

Listeners meet composers at PSU Festival of New Music

The director of Pittsburg State University's third annual Festival of New Music hopes the event will provide listeners an opportunity to make a personal connection with composers. Ross said the festival, which runs March 7-11, gives PSU students and the region's music patrons the opportunity access to music and composers that otherwise might not be readily available in this area. An added benefit, Ross said, is that all of the events, with the exception of the Southeast Kansas Symphony on March 10, are free.

The festival opens at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, March 7, with a concert in McCray Recital Hall featuring guest Artist Elizabeth Farnum, soprano, and pianist Margaret Kampmeier. Farnum will sing art songs and music theater pieces from the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries. Special guests will include clarinetists Richard MacDowell and PSU faculty member Joanne Britz. Farnum will perform music by PSU alumnus Hubert Bird and PSU faculty member John C. Ross.

Elizabeth Farnum is a specialist in contemporary music. In addition, she is an active performer in many diverse musical styles, and her performances of modern music and musical theater have taken her throughout the United States, Europe and Japan. Farnum's background is in musical theater, and she most currently appeared on Broadway in "Riverdance." She has starred in several off-Broadway and regional productions and has performed with the chorus of the Metropolitan Opera. She is featured on recordings of Koch International, Bis, New World, Vox, CRI, Helicon, North/South and Pro Organa. She has recorded six CDs for Deutsche Grammophone and Allegro with Pomerium, of which the third, "Creator of the Stars," was nominated for a Grammy.

Farnum lives on City Island, N.Y.

Pianist Margaret Kampmeier is active as a soloist, chamber musician, orchestral keyboardist and teacher of piano. She has performed across the U.S., in Canada, Mexico, Europe and Asia, and has recorded for Centaur, CRI, Koch, Nonesuch, and Bridge Records. Kampmeier is a founding member of the Naumburg award-winning New Millennium Ensemble, and performs regularly with numerous other New York ensembles such as the Orchestra of St. Luke's and Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. A dedicated educator, Kampmeier teaches at Princeton University.

For more information, please contact John Ross in the PSU Department of Music at 620-235-4477 or by e-mail at jross@pittstate.edu.

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March 8

The Festival of New Music continues on March 8 with a panel discussion at 12:30 p.m. in McCray Recital Hall on “The Arts and Education.” PSU faculty and members of the community will discuss issues surrounding the role of the arts in education and the implications for the future.

At 7:30 p.m. on March 8, the second concert of the series, “Special Guests & Friends,” will be held in McCray Recital Hall. Special Guest Artists Richard MacDowell (clarinet), Emily Zizza (clarinet), Sara Mandal-Joy (soprano), and PSU alumna Pamela Gaston (mezzo-soprano) will be joined by PSU faculty member Joanne Britz, clarinet, and Reena Berger, piano.

March 9

From noon until 1 p.m. on Wednesday, March 9, the Festival of New Music continues with a “Beatnik/Improv” concert in the Overman Student Center. Students and faculty will perform an improvisation classic, “Terry Riley’s In C.” The performance will include readings from Jack Kerouac’s “On the Road,” by PSU faculty member Paul Smith. Both works were written at about the same time.

At 10 p.m. on March 9, the lobby of McCray Hall will provide the setting for the fourth concert of the series, “Time & Space: Unusual.” This short concert will feature guest artists and several PSU faculty and students, including Tracy Blizman (horn) and Jim Clanton (percussion). This resonant space will host performances from the four corners (on the lobby floor and the mezzanine level, east and west ends). The concert will include works for percussion, brass, voice, clarinet, and CD. Hot cider and tea will be served. Chairs will be provided, but concertgoers may bring pillows and sit on the floors or tables.

March 10

The Southeast Kansas Symphony Orchestra will provide the fifth concert of the New Music festival at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 10, in the McCray Recital Hall. The Symphony will perform works by alumnus Hubert Bird, PSU faculty Member John C. Ross, and guest composer Keith Lay. Solo performances will be presented by PSU faculty member James Hall (flute) and professor emeritus Paul Carlson (violin). The concert will also feature arrangements by current PSU students.

Tickets for the Symphony concert are \$7 for adults and \$5 for students and senior citizens. Tickets are available from the Department of Music office in McCray Hall or at the door. Children under 12 are admitted free when accompanied by an adult.

March 11

The Festival of New Music concludes at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, March 11, in McCray Recital Hall with “Violin Music of Saygun.” Special guest artist June Chen (piano) and PSU faculty member Selim Giray (violin) will present an all-Saygun concert. Dr. Giray is an expert on this Turkish composer’s music.