

**The Modern Art Museum of Fort
Worth**

presents

Sounds Modern

performing

Coming Together

by

Frederic Rzewski

Saturday, May 5, 2012, 2:00 pm

Modern Art Museum auditorium

***Coming Together* (1972)**

Frederic Rzewski (b. 1938)

Part I: Coming Together

Part 2: Attica

Paul Slavens, narrator

Elizabeth McNutt, flute; Kimberly Cole Luevano, clarinet; Rachel Yoder, bass clarinet; Jeremiah Stones, bass trombone; Christopher Deane, percussion; Christopher Trebue Moore, electric guitar; Shannon Wettstein, piano; Matt Albert and Andrew May, violins

Sounds Modern is directed by Elizabeth McNutt, with assistance from Andrew May. The next Sounds Modern event will be on September 15, in connection with the exhibition of Lucien Freud's paintings. More information: soundsmodern.org

Glenn Ligon and *Coming Together*

Glenn Ligon's art works are rich with cultural references, often dealing with aspects of the American experience including oppression within our society. His work uses text and repetition, sometimes in simplistic forms. Likewise, Rzewski's *Coming Together* also deals with oppression, using simple materials, including text, that are repeated and varied. The themes of Ligon's and Rzewski's work are related, even similar, though they come from different generations and races. Perhaps through art works such as these, a greater coming together can be achieved, at least a little.

Glenn Ligon's art works confront issues of injustice and oppression in the American experience. He comments upon and reinvents powerful texts, often setting them in surprising contexts and repeating words or phrases so that they become visual elements. Frederic Rzewski transforms the text of *Coming Together* using similar techniques: a surprising musical context for the spoken words, and a simple, formulaic way of extending the text and the musical material (in essence nothing more than a pentatonic scale) over time. Ligon and Rzewski work in different art forms, different generations, different identities, different races – but their approaches to art, culture, and politics are in some cases startlingly similar. Through art works such as these, a greater coming together can be achieved.

From the composer:

Coming Together was written in November and December of 1971 in response to a historical event. In September of that year inmates of the state prison at Attica, New York revolted and took control of a part of the institution. Foremost among their demands was the recognition of their right "to be treated as human beings." After several days of fruitless negotiations, Governor Nelson Rockefeller ordered state police to retake the prison by force, on the grounds that the lives of the guards whom the prisoners had taken as hostages were in danger. In the ensuing violence forty-three persons, including several of the hostages, were killed and many more wounded.

One of the dead was Sam Melville, a prisoner who had played a significant role in organizing the rebellion. In the spring of 1971, Melville had written a letter to a friend describing his experience of the passage of time in prison. After his death the letter was published in the magazine, *Ramparts*. As I read it I was impressed both by the poetic quality of the text and by its cryptic irony. I read it over and over again. It seemed that I was trying both to capture a sense of the physical presence of the writer, and at the same time to unlock a hidden meaning from the simple but ambiguous language. The act of reading and rereading finally led me to the idea of a musical treatment. The text is as follows: "I think the combination of age and a greater coming together is responsible for the speed of the passing time. It's six months now, and I can tell you truthfully few periods in my life have passed so quickly. I am in excellent physical and emotional health. There are doubtless subtle surprises ahead, but I feel secure and ready. As lovers will contrast their emotions in times of crisis, so am I dealing with my environment. In the indifferent brutality, the incessant noise, the experimental chemistry of food, the ravings of lost hysterical men, I can act with clarity and meaning. I am deliberate, sometimes even calculating, seldom employing histrionics except as a test of the reactions of others. I read much, exercise, talk to guards and inmates, feeling for the inevitable direction of my life."

Attica was originally intended to follow *Coming Together* after a short silence, so that the two pieces together would form a pair of dark and light images of the same subject. In this case it is a survivor of the event who speaks: Richard X. Clark, who was freed on parole some weeks after the massacre. As the car taking him to Buffalo passed the Attica town line, the reporter sitting next to him asked him how it felt to leave Attica behind him. His answer, "Attica is in front of me," became the text for this piece.

About the Performers

Matt Albert is the Director of Chamber Music and of SYZYGY at Meadows School of the Arts, Southern Methodist University. He was a founding member of eighth blackbird, with whom he received numerous awards, including first prizes at the Naumburg, Concert Artists Guild, Coleman, and Fischhoff Competitions. Matt holds degrees from Oberlin College and Conservatory, the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and Northwestern University School of Music.

Associate Professor of Percussion at the UNT College of Music, **Christopher Deane** also serves as Principal Percussionist for the Las Colinas Symphony Orchestra. Has performed with major orchestras including the Dallas, Detroit, Cincinnati, Minnesota, North Carolina and Utah Symphony Orchestra as well as the Boston Pops Orchestra. He has recorded with the Detroit Symphony, the North Carolina Symphony, the Dallas Wind Symphony, the Cincinnati Philharmonia and the UNT Wind Symphony. He has won both 1st and 2nd prize in composition from the Percussive Arts Society and his compositions for percussion are regularly performed internationally.

With reviews such as "breathtaking...", "virtuosic tone and technique," and "exceptionally sensitive and introspective rendition," **Kimberly Cole Luevano** continually establishes herself as a formidable soloist and chamber musician. Luevano joined the University of North Texas faculty in 2011, is a faculty member at the renowned Interlochen Arts Camp, and has adjudicated, presented masterclasses, and given acclaimed performances throughout North and South America and Europe. Former students occupy positions throughout the United States and Canada. Luevano studied in Paris, France as the recipient of a U. S. Government Fulbright Grant and is featured on compact discs on the Centaur and Albany labels.

Flutist **Elizabeth McNutt** is a recitalist who primarily performs contemporary music. She has premiered approximately 200 works and performed in Europe, Asia, and throughout the U.S. Her solo CD *pipe wrench: flute and computer* is on EMF Media; her other recordings are on CRI, Centaur, SEAMUS, and Parma. Her writing has been published in *Organized Sound*, *Music Theory Online*, and *Flutist Quarterly*. She frequently performs in the Calliope Duo and in The Tornado Project. McNutt is on the faculty at University of North Texas, where she teaches flute and directs the new music ensemble Nova.

Violinist and composer **Andrew May** is best known for his chamber music, especially works involving live interactive computer systems. He is on the composition faculty of the University of North Texas. He has performed internationally as a violinist and conductor, specializing in adventurous new music and avant-garde improvisation. He has been involved in organizing several new music concert series, including Pendulum, Atomic Clock Music Events, CEMI Presents, and Sounds Modern.

Christopher Trebue Moore is a composer and guitarist, originally from the North Texas area. His works have been performed across North America and Europe by a host of performers including the Arditti String Quartet, MusikFabrik, Ensemble Surplus, and the International Contemporary Ensemble. A graduate of Stanford University (DMA, 2008), Dr. Moore currently works as Visiting Assistant Professor of composition studies at the University of North Texas.

Paul Slavens has been active in the DFW area for the last 25 years. He was a founding member of the band Ten Hands, music director for Fort Worth's Four Day Weekend improv comedy troupe and is currently host of the Paul Slavens Show on 91.7 KXT. He plays regularly in the area with his improvisational musical comedy band and is a Voice Over talent with Kim Dawson Agency.

Jeremiah Stones is a freelance trombonist and professor of music at Grayson College. He has performed as a featured soloist in the USA, Holland, Spain, and Denmark. His awards include winning the University of North Texas' Concerto Competition (2007), Eastern Trombone Workshop's National Solo Competition (2007), and International Trombone Association's orchestral bass trombone competition (2010).

Shannon Wettstein, pianist, is internationally acclaimed for her performances of the most adventurous new music as a soloist, with the ensemble Zeitgeist, and with the Calliope duo with flutist Elizabeth McNutt. This month she will premiere Chinary Ung's *Spiral XIV*. Her teachers include Aleck Karis at the University of California, San Diego, Stephen Drury at New England Conservatory, Sequeira Costa, Richard Angeletti and Claude Frank, at the University of Kansas. Recordings are available on Centaur, Tzadik, Innova, and Koch labels. On the faculty of Augsburg College, she also enjoys teaching yoga, and loves being the mom of two dogs.

Rachel Yoder is professor of clarinet at Southeastern Oklahoma State University and a freelance musician and teacher in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. She performs with the Madera Wind Quintet and the Sherman Symphony in addition to frequent collaborations with composers to perform new works for clarinet.

Thanks to Julie West, Andrew May, Tina Gorski, the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, and Atomic Clock Music Events for their support of this performance.