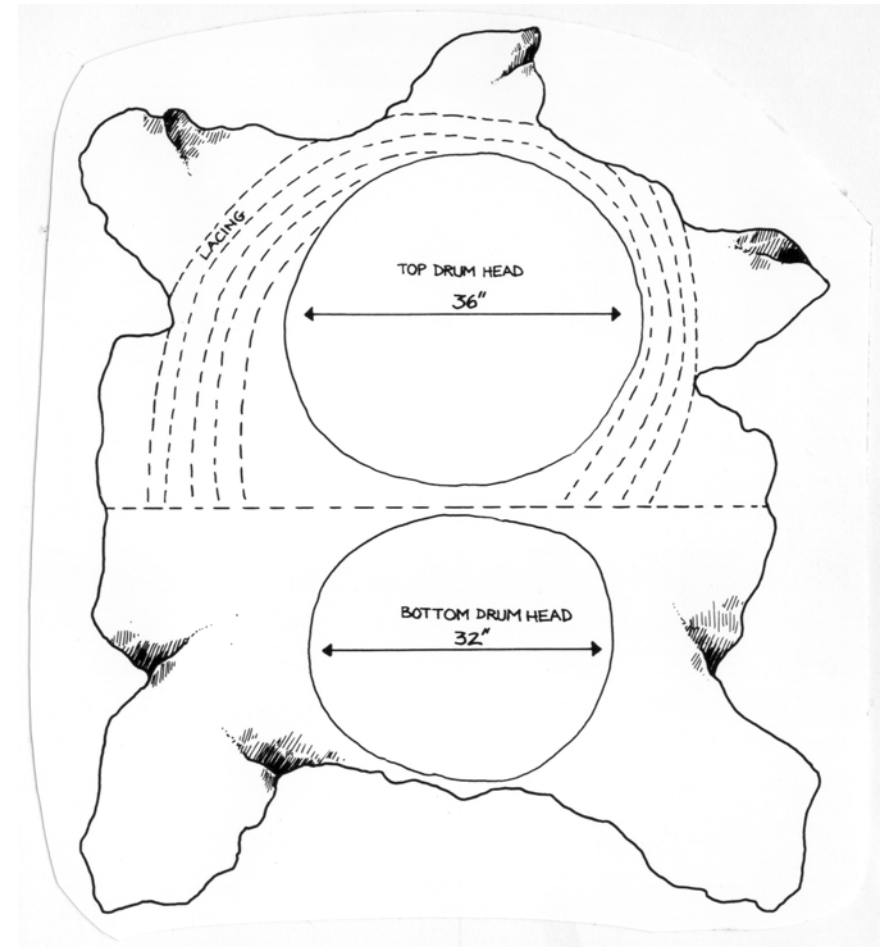


E s s e n t i a l M u s i c

# K Y L E G A N N



*What is good is given back.*

G R E E N W I C H H O U S E A U D I T O R I U M  
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## P R O G R A M

**Hesapa ki Lakhota ki Thawapi (The Black Hills Belong to the Sioux) 1984**

Laurie Frink, *trumpet*                      Theresa Patton, *flute*  
 Guy Klucevsek, *accordion*                John Kennedy, *drum*

**Sweeney Out West: 13 Vacation Mishaps\* (selections) 1986-1987**

Judith Gordon, *piano*

**Cyclic Aphorisms+ 1988**

Mia Wu, *violin*                                Jean Anne Albee, *piano*

**Desert Flowers# 1979**

Theresa Patton, *flute*

INTERMISSION

**Paris Intermezzo+ 1989**

Kyle Gann, *toy piano*

**The Convent at Tepoztlan\* 1989**

Judith Gordon, *piano*

**Mountain Spirit/Baptism 1983**

Melissa Lesbines, *DX7FD*  
 Theresa Patton & Trygve Peterson, *flutes*  
 John Kennedy & Charles Wood, *drums & bells*

+ First Performance  
 \* American Premiere  
 # New York Premiere

Program made possible in part through the Friends of Essential Music, the Marquis George MacDonald Foundation, and through a grant from Meet The Composer's Composer's Performance Fund, with support from the New York City Dept. of Cultural Affairs, NYSCA, NEA, and American Express Foundation, Morgan Guaranty Trust Co., Edith C. Blum Foundation, Oaklawn Foundation, and Bristol Meyers.

## U P C O M I N G   E V E N T S

### MUSIC OF MITCHELL CLARK

An emerging young voice in the American Experimental Tradition, Mitchell Clark composes evocative, poetic works with intense focus and purity of form and sound. Several new works will be presented, including "Harbor" for percussion and "Umbrae" for viola and cello. Featuring Judith Gordon, piano; Peter Standaart, flute; and others.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 18 at 8PM  
 GREENWICH HOUSE AUDITORIUM, 27 BARROW STREET

### MUSIC OF WILLIAM RUSSELL

Today William Russell lives in the French Quarter of New Orleans and occasionally plays at Preservation Hall. But back in the 1930's, he lived in New York and composed the most innovative and cantankerous percussion music of the era, some of which has never been performed! Join us in meeting and honoring one of America's most forgotten composers on the occasion of his 85th birthday, in beautiful Gould Hall at the French Institute. Linda Bouchard conducts the world premiere of "Made in America" and other works. This is going to be fun!

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24 at 8PM  
 GOULD HALL AT THE FRENCH INSTITUTE, 55 EAST 59<sup>th</sup> STREET

### DEPARTURE/RETURN

Our Annual May Day Concert (this year in April!) will as usual mix older works with new. We'll dust off George Antheil's "Airplane Sonata", John J. Becker's "Songs of Departure", and Henry Cowell's "Return". We'll give the first performance of a String Quartet composed by Johanna Beyer in 1938 and offer some recent works by sorely-neglected contemporaries James Tenney and Peter Garland.

THURSDAY, APRIL 12 at 8PM  
 GREENWICH HOUSE AUDITORIUM, 27 BARROW STREET

## E s s e n t i a l   M u s i c

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Since our start in 1987 we have produced many concerts, performances and other events that have brought to life the works of several important composers and sound artists. Of particular interest to us has been the idea of an American Experimental Tradition, born in rebellion against European musical traditions, coalescing during the 30's, and exemplified in the work of such composers as, among others, Henry Cowell, John Cage, John J. Becker, William Russell, Harry Partch and Johanna Beyer. The threads of rebellion have been, through the years, woven into a wonderfully many colored fabric of musical experimentalists working throughout the Americas and beyond. Essential Music will continue, in the years ahead, to explore this rich legacy and its current and future heirs. Please join with us in our ambition.

The support that we receive from our Friends is of great value to us. The next couple of years are going to be difficult for us and if Essential Music is going to be able to survive and flourish it will be as a direct result of the support and love of its Friends. It is extremely difficult for nascent organizations, like Essential Music, to obtain corporate and government grants, and such institutions use as one gauge of worthiness the willingness of individuals, like our Friends, to help us keep moving.

Friends of Essential Music, in addition to the intangible rewards of being a part of all this, receive the following:

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## KYLE GANN - AN APPRECIATION

"Undoubtedly our musical situation is fragmented. But the overriding duality that pertains is not minimalism vs. serialism, but minimalism/serialism vs. X, with many of the more thoughtful composers trying to figure out what X is. It has something to do with intuition, with the choice of a note or rhythm simply because one likes it, or has something emotional or spiritual to express; it has to do with the transcendence of *technique*, which from our habitual science-worship Americans presently overvalue. The Challenge is to rescue subjectivity from bad faith, to learn to rely once again on taste, feeling, inspiration, and the right brain."

- Kyle Gann, The Village Voice, 1987

While doing my graduate work in Chicago from 1982 to 1984, I became increasingly intrigued by the uncommonly thoughtful music reviews/essays in the Chicago Reader by a guy named Kyle Gann. When the opportunity arose to hear his music, I hastened to go in the hope that it had as much to say. I was not dissatisfied, and discovered that we shared in common an institutional path through Oberlin and Northwestern. Upon moving to New York and enjoining Charles Wood in grandiose plans, we figured on Kyle Gann being one of the unknown midwesterners we would share with New York. Kyle soon moved to The Village Voice and the rest, as they say, is history.

Tonight, many of you are probably here because of the same impulse I felt in Chicago. In the midst of a plethora of aesthetic options, we look for artists whose work springs from a thoughtfully integrated foundation, and it is natural to wonder if and how Kyle has worked that out. His music answers that he has done it through his own perscription above, with a humility aware of relativity and subjectivity.

While Gann's music has plenty of interesting and creative technical design, that design is in the service of expressing his ideals on subjects more important than music, such as our awareness of place, social justice, and the earth. He brings to his work the perspective of someone who studied philosophy as much as music. It is never tastelessly heavy-handed, and betrays a sense of humor that is literate but down to earth. His music is unabashedly beautiful without seeming anachronistic, and it is that courage that delivers intimate feeling so convincingly. Where Native American or other ethnic and folk materials are used, their function is not contrived, but rather works as spine and shadow for his aesthetic.

Above all, Kyle Gann's music confronts the spirit world directly, modeled after metaphysical designs and striving for affirmation. It is the unseen, intangible nature of music that makes it such a compelling sphere for our spiritual yearnings. In a sense, composers are philosophers who've figured out that words will never come close to expressing the magic of creation. Kyle's music seems motivated by that expressive attempt, to forge a musical sphere that unifies the perceptions of mind and heart.

In a concert devoted to the work of just one composer, the purpose is not to glorify or indulge, but to learn how it is that someone amongst us in this dizzying age, has integrated their person and art with relevance. Technique means little when it is not grounded with the integrity of a living entity with balanced parts. The history of the American Experimental Tradition is full of composers who balanced themselves with other forms of service to the music community: Cowell, Becker, Cage, Carter, Thomson, Garland, and others including Gann, who have helped keep their colleagues inspired through dialogue and communication. Kyle Gann is a music critic because he is a philosopher with good ears.

If the measure of music be its intertwining of sound and design in ways that delight the ear and mind, while at the same moment delivering human emotion that resonates as being more than human, then Kyle Gann is a most gifted composer. Kyle Gann's music is simply Kyle - straightforward, close to the earth yet driven by the philosophical, and full of genuine feeling. Though we would miss his thoughts on the rest of us, let's hope that his future allows for him to be thought of first as a composer.

- John Kennedy

## KYLE'S NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Hesapa ki Lakhota ki Thawapi is Lakhota for "The Black Hills Belong to the Sioux." This protest piece was written in 1984 during the American government's umpteenth attempt to steal the Sioux's uranium-rich sacred land in defiance of earlier treaties. The piece's structure is a metaphor: a calm, rolling, 12/8 pattern from which bits are progressively subtracted, rendering the rhythm nervous and fragmented. The melodies are developed from a Sioux Flag Song, quoted once in its entirety. I "made up" the drum's syncopations as a variation of Zuni patterns, then found identical rhythms in a song from San Juan pueblo.

Sweeny Out West: 13 Vacation Mishaps for Piano is a work in progress. A programmatic suite, it is a portrait of the gap between a man and reality, and of a vacation in which he is confronted with the things that occupy that gap: wife, kids, car, sex, etc. The protagonist and title of the first piece both come from T.S. Eliot:

The lengthened shadow of a man  
Is history, said Emerson,  
Who had not seen the silhouette  
Of Sweeny straddled in the sun.

In "Roadside Diner," Sweeny leaves motel and family to get a bowl of chili, and entertains an impossible fantasy concerning the waitress at a rural diner. In "The Ocotillo's Message," Sweeny communes with an ocotillo (a stiff desert plant which radiates upward from the earth), but can't overcome his psychological distance from it. "Satori Canyon" is the penultimate number, in which Sweeny gets a glimpse of enlightenment.

Cyclic Aphorisms is a set of studies which experiment with nonsynchronously repeating cycles inspired by Nietzsche's concept of the Eternal Recurrence principles of the turn-of-the-century Chicago theorist Bernhard Ziehn.

Desert Flowers was written in 1979 for flutist Suzanne Smith.

The Convent at Tepoztlan, for piano and tape, piano and synthesizer, or two pianos, is a tempo canon at a ratio of 23:24. In the first half, the tape plays the same material as the piano at a speed 23/24 as fast, then catches up in the second half by playing at 24/23 speed. The piece is an homage to Conlon Nancarrow, whose tempo canons are among the great wonders of 20th-century music. In September of 1989, Nancarrow and his wife took me to the town of Tepoztlan, near Cuernavaca, Mexico, where we visited a 16th-century convent. Unlike Nancarrow's canons, which emphasize speed and texture, The Convent at Tepoztlan emphasizes canonic structure, suggested by the convent's architecture.

In Mountain Spirit, each instrument has a cycle of a unique prime number of beats in length, with the electronic keyboard's cycle of 107 beats corresponding to the length of the source material, the "Mountain Spirit" song of the Apache. Within the keyboard's thirteen cycles, the "Mountain Spirit" theme is repeated in its original form four times, in accordance with the Native American custom of paying homage to the North, East, West, and South within each ceremony.

Baptism is based on a song of the Apache Native American Church entitled "Son of Our Father", although there are many other references to Protestant hymns. The form of the piece, in seven sections, was suggested by, and loosely follows, the account of the seven days of creation in Emmanuel Swedenborg's Arcana Coelestia, which explains them as veiled metaphors for the seven stages of the soul. Melodically, Baptism follows the Christian concept of conversion, developing from complexity to simplicity. In terms of tonality, it goes from simplicity to complexity and back, corresponding to the Zen concept of enlightenment. After beginning with Native American Church material, the idea of baptism is expressed with a certain pantheistic irony.

KYLE GANN, composer and music critic, writes a weekly new music column for the Village Voice in New York, and has written for the Chicago Tribune, the New York Times, the Chicago Sun-Times, and many other publications. His music is published by Editions V in Essen, West Germany, and has been performed in New York, Chicago, Dallas, Germany, Portugal, and Brazil. Born in 1955 in Dallas, Texas, he studied composition with Ben Johnston and Peter Gena, and philosophy at Oberlin College and Northwestern University. He travels widely in the southwest, and has a strong interest in American Indian Music and culture. During the spring of 1990, He will occupy the Kushell Chair in Music at Bucknell University.

\* \* \* \* \*

## THE PERFORMERS

JEAN ANNE ALBEE debuted as a soloist with the Buffalo Philharmonic at the age of 12, and has since appeared with the St. Louis Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra, and Lisbon Radio Orchestra. She performed in 1988 at the American Music Festival at Lincoln Center with Paul Zukofsky.

LAURIE FRINK has played with the big bands of Benny Goodman and Gerry Mulligan, and recorded with among others, the Talking Heads and David Bowie.

JUDITH GORDON's recent performances have included the Marlboro Festival and the N.Y. premiere of William Bolcom's Capriccio with Yo Yo Ma. She will give her New York solo debut in May 1990 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

GUY KLUCEVSEK has just completed a score for the choreographer Mark Taylor commissioned by the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust. Recent performances include a tour of Japan with Relache and an American tour with "Serious Fun" of Lincoln Center.

MELISSA LESBINES has performed with Laura Dean Dancers and Musicians, Percussion Group/Cincinnati, and as concerto soloist with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. This spring she looks forward to a solo recital tour in Greece.

THERESA PATTON has recently performed as a guest artist in a Paula Robison concert series at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She is currently touring America as principal Flute with "Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber".

TRYGVE PETERSON is currently working towards his D.M. at Julliard while on leave of absence from the faculty of Virginia Tech University.

MIA WU has a D.M. from Julliard and performs regularly with Continuum and other ensembles. She has recorded the Virgil Thomson Sonata for the Musical Heritage Society, is now on the faculty of Princeton University, and has a Merkin Hall recital in April 1990.

JOHN KENNEDY has appeared as a soloist with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Orchestra of St. Luke's, and at the Spoleto Festivals. Through Young Audiences, he conducts music residencies for emotionally handicapped children in New York City schools.

CHARLES WOOD's recent performances have included a production with his wife Jo Ann, that resulted on September 27 in the birth of Charles Henry "Hank" Wood.