reception to Meet Musicians, Composers

All members of the audience are invited to meet Geoffrey Gordon, Sebastian Currier, Stephen Burns and members of the ensemble at a free post-concert reception sponsored by C'est Si Bon and Vin DiVino.

Tickets for *Alpha...In the Beginning* are \$20; \$10 for seniors and students. To order, call 312.334.7777.

To learn more about Fulcrum Point New Music Project as it celebrates its tenth anniversary and the fifth season of *Essential Arts: Essential Elements*, please visit fulcrumpoint.org.