

Soundboard Productions & Pierce College presents

MICROFEST!!

an evening of microtonal music

Three Pieces (1977).....Lou Harrison
Avalokiteshvara • Waltz for Evelyn Hinrichsen • Sonata in Ishartum

Atom turning in the Sun of Eternity (1996).....Sasha Bogdanowitsch
Prelude to the New Way • Piece Yearning • On Present & Future

Letter From Hobo Pablo (1943).....[West Coast Premiere].....Harry Partch
Just Strings
John Schneider, just guitar Susan Allen, harps Gene Sterling, percussion

Moment Condensate (1996).....George Zelenz
• Nominal scratches • The Sacred, The Serene • The privacy of Ontology • Circular
Flailing Apprenticeship • The World is not mystical, *THAT* the World is, is the mystical
George Zelenz & Louis Johnson, tubulong

The unfathomable loneliness of the Light year man (1996)...Rod Poole
17-tone just intonation guitar

Rhythmicon (1987).....Carter Scholz
John Schneider, justly tuned guitars

Micronesia (1996).....Neil Haverstick
Neil Haverstick, 19/tone guitar Gene Sterling, drums

i n t e r m i s s i o n

Midare (Judan No Shirabe) [17th century].....Yatsunami Kengyo
Yoko Awaya, koto

Dialeba (1997).....Kraig Grady
just intonation vibes

From the West (1996).....Neil Haverstick
Neil Haverstick, 34/tone guitar Rod Poole, bowed guitar

In Just C (1964/97).....Terry Riley
Ensemble

Microtones are quite simply those notes that lie "in the cracks" between the notes of the modern piano. These "smaller" notes can be used to fine-tune intonation, (make the music more in tune than traditional equal temperament), or sometimes to create new sounds that have never been heard before by dividing the octave into new divisions. Nothing about these new notes determines the *style* of music, however; they are simply the materials of music, much the way colors are the materials of the painter. Style is, of course, determined by how the colors are used - in what forms, shapes and patterns, etc. This evening's concert will visit many styles, from classical to popular, traditional to avant garde, using both intonational and divisional microtones.

Lou Harrison is one of the outstanding personalities of American Music, well known as a performer, calligrapher, artist, ethnomusicologist and instrument builder as well as master composer. Since the 1930's, he has composed for practically every medium, including symphony orchestra, opera and the ballet, as well as such solo instruments as guitar and harp. This rich musical background, coupled with his sensitivity and deep respect for music of all cultures, past & present, is best summarized by his wonderful motto: "Cherish, Conserve, Consider, Create." We celebrate his 80th birthday tonight with *Avalokiteshvara*, named after the Buddha of compassion [the bells represent the Bodhisattva], a *Waltz* originally written for piano, though it also appears in his *3rd Symphony*, and finally the *Sonata in Ishartum* which was composed for two troubador harps.

The pieces by **Sasha Bogdanowitsch** are selections from a larger work currently in preparation for voice and chamber ensemble entitled, "Atom Turning in the Sun of Eternity." The two guitar and harp duets, written especially for *Just Strings*, are instrumental interludes that comment on the actions of the preceding and coming movements of the larger work and are both in a five-limit just tuning. 'Peace Yearning' is the third movement of the larger work and uses the Ancient Greek seven-limit enharmonic scale of Archytas.

Harry Partch is truly the father of this century's fascination with the pure intervals of just intonation. Of his Americana pieces from the 1940's, *The Letter* is perhaps the best known, but only in its later version for adapted guitar, kithara and marimbas. Having re-written the work several times, he admitted in his last decade that the original version for plucked strings (adapted guitar & Kithara) was his favorite - tonight the Kithara are played on harp & tuned guitars.

George Zelenz is an autodidact, a polystylistic percussionist, free-improv meister, as well as (among other things) a fine woodworker and builder of custom homes. His Tubulong is made of high-grade aluminum pipes that are tuned to the pure intervals of Just Intonation.

Rob Poole has been involved in free improvisation for many years, with the Oxford Free Improv Co-op, as well as with such notables as Derek Bailey and Keith Rowe. His recent CD *Death Adder* was released in 1996 to critical acclaim. His work with the *Voice of the Bowed Guitar* group will be recorded this year. His steel string guitar used 17 frets/octave, which are tuned in Just Intonation.

Carter Scholz is a writer and composer with training in piano and Javanese gamelan. His music often uses computers and non-tempered tunings. He tells us, "In his book *NEW MUSICAL RESOURCES* (1930), Henry Cowell proposed an instrument which would 'mechanically produce a rhythmic ratio, but which would be controlled by hand'. This device was built for Cowell in 1931 by Leon Theremin, and was used in Cowell's *Concerto for rhythmicon and orchestra* and his (lost) *Music for violin and rhythmicon*. The concerto opens with the rhythmicon chiming out members of the harmonic series in rhythms proportional to their harmonic numbers. *Rhythmicon* realizes this idea with the first seventeen members of the harmonic series triggered by regular clocks in meters from 1/8 to 17/8. Fairly complex melodic patterns emerge as the result of very simple rhythmic processes. In this performance, each rhythmic cycle is also given its own trajectory through an illusionary space."

Neil Haverstick has been playing microtonal music for the past seven years. A freelance musician from Denver, his piece *Spider Chimes* won the 1992 *Guitar Player Magazine* Ultimate Guitar Competition in the Experimental category. His recent publication *19 TONES: A NEW BEGINNING* charts the new territory explored in his recent CD *The Gate*. His 34/ tone guitar is the invention of Southern Californian Larry Hanson, whose interest in unusual tunings spans many decades. His own **Microstock** festival is now in its third year, and has featured his own band, as well as microtonal musicians from New York and Los Angeles.

Yoko Awaya's Music Academy has brought the sound of the koto to thousands here in Southern California, where she has been committed to carrying the instrument's long tradition to a new generation. *Midare* is a purely instrumental piece in ten short movements, whose final part is said to picture the snow falling incessantly in the forest. The "Kengyo" in the composer's name was the highest rank attainable by a blind musician.

Kraig Grady has been making & playing his own instruments since hearing a performance of Partch's *U.S. Highball* in 1975. His recent ethnomusicological researches have included travels to Anaphoria, which resulted in his latest CD, *Music from the ISLAND OF ANAPHORIA*. This evening's instrument uses the bars of the standard vibraphone, fine-tuned in just intonation.

Terry Riley's landmark composition *In C* was written in 1964, and has since been performed thousands of times on every continent in the world. It consists of 53 musical fragments [each of which must be played in order, but for as long as each musician desires] which can be performed by any number of - and any kind of instruments. The musical result of such controlled close imitation somewhat resembles a giant game of musical tag, as the listener follows each fragment around the ensemble. Riley's interest in pure tunings also dates from this period, [his own piano improvisations on a purely tuned piano are legendary], so tonight we tune the infamous *In C* in just intonation.

Sasha Bogdanowitsch received his BFA in music from Cal Arts, where he studied composition and world musics, integrating the two into multimovement, interdisciplinary performances. He has studied and performed in Indonesia, India, and Australia as well. During the last four years, while living in the greater San Francisco Bay area, he has worked with such diverse artists and/or groups as: composer Lou Harrison, Pakistani vocalist, Salamat Ali Khan, puppeteer Kathy Foley, and the gamelans, Si Aptos, Si Betty, Sari Raras, Pusaka Sunda and UCSC. He is currently pursuing a graduate degree in music and composition at the University of California at Santa Cruz, where he has just completed teaching a course on Just Intonation.

Just Strings was created in 1991 to perform the music of Lou Harrison & Harry Partch in their intended tunings, and has gone on to commission and perform works by Larry Polansky, Mamoru Fujieda, John Luther Adams and others. In 1995 they toured Japan under the auspices of the American Embassy's prestigious Interlink Festival, giving concerts and lectures on new music. Their CD *Just West Coast* was *CD Reviews* "CD of the Year" in 1994, and their recording of Sasha Matson's *The 5th Lake* was just released by New Albion Records. Susan Allen is presently Dean of Music at Cal Arts, Gene Sterling a well-known studio musician & film composer [who actually recorded with Harry Partch in the late 1960's], and John Schneider is Professor of Music at Pierce College, and the host of **SOUNDBOARD**, which can be heard every Thursday on KPFK 90.7fm from 10am to Noon.

Special thanks to Carry Hanson for making Neil Haverstick's appearance this evening a possibility.