

aleba gartner associates
134 henry street • new york, ny 10002
tel: 212/206-1450 • e-mail: a@alebagartner.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 13, 2009

Tickets & Information: 212/854-7799; www.millertheatre.com

Press Contacts:

Aleba Gartner, 212/206-1450; a@alebagartner.com

Christy Pill, 212/854-1488; cp2234@columbia.edu

“Columbia University’s Miller Theatre has become one of the city’s most popular venues for new music, offbeat ensembles and adventurous concerts.” — Bloomberg.com

MILLER THEATRE AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

fills November with three *Composer Portraits*:

Galina Ustvolskaya

Saturday, November 7, 8:00PM

A rare glimpse at the wild sound world of this reclusive student of Shostakovich

Ralph Shapey

Tuesday, November 17, 8:00PM

An all-star cast pays homage to this radical traditionalist

Kaija Saariaho

Sunday, November 22, 8:00PM

Jennifer Koh and ICE play the Finnish master’s mysterious violin concerto

Tickets: \$25 • Students: \$15

In the words of Melissa Smey, Miller’s “ambitious” (*The New York Times*) new director:

“Composer Portraits are back in full force this November with a talented array of artists—including Fifth House Ensemble in its Miller debut and return visits from some series favorites, including Jennifer Koh, Miranda Cuckson, and International Contemporary Ensemble. These fine performers will bring to life the wide-ranging repertoires of three diverse composers, Galina Ustvolskaya, Ralph Shapey, and Kaija Saariaho.”

Composer Portraits

GALINA USTVOLSKAYA (1919-2006)

Saturday, November 7, 8:00PM

Russian composer **Galina Ustvolskaya** studied under the tutelage of Dmitri Shostakovich, who openly admired both her and her work. Like Shostakovich, she had a public musical style to meet the approval of the Soviet regime that was in stark contrast to her personal style. The **Fifth House Ensemble** highlights the fierce sound world of Ustvolskaya’s music, most notably her **Piano Sonata No. 6**, full of raw, hammering, repetitive tone clusters.

PROGRAM: *Trio* (1949)

Piano Sonata No. 6 (1988)

Octet (1949-1950)

Composition 2 (1972-1973)

Piano Sonata No. 4 (1957)

Composition 3 (1974-1975)

ARTISTS: **Fifth House Ensemble**

BIOS: The music of Russian composer **GALINA USTVOLSKAYA** came shamefully late to the west—a premiere only in 1986—but it carried the force of a catastrophe when it arrived. Listeners and writers seemed drawn to descriptive metaphors for strength against itself, on the grandest scales: Ustvolskaya’s music was compared to dark stars, paralytic fervor, and a cosmos. But perhaps Ustvolskaya’s own proud assertion, that none of her music is chamber music, holds best: the space doesn’t surround the music; the music envelopes the space.

Ustvol'skaya studied at the music college affiliated with the Leningrad Conservatory. Upon graduating into the Conservatory, Ustvol'skaya began studies with Shebalin and Shostakovich. As of 2000, she had pursued an ascetic and withdrawn existence, writing only "when I am in a state of grace...when the time comes I reveal the composition. If the time does not come, I simply destroy it."

The Chicago-based **FIFTH HOUSE ENSEMBLE**'s innovative programs engage audiences through their connective programming and unexpected performance venues. A regular on the Chicago chamber music scene, Fifth House has performed on some of the city's most well-regarded series and venues. In addition to public performances, Fifth House Ensemble reaches out to those unable to make it to the concert stage through its MusiCare series. Recently named to the Illinois Arts Council's Arts-in-Education Roster, Fifth House's innovative educational endeavors have resulted in performances and residencies at Chicago public schools and the Chicago Cultural Center in partnership with the International Music Foundation.

Composer Portraits

RALPH SHAPEY (1921-2002)

Tuesday, November 17, 8:00PM

Philadelphia native Ralph Shapey is truly a unique American voice. Also a well-known conductor, he disregarded popular trends in composition and held the conviction that music, once created, should stand on its own. His music is tremendously difficult yet accessible, lyrical yet abrasive. A consortium of incredible artists join together to pay homage to this often-called "radical traditionalist," performing works composed between 1945 and 1996.

PROGRAM: *Five* for violin and piano (1960)
Interchange (1996)
Movements (1960)
Etchings (1945)
Concerto for clarinet and chamber group (1954)
Three for Six (1979)

ARTISTS: **Miranda Cuckson**, violin, viola, and artistic director
Charles Neidich, clarinet
William Purvis, horn
Blair McMillen, piano
Argento Chamber Ensemble
New York Woodwind Quartet
Talujon Percussion Quartet
Donato Cabrera, conductor
Michel Galante, conductor

BIOS: **RALPH SHAPEY** showed early talent as a violinist, composer, and conductor. As a composer, Shapey pursued excellence in his own style, regardless of trends; and in a world that places at least as much emphasis on the personality and image of the artist as on his work. In a career which encompassed composition, conducting, and teaching, Ralph Shapey received numerous awards and commissions. He was the recipient of a MacArthur Prize from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation (1982); the First Prize in the Kennedy Center Friedheim Competition (1990); and two commissions from the Library of Congress. He was elected in 1989 to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and in 1994 to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 1991, he retired from the University of Chicago, Professor Emeritus. Ralph Shapey died June 13, 2002.

MIRANDA CUCKSON has appeared internationally as soloist with many orchestras, including her 2008 debut with the Jerusalem Symphony conducted by Leon Botstein, and appearances with the Indianapolis Symphony, Shanghai Symphony, and Beijing Radio Orchestra. A passionate champion of new music, she is involved in groups including the Argento Chamber Ensemble and Sequitur, and has worked with composers such as Elliott Carter and Georg Friedrich Haas. Cuckson studied at The Juilliard School and teaches at The New School for Music.

CHARLES NEIDICH has been described as one of the most mesmerizing musicians today. He regularly appears as soloist and as collaborator in chamber music programs with leading ensembles. Known as a leading exponent of period instrument performance practice, Neidich was one of the first soloists to

improvise cadenzas and ornament classical concertos. Neidich is also an ardent exponent of new music and has premiered works by Milton Babbitt, Elliott Carter, Helmut Lachenmann, Ralph Shapey, and others.

Hornist **WILLIAM PURVIS** has performed with the festivals of Norfolk, Tanglewood, Chamber Music Northwest, Schleswig-Holstein, and Hong Kong. A champion of new music, he has given premieres of horn concertos by Peter Lieberson and Bayan Northcott. A graduate of Haverford College with a major in philosophy, he is currently a faculty member of the Yale School of Music, The Juilliard School, and SUNY–Stony Brook.

BLAIR MCMILLEN is known for imaginative and daring programming; he plays a repertoire that spans from late-medieval keyboard manuscripts to today's up-and-coming younger generation of composers. Dedicated to new and groundbreaking projects, McMillen is committed to performing the music of today. A native of Charlotte, North Carolina, McMillen holds degrees from Oberlin College, Manhattan School of Music, and The Juilliard School.

ARGENTO CHAMBER ENSEMBLE is the performance arm of the Argento New Music Project. Consisting of nine members, the ensemble expands to perform and record chamber orchestra works of up to 30 musicians. The ensemble has toured widely in the United States and abroad in festivals including the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, the International Festival of Spectral Music in Istanbul, Turkey, and the International Festival of Electro-acoustic music. The group has worked with leading composers such as Pierre Boulez, Elliott Carter, Philippe Hurel, and Philippe Leroux. The ensemble's first recording, featuring the music of Tristan Murail, was released in January of 2007 and received critical acclaim worldwide.

For almost 60 seasons, the **NEW YORK WOODWIND QUINTET** has maintained an active performance schedule in the United States and abroad while also teaching the next generation of woodwind performers. The Quintet has commissioned and premiered over 20 compositions. The group is continuing their now 15-year-long residency at The Juilliard School, where they present eight seminars each year for student woodwind quintets, teach individual students, and give regular coaching sessions.

TALUJON PERCUSSION QUARTET has been mesmerizing audiences since 1990. The group is committed to the expansion of the contemporary percussion repertoire as well as the education and diversification of its worldwide audience. Based in New York City, Talujon performs regularly at Alice Tully Hall, Merkin Concert Hall, and the Knitting Factory. Talujon has appeared in universities and concert halls throughout the United States, and on such festivals as Taipei's Lantern Festival, BAM's Next Wave Festival, and Bang on a Can.

DONATO CABRERA is currently an assistant conductor for the Metropolitan Opera. From 2005 to 2008, Cabrera was the associate conductor for the San Francisco Opera. In the spring of 2008, he conducted Brahms's *Symphony No. 1* with the San Francisco Conservatory Orchestra. As music director and co-founder of the American Contemporary Music Ensemble, Cabrera's commitment to new music was fully realized. Cabrera holds a bachelor's degree in music from the University of Nevada Reno, a master's degree in conducting from the University of Illinois, and has pursued graduate studies in conducting at Indiana University, Bloomington, and the Manhattan School of Music.

MICHEL GALANTE has performed as principal, guest, and assistant conductor with orchestras and ensembles in the United States, Canada, and Europe. He is a doctoral candidate in composition at Columbia University. His composition awards include Hertz, Fulbright, and Mellon fellowships, and prizes from ASCAP and the Composer's Guild.

Composer Portraits

KAIJA SAARIAHO (b. 1952)

Sunday, November 22, 8:00PM

Onstage discussion with Kaija Saariaho and George Lewis

Considered one of the most original compositional voices of our time, **Kaija Saariaho** is a prominent member of a group of Finnish composers now making a worldwide impact. Her music is at once opulent and mysterious, with dense ever-changing textures, often created by a combination of music and electronics. This Portrait features **Jennifer Koh** in the dramatic *Graal théâtre*, a 25-minute violin concerto that juxtaposes the virtuosity of the violinist with the activity of the ensemble (**International Contemporary Ensemble**, who return after the Xenakis Portrait), which morphs from delicate calm to vibrant commotion. Saariaho herself will be in attendance.

PROGRAM: *Terrestre* (2002)
Graal théâtre (violin concerto) (1994, rev. 1997)
Lichtbogen (1985-1986)
Solar (1993)

ARTISTS: **Jennifer Koh**, violin
International Contemporary Ensemble
Brad Lubman, conductor

BIOS: Born in 1952 in Finland, **KAIJA SAARIAHO** lived a childhood embedded in music, playing several instruments. At the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki she studied composition with Paavo Heininen, and later studied in Darmstadt then in Fribourg, with Brian Ferneyhough and Klaus Huber. Characterizing her works of the 1980s, her sensual writing, descriptive and lyrical, unfold subtle transformations. Starting in the 1990s, her music becomes more expressive, often faster in its melodic fluctuations. Saariaho's first opera, *L'Amour de loin*, garnered critical acclaim for its premiere at the Salzburg Festival in 2000, and won the Grawemeyer Composition Award in 2003.

Violinist **JENNIFER KOH** is recognized in the United States and abroad for her ability to fuse intensity of temperament with a classical poise and elegance. Since she came to international attention in 1994 as winner of the Tchaikovsky Competition, Koh has gone on to perform as guest soloist with many of the world's leading orchestras, including the Chicago Symphony, New York Philharmonic, and the Helsinki and Czech Philharmonics. She is an active chamber musician and recitalist, performing in New York, Philadelphia, and other centers with such distinguished artists as Jaime Laredo and Leon Fleisher. She is heard annually at the Spoleto Festival in Italy. Koh is a graduate of Oberlin College and an alumna of the Curtis Institute.

INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY ENSEMBLE (ICE) is a uniquely structured chamber ensemble comprised of emerging performers and composers who are dedicated to advancing the music of our time. Through innovative programming, multimedia collaborations, commissions by young composers, and performances in nontraditional venues, ICE brings together new music and new audiences. ICE was founded in 2001 and has rapidly established itself as one of the leading new-music ensembles of its generation. A champion of music by emerging composers, ICE has given over 200 world premieres to date.

BRAD LUBMAN has played a vital role in modern music for more than two decades. An unusually versatile conductor of orchestras and ensembles all over the world, Lubman has worked with a great variety of illustrious musical figures. Conducting a broad range of repertoire from classical to contemporary works, Lubman has appeared with the Dresden Philharmonic, DSO Berlin, Orchestre Philharmonique Radio France, London Sinfonietta, Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group, and Steve Reich Ensemble, amongst others. Lubman is co-artistic director and conductor of the new music ensemble Signal. Lubman is on faculty at the Eastman School of Music and Bang-on-a-Can Summer Institute.

*Columbia University's Miller Theatre is located north of the Main Campus Gate
at 116th St. & Broadway on the ground floor of Dodge Hall.*

For tickets, the public should call the Miller Theatre Box Office at 212/854-7799, M–F, 12–6PM.
Tickets can also be purchased online at www.millertheatre.com.

For further information, press tickets, and to arrange interviews,
please contact Aleba Gartner Associates at 212/206-1450 or a@alebagartner.com.

For photos, please contact Christy Pill at 212/854-1488 or cp2234@columbia.edu.

*Major support for the 2009-10 season is provided by the Peter Jay Sharp Foundation,
the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, the Francis Goelet Charitable Lead Trusts, and The Reed Foundation, Inc.*

*Major support for contemporary music programming is provided by the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust,
the Francis Goelet Charitable Lead Trusts, and The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Inc.*

#