



continuum
contemporary music

Continuum Contemporary Music
Presents

Wisdom of the Elders

Celebrating Continuum's 25th Anniversary
Friday, May 21, 8 pm at the Music Gallery

For Immediate Release – Toronto, April 8, 2010: Continuum's 25th anniversary season concludes with *Wisdom of the Elders*, a concert examining our place in the world – as members of Continuum and as members of the human race. The works on the program ask important questions: in *Narayana's Cows*, Tom Johnson musically interprets the 14th century Indian mathematician Narayana's investigation into population growth; in a new piece by Juliet Palmer, a setting of excerpts from the work of Native author Thomas King, the creation myth is reexamined; British composer Geoff Hannan underscores inequity in *Where I live is Shite/Where I live is Posh*. The concert is a celebration of Continuum's achievements since its inception and features old friends, some of whom were members when the group was a collective of musicians and composers fresh out of school. Other special guests are soprano **Carla Huhtanen** and acclaimed actor **RH Thomson**.

For this milestone concert, Continuum commissioned a new work from Toronto-based **Juliet Palmer** (funded jointly by the Toronto Arts Council and the Ontario Arts Council). A setting of text taken from *Green Grass, Running Water* by Native author Thomas King, *How it Happened* is coyote's tale of how we got where we are today. Juliet Palmer, a native of New Zealand, has had works performed throughout North America, the Pacific Rim and Europe, was nominated for a Dora Award for *Stitch*, an interdisciplinary work for three women and three sewing machines, and is currently working on *Shelter*, a full-length work for Tapestry New Opera, and on *Voice Box*, for boxing women singers, commissioned by Harbourfront. **Thomas King** is an award-winning Native novelist, children's author, professor, editor, radio host, lecturer and politician. The work is narrated by the renowned actor **RH Thomson**, who, true to the theme of the concert, is almost as well-known for his environmental and social activism as his work on stage and screen.

American seminal minimalist composer **Tom Johnson** (in fact he coined the term "minimalism" in his writings for the Village Voice) is featured in two works. *Narayana's Cows* is a musical interpretation of a mathematical calculation by the 14th century Hindu mathematician Narayana of the increase in a herd or cattle through 17 years – the population explosion made explicit in music: "It begins with the original cow and her first calf: long-short. The second year she has another calf: long-short-short. The third year: long-short-short-short. Then in the fourth year, the first calf also becomes a mother and the herd grows from four to six: long-short-short-short-long-short. The music continues like this, though it doesn't go all the way to the 20th year, because by the 17th year there are already 872 cows and calves and 15 minutes of music." (Jean Allouche and Tom Johnson) In *Tortue de Mer* he transcribes for bass saxophone a game of sand drawing and story telling as practiced by the people of Pacific island of Vanuatu.

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British composer **Geoff Hannan** has said, "I'm interested by what goes on in the world. If my music is absurd, sublime, irritating or inspiring it's because the world is too. There are conflicting ideas, beliefs and values everywhere and I find this mess both attractive and challenging. It's attractive because there really is no right and wrong (at least in music!) and challenging because of the energy required to preserve a sense of self when previously cherished certainties are toppling like dominoes." With *Where I Live is Shite / Where I Live is Posh*, Hannan delivers a sense of these conflicting values in musical social satire that reveals the effect of population pressures – inequitable access to resources resulting in unhappiness and absurdity.

Continuum also reprises *Jackhammer Lullaby*, commissioned in 2008 from **Aaron Gervais**, a young Canadian composer whose music successfully marries diverse and seemingly conflicting influences, without resorting to pastiche.

Continuum presents concerts featuring the core ensemble of flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano, and percussion, as well as unusual instrumental combinations. The organization has commissioned and premiered close to 150 new works from emerging Canadian and international composers, and also established composers charting new territory. Increasingly the group engages in collaboration and interdisciplinary work. Led by Artistic Director Jennifer Waring, Continuum has toured Canada, and twice to Europe. The group has recorded two CDs on its own label, formed the recording ensemble for a Centrediscs release of works by Chris Paul Harman and is soon to record a CD of works by James Rolfe, also for Centrediscs. Interdisciplinary projects have paired music with dance, installation, film, architecture and philosophy. In 2005 Continuum presented *l'Oreille Fine*, three days of concerts and a symposium featuring philosophers, poets, critics and a psychologist dealing with the subject of contemporary expression in a classical art form. More recently Continuum mounted SHIFT, a festival of Canadian and Dutch music, film and literature, in Amsterdam, Toronto and Ottawa.

In addition to the May 21st performance, Continuum performs May 20th at noon as part of the free concert series at the Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre; the May 20th performance also features guest artist Carla Huhtanen, soprano.

Continuum is generously supported by the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, the City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council, SOCAN Foundation, the George Cedric Metcalf Charitable Foundation through its Strategic Initiatives programme and many private donors.

**Wisdom of the Elders: Friday, May 21, 2010, 8 pm.
The Music Gallery: St. George-the-Martyr Church, 197 John Street
Tickets (\$20 / \$15 / \$10) available at wisdom.eventbrite.com
or at the door on the night of the concert.**

For more information on this concert please visit www.continuummusic.org,
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