

CHANNEL CROSSINGS

CCS 9796



meridian  
arts ensemble



**Anxiety of Influence**

Zappa  
Debussy  
Barber

Jon Nelson - trumpet  
 Josef Burgstaller - trumpet  
 Daniel Grabois - horn  
 Benjamin Herrington - trombone  
 Raymond Stewart - tuba  
 John Ferarri - drums

Jon Kliftonoff - piano



CCS 9796

CHANNEL CROSSINGS

## Anxiety of Influence

**Frank Zappa (1940 - 1993) (arr. Jon Nelson)**

- |   |   |      |
|---|---|------|
| 1 | Run Home Slow                                       | 1.18 |
| 2 | The Little March                                    | 1.28 |
| 3 | Little House I Used to Live In - piano introduction | 3.03 |
| 4 | Little House I Used to Live In - ensemble           | 4.56 |
| 5 | The Black Page - drums solo                         | 1.55 |
| 6 | The Black Page - ensemble                           | 5.32 |

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**Claude Debussy (1862 - 1918) (arr. John Sheppard)**

- |   |                  |      |
|---|------------------|------|
| 7 | Sarabande (1894) | 4.05 |
|---|------------------|------|

**Stephen Barber (b. 1952)**

- |   |                                 |       |
|---|---------------------------------|-------|
| 8 | Semahane (Whirling Wall) (1993) | 21.42 |
|---|---------------------------------|-------|

**Daniel Grabois (b. 1964)**

- |   |                   |      |
|---|-------------------|------|
| 9 | Zen Monkey (1995) | 7.35 |
|---|-------------------|------|

**Traditional Afro/Cuban (arr. Jon Nelson)**

- |    |              |      |
|----|--------------|------|
| 10 | El Solitario | 5.03 |
|----|--------------|------|

**Stanley Silverman (b. 1938)**

- |    |  |       |
|----|--|-------|
| 11 | Variations on a Theme of Kurt Weill (1977) | 13.15 |
|----|--|-------|

**Raymond G. Stewart (b. 1962)**

- |    |                     |      |
|----|---------------------|------|
| 12 | Okay Chorale (1994) | 1.02 |
| 13 | KOHS-Ska (1995)     | 3.54 |

<b>Total Time</b>	<b>76.10</b>
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**Meridian Arts Ensemble**



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THE MERIDIAN ARTS ENSEMBLE USES **TOM CROWN** MUTES AND **ALTIERI** INSTRUMENT CASES.

#### **TECHNICAL INFORMATION**

MICROPHONES

ANALOGUE TO DIGITAL CONVERTER  
SPEAKERSYSTEMS

RECORDING LOCATION  
RECORDING DATES

**Bruel & Kjaer 4003 Rens Heijnis  
omnidirectional  
DCS 900C  
Celestion & AKG K1000  
Headphones  
Doopsgezinde Kerk, Amsterdam  
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## The Meridian Arts Ensemble

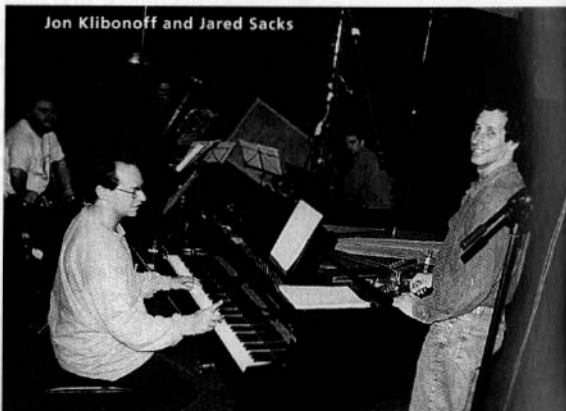
- has established itself as one of America's finest chamber ensembles through its innovative repertoire and critically acclaimed performances. First Prize Winner of the 1990 Concert Artists Guild New York Competition, the Ensemble also won First Prize in 1994 from ASCAP/Chamber Music America for Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music.
- has commissioned numerous works, and has also collaborated with or premiered works by Frank Zappa, Milton Babbitt, Kirk Nurock, Ira Taxin, Phillip Johnston, David Sampson, Tom Pierson, Stephen Barber, and Elliott Carter. The Ensemble's interest in expanding the horizons of concert repertoire has been further demonstrated through adaptations and performances of works by Don Carlo Gesualdo, J.S. Bach, Frank Zappa, Jimi Hendrix, Captain Beefheart, and Afro/Cuban dance styles.
- has performed in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Cleveland, Atlanta, Juneau, and other cities. The Ensemble has also toured Europe and Japan extensively, and in 1995 gave its South American debut in Bogota, Colombia. Collaborations have included a performance at Alice Tully Hall for the 25th Anniversary of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. The Ensemble has also performed in many European festivals, including Köln Musiktriennale, Schleswig-Holstein, Bochum Klavier Festival, Graz (Austria), and November Music (Holland and Belgium). Club appearances have included performances in New York at the alternative spaces CBGB's, The Knitting Factory, the Cooler, and the Kitchen; in Washington, DC at the Black Cat; and at the House of Blues in Los Angeles.
- has been seen internationally on German, Dutch, and Austrian state television, and in the U.S. on public television's *Live From Lincoln Center*. Radio broadcasts have included National Public Radio's *Weekend Edition*, *St. Paul Sunday Morning*, WDR (Germany), Dutch National Radio, ORF (Austria), Voice of America, and Radio Free Europe.

Pianist **Jon Klibonoff** has established a versatile career as orchestra soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician throughout the U.S. and abroad. The Boston Globe writes: *'Mastery of touch, color, dynamics, and style was aplenty, and a first-class interpretive intelligence. ....There are concerts and concerts, but this seemed a privileged encounter.'*

As a member of the Bowdoin Trio, Mr. Klibonoff won First Prize of the Concert Artists Guild New York Competition in 1984. He joined the Guild's roster as a solo pianist in 1992 as winner of the Wedeen Management Award. Other awards and competition prizes include the Silver Medal of the Gina Bachauer International Piano Competition, the Affiliate Artists Xerox Pianists Award, the Pro Musicis Foundation Award, First Prize in the Kosciuszko Chopin Competition and the Pepsi-Cola Young Artists Competition, and a Solo Recitalist Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Mr. Klibonoff has been heard as soloist with many of America's major orchestras, including those of Baltimore, Utah, Buffalo, North Carolina, Syracuse, Richmond, New Orleans, and Denver. He has appeared at the Metropolitan Museum, 92nd Street Y, and Weill Recital Hall in New York, Jordan Hall in Boston, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art as well as in Paris, Rome and Hong Kong. A frequent guest of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Mr. Klibonoff has collaborated with many of America's major artists, including Yo-Yo Ma, David Shifrin, and Carol Wincenc.

Jon Klibonoff and Jared Sacks



## Anxiety of Influence

All artists seek their own creative identity or voice. The process often begins with emulation and imitation of the models already established. But the process can also involve rejection of that which has come before. This desire, this need to be different and new, this distancing from one's artistic forebears, is the anxiety of influence. On this sixth Meridian album, we have continued on our course through uncharted waters. In our quest for new sounds, we have added piano to the Ensemble for this disc, and have selected repertoire which romps through this new sonic spectrum. Works by Ensemble members, commissioned works, and pieces by some of our favorite composers comprise the music on this disc. We hope that the anxiety of influence, leading us away from the past, will push us ever forward.

*Meridian Arts Ensemble*

## Frank Zappa (1940-1993)

— *Run Home Slow, The Little March, Little House I Used to Live In, The Black Page*

One of the great geniuses of our time, Frank Zappa was widely recognized as a 'pop' composer who wrote classical music on the side. Nothing could be further from the truth. Frank began writing 'classical' chamber music at the age of 14, and didn't write his first 'pop' tune till he was 21. His compositional roots clearly lie in

chamber music. We know this from his early study of Varese, Webern, and Stravinsky. Our intention when performing his music is to present it as concert music, regardless of the style of a particular piece, be it ska, rock, or funk. Also, this music (like everything else we play) can be heard in any kind of venue, be it Philharmonic Hall, Ed's coffee shop, or JR's Bar and Grill in central Arkansas. One need only ask two questions: Is this piece worthy of adaptation and preparation? Will an adaptation to a new medium still truthfully communicate the intention of the composer? *Run Home Slow* was originally written in 1959. This music comes from a cowboy movie called *Run Home Slow*, starring Mercedes McCambridge. *Little House I Used to Live In* is taken from Zappa's *Fillmore East* 1971 album.



Black Page comes from the Make a Jazz Noise Here album, as performed by the 1988 Frank Zappa band. This version is referred to by the composer as the 'New Age' version.

Jon Nelson

**Claude Debussy (1862-1918)**

— *Sarabande (1894), arr. John Sheppard*

The name of Claude Achille Debussy (1862-1918) is forever linked to French Impressionism and Symbolism (although he preferred the latter, a literary term, rather than the former, an art term). A pianist by training and a student of the French Conservatory tradition, his influences included Wagner, Russian music, French composers, and Oriental Music (especially the Javanese Gamelan, an orchestra made up primarily of gongs and percussion, which he first saw at the Paris Exposition in 1889). The Sarabande, drawn from *Pour le Piano (1894)*, bears a harmonic resemblance to a piece of the same name by his contemporary Satie, and illustrates Debussy's tendencies towards fragmentary and motivic melodies, parallel structures, and 7th, 9th, and 11th chords.

Debussy's piano music emphasizes the lush, shimmering, mysterious qualities of that instrument. His use of extreme dynamics and of the blurring capability of the pedal creates music which encompasses the feelings of fragility and strength, opacity and clarity, stillness and motion. This arrangement, by John Sheppard, perfectly translates the beauty of the piano score into the realm of brass.

Josef Burgstaller

**Stephen Barber (b. 1952)**

— *Semahane (Whirling Wall) (1993)*

Naat, Mesnevi, Taksim, Pesrev, Ayin-I-Serif I, Ayin-I-Serif II, Taksim, Taksim, Ayin-I-Serif III, Ayin-I-Serif IV, Homage to F.Z., Finale - Huuu, Coda Semahane is inspired by the spiritual ceremonies of the Mevlevi sect of Sufism, known in the Western world as the 'whirling Dervishes'. This ritual of whirling is an act of

Daniel Grabois



love and a drama of faith. It possesses a highly structured form within which the gentle turns become increasingly dynamic as the individual dervishes strive to achieve a state of trance.

This piece features a truncated form of the ritual, which normally lasts forty minutes. Being an instrumental piece, Semahane does not include all of the verbal and musical elements. A few segments are omitted. The selections of the movements, however, represent the main body of the ayin-i-serif (blessed ceremony).

The piece opens with the recitation of the Naat, a praise of Mevlana ('Our Lord' or 'Our Master'). This is followed by an improvisation. The Mesnevi starts with the sad, heart-rending strains of the instruments expressing the mystic's yearning to return to God the Beloved. Following the Mesnevi is the Taksim, also an improvisational soloistic passage. The Pesrev (Prelude) is followed by the Ayin-i-Serif, the main body of the whirling ritual. The continuous whirling has four sections, each referred to as a Selam (meaning 'greetings', 'salutation', 'peace'). After the Homage to F.Z. (F.Z. is Frank Zappa, whose premature death occurred during the writing of Semahane),

we reach the Finale, in which the dervishes chant in unison the extended HUUU. This is said to epitomize all the names and attributes of God in mystical terms.

The whirling ceremony is referred to as sema, which may have its roots in the ancient shamanistic semah dances of Central Asian Turks, but also is related to an Arabic word for 'sky' or 'heaven'. Some of the poems of Rumi, the towering figure of Sufism, refer to the sema's celestial metaphor: 'Yours are the galaxies in the sky of the whirling.' Semahane is dedicated to Frank Zappa and the Meridian Arts Ensemble.

*Stephen Barber*

**Daniel Grabois** (b. 1964)

— *Zen Monkey* (1995)

Zen Monkey is my first piece for brass quintet, and is one of my earliest compositions. I was inspired to begin writing by the mere fact of





having a band that would play any piece (within reason) I came up with. Zen Monkey unfolds in three sections. In the first section, I have tried to create a sense of repose and stasis. Two-beat and three-beat gestures alternate with small pockets of silence, which act as punctuation. The second section sets a very simple melody on top of an ever-quickening groove. I have tried to create a sense of the music hurdling forward toward its climax. The final section recapitulates the first, but the material here is much less spare, and is heavily ornamented, with only the pockets of silence remaining the same as before.

The inspiration for this piece comes from the brilliant musicianship of my colleagues in the Meridian Arts Ensemble, and from the music of Arvo Part and of the rock band R.E.M. The title of the work is probably meaningless.

*Daniel Grabois*



· Josef Burgstaller

### **Traditional Afro/Cuban - Solitario**

Solitario is a traditional Afro/Cuban piece, representative of the 1940's style of Latin dance music made popular by Machito, Mario Bauza, and Tito Puente. Solely rooted in 'son clave', this music's emphasis is on rhythm, relying heavily on extensive percussion. This piece worked its way into the Meridian Arts Ensemble's repertoire as a result of several group members' experience playing in Orque de Chu Melendez, a traditional style Latin band based in East Harlem, New York City. The MAE has added piano in its traditional role in this arrangement.

*Jon Nelson*

### **Stanley Silverman (b. 1938)**

— *Variations on a Theme of Kurt Weill (1977)*

Several years before writing this piece, I served as the musical director for Joseph Papp's production of Brecht and Weill's Threepenny Opera, directed by my collaborator Richard Foreman. Curiously enough, I had never really 'known' the work in its original form until I did the research for this production. Indeed, when I



was in high school, my girlfriend's obsessive rendering of certain songs, coupled with Babby Darin's version of 'Mack the Knife', gave me a rather incomplete picture of the whole score. The song I have chosen for the theme of this piece is called 'Lied von der Unzulänglichkeit Menschlichen Strebens', or, in the translation by Ralph Mannheim, 'Song of the Insufficiency of Human Endeavor.' It is sung by Peachum, the king of the beggars. In recent years there has been a tendency to treat it as a light-hearted up-tempo third act show tune because of its seeming rhythmic and harmonic simplicity. However, tapes of early performances show that it was performed slower, and at times legato, with the emphasis on the verbal articulation like a learning song.

At the time I wrote these Variations, I had been exploring the relationship between musical

found-objects and my own variation technique. I am interested in almost blatantly recognizable models in order for the listener to be able to follow (or get lost in) the variations. Also, the 'in and out' of tonal focus is very evident in these variations, which all deal with gestures from the Weill subject.

*Stanley Silverman*

**Raymond G. Stewart** (b.1962)

— *Okay Chorale* (1994)

This chorale, presented here as a prelude, is the result of boredom with Bach. That is, the MAE had performed and recorded the same Bach Chorales for years until recently, when we began writing original material and publishing new Bach chorales to replace the old (see Meridian Arts Ensemble Editions 40 Bach Chorales arranged for brass quintet). After a recent concert, an MAE fan approached me to suggest a title for the work and although I think he had Wyatt Earp in mind, I accepted the title because, after all... it's not a great chorale, just an okay chorale.

*Raymond G. Stewart*

**Raymond G. Stewart** (b. 1962)— *KOHS-Ska* (1995)

Ethnic music fascinates the Meridian Arts Ensemble. The recent additions of Turkish ceremonial and klezmer music are a case in point and are welcome to our growing repertoire in the ethnic category. When the idea of exploring the music of Jamaica came to me, I realized we had absolutely no experience performing Mento, Calypso, Ska, Reggae, Rock-Steady, or even Present-Day Reggae. Review of these historic styles (lyrics were often reflective of the political and socio-economic climates of the island nation) left me drawn to Ska, which emerged in its first wave of popularity during the late 1950's and peaked about ten years later. The Skatalites, a band still working today, were the original voice of the ska sound,



identified by the choppy afterbeat rhythm. This afterbeat chop was labeled "ska" simply after the musical syllable the rhythm offered from the accompanying instruments, usually guitar or piano. My idea was to honor the masters, the Skatalites, in an arrangement of one of their tunes, but this idea soon evolved to create a new piece of music specifically for the MAE while maintaining the original style of the period.

*Raymond G. Stewart*

**Meridian Arts Ensemble on Channel Classics**

Hindemith, Lutoslawski a.o.	CCS 2191
Smart Went Crazy: Zappa, Hendrix, Nurock	CCS 4192
Visions of the Renaissance	CCS 6594
Prime Meridian	CCS 8195
'Five': American Composers	CCS 9496