



For Immediate Release
Monday, Aug. 20

Contact:
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(917) 676-8983

ARTSaha! FESTIVAL PRESENTS RARE PERFORMANCE OF “BALLET MÉCANIQUE” SCORE AND ABSTRACT FILM

OMAHA, NEB., Aug. 20, 2007 – For only the fourth time in U.S. history, a simultaneous performance of the original 1924 “Ballet Mécanique” orchestral score and film will be presented Saturday, Sept. 8 at the University of Nebraska at Omaha’s Strauss Performing Arts Center.

The concert and film screening, which begins at 7:30 p.m., is part of the annual ARTSaha! new music festival, a collaborative artistic venture from ANALOG *arts ensemble*.

French artist Fernand Léger created the abstract short film in 1924 and commissioned American expatriate George Antheil to compose the film’s score.

The 16-minute film depicts a dance, or ballet, of objects and machinery, and its score was intended to reflect the rhythmic mechanical movements of the “dancers.” Antheil’s score was a cacophony of sound, calling for 16 synchronized player pianos and an eclectic collection of percussion. Léger ultimately rejected Antheil’s score because it was twice as long as the film itself and nearly too complicated to perform. The original score and film were not publicly shown together until 1990 when computer technology made performance possible, said Dolf Kämper, co-artistic director of ANALOG *arts ensemble*.

The ARTSaha! concert will include four Yamaha disklaviers (modern player pianos) synchronized through MIDI-technology. Two live pianos, four bass drums, three xylophones - plus the sounds of bells, fans, whistles, sirens and propellers - will heighten the rapid cadence and aural richness, Kämper said.

The first half of the concert will showcase other works for player pianos, including the world premiere of two unpublished pieces by Conlon Nancarrow, a major figure in 20th century music. The complete concert program is posted online at www.artsaha.org.

The concert is one of the highlight events of the ARTSaha! festival taking place from Sept. 7 to Sept. 15 in Omaha. The festival’s theme is: “The Future of Music. Now.” ARTSaha! is a production of ANALOG *arts ensemble* in partnership with the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

The festival is supported by the Nebraska Humanities Council, and its sponsors include The Reader, Reniers Pianos and Yamaha.

Tickets are \$15 and are available at the door. A pre-concert talk by Dolf Kämper will begin at 7 p.m. For more information, contact Regina Syquia at (917) 676-8983 or rs@analogarts.org.

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ANALOG MOUNTS 24-HOUR MARATHON ORGAN PERFORMANCE

OMAHA, NEB., Aug. 20, 2007 – ANALOG *arts ensemble* will mount a 24-hour marathon performance of John Cage's epic organ piece "ASLSP (As Slow as Possible)" on Monday, Sept. 10 as part of Omaha's new music festival ARTSaha!

The marathon will run from midnight to midnight at the First Central Congregational Church, 421 S. 36th St. Admission is free.

ANALOG co-directors Joseph Drew and Rudolf Kämper will work the manuals of the First Central Congregational Church's organ for this day-long marathon. Drew has previously performed the piece in Omaha and Cleveland for nine and 12-hour stretches, respectively. The piece is currently being performed in Halberstadt, Germany, over the course of 639 years.

American composer John Cage wrote "ASLSP" in 1985 as an open score, with notes that can be held for an unspecified amount of time. To ensure varying combinations of the piece's eight movements, Cage instructed the performers to omit one movement of their choice and to repeat another.

"One of Cage's biggest contributions to music was the way he left so many decisions up to the musician. 'ASLSP' is mentally challenging and physically demanding to perform at such lengths, but it is liberating as well and very much in line with the Asian traditions that inspired Cage so profoundly," Drew said.

Audience members are encouraged to use the sonic atmosphere in whatever way they choose: relaxing, reading, meditating, sleeping, or speaking to the performers. They may come and go freely throughout the concert. A schedule of the piece's individual movements is posted on the festival Web site at www.artsaha.org.

A discussion of the piece and its significance will take place at 6 p.m. during a break in the performance.

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STUDENT COMPOSERS FACE OFF IN “IRON COMPOSER OMAHA”

OMAHA, NEB., Aug. 20, 2007 – Student composers will go pen-to-pen in Iron Composer Omaha, a speed-composition contest on Tuesday, Sept. 11, as part of Omaha’s new music festival ARTSaha!

The competition will give five finalists one day to write an original piece of music to be performed that evening before a live audience and panel of judges. Final performances begin at 7:30 p.m. at the University of Nebraska at Omaha’s Strauss Performing Arts Center.

Iron Composer Omaha is a new kind of instant-composition contest, inspired by the Iron Chef television show. A musical ‘secret ingredient’ will be unveiled at noon. Contestants will have five hours to incorporate the ingredient into a score for a particular instrumentation. Judges will determine the Iron Composer immediately following the final performances. The top three finishers will receive cash prizes ranging from \$100 to \$500.

The competition is open to student composers between the ages of 18 to 26 currently residing in Nebraska. Five finalists will be selected from the pool of applicants, each of whom must submit sample compositions by Aug. 31 to be considered. The contest is coordinated by Dr. Kenton Bales, a UNO music professor.

“I’ve been involved in national student composition competitions for over 15 years, and I’m excited about Iron Composer Omaha because there is nothing else like it. It challenges student composers to focus on a project in a timely fashion, and it should be tremendous fun for both the participants and the audience,” Bales said.

The judges will be Thomas Wilkins, music director of the Omaha Symphony; John Klinghammer, clarinetist with the Omaha Symphony; and Doug Helvering, co-founder of Amber Waves Music Publishing. Scores will be evaluated on their use of the secret ingredient, originality, technical command and overall presentation.

Following the judging, ANALOG will perform other modern works including the music of Henry Cowell, Luciano Berio, Duke Ellington and Radiohead. The complete concert program is posted online at www.artsaha.org.

Iron Composer Omaha is a Robert M. Spire Student Composition Competition presented as part of the ARTSaha! music festival taking place from Sept. 7 to Sept. 15 in Omaha. The festival’s theme is: “The Future of Music. Now.” ARTSaha! is a production of ANALOG *arts ensemble* in

partnership with the University of Nebraska at Omaha. The festival is supported by the Nebraska Humanities Council, and its sponsors include The Reader, Reniers Pianos and Yamaha.

Tickets are \$10 and are available at the door. A pre-concert talk will begin at 7 p.m. For more information, contact Regina Syquia at (917) 676-8983 or rs@analogarts.org.

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CLASSICAL MUSIC PIONEERS CELEBRATED IN “ECOUTEZ” CONCERT

OMAHA, NEB., Aug. 20, 2007 – The University of Nebraska at Omaha’s “Ecoutez” concert series will kick off the year with a celebration of groundbreaking classical music on Friday, Sept. 14 at 7:30 p.m. at UNO’s Strauss Performing Arts Center.

The concert will be ANALOG *arts ensemble*’s debut on the Ecoutez series. The program, entitled “Go Figaro!,” features music that challenged the prevailing conventions of its time. The centerpiece of the evening will be ANALOG’s version of Igor Stravinsky’s “The Rite of Spring,” a piece whose premiere was considered “the birthplace of the modern,” said ANALOG co-artistic director Joseph Drew.

“The title ‘Go Figaro!’ is a pun on the character of the common man created in the 18th century, who found his way into operas by Mozart and Rossini. Like so much of what was happening at that time, he was revolutionary and, ultimately, an engine for change. We’ll trace the character as he reappears in music from just about every era, from the Renaissance through the Romantic, and showcase the pieces that shook things up in their day,” Drew said.

The repertoire of classical music’s most memorable moments will range from the more familiar composers, such as Palestrina and Beethoven, to the unexpected, including the street musician Moondog.

Tickets are \$15 for the public and are available at the door. Students with identification will be admitted free. A pre-concert talk about the turning points in music history presented in the program will begin at 7 p.m. A detailed program can be found on the festival Web site at www.artsaha.org.

“Go Figaro!” is one of the highlight events of the ARTSaha! festival taking place from Sept. 7 through 15 in Omaha. The festival’s theme is: “The Future of Music. Now.” ARTSaha! is a production of ANALOG *arts ensemble* in partnership with the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

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AUDIO-VISUAL JOURNEY SHOWCASES VISIONS OF THE FUTURE

OMAHA, NEB., Aug. 20, 2007 – ANALOG *arts ensemble* presents “Cowardly Old World,” an audio-visual journey through time, on Saturday, Sept. 15 at 7:30 p.m. at the University of Nebraska at Omaha’s Mallory Kountze Planetarium. Admission is free.

The concert is based on a story by Los Angeles filmmaker Gordon L. Smith as part of Omaha’s new music festival ARTSaha!

Inspired by the festival theme of futurism, Smith created a narrative featuring a fictional character Gil Rimple who becomes unstuck in time. The audience will travel with Rimple as he bounces throughout time to visit different visions of the future. These predictions stem from a broad range of visionaries including Al Gore, Jules Verne, Nostradamus, George Orwell, H.G. Wells and others.

“I’ve always been fascinated by the different futures shown in movies. ‘Bladerunner’ is the first film I remember seeing in the theatre, and shows like ‘The Jetsons’ and ‘Buck Rogers’ influenced me from a very young age. There’s a very deep need, I think, for people to speculate about the future and try to make sense of what’s happening to them right now,” Smith said.

The accompanying program of electronic music includes several new compositions by ANALOG *arts ensemble* members as well as classics of the genre. ANALOG will mount an acousmonium, or sound diffusion scheme, to wrap the audience in a blanket of sound. With the projection capabilities of UNO’s triple-screen planetarium, the event will be an extravaganza of both sight and sound.

A pre-concert talk about the future visions presented in “Cowardly Old World” and sound diffusion will begin at 7 p.m.

“Cowardly Old World” is one of the highlight events of the ARTSaha! festival taking place from Sept. 7 through 15 in Omaha. The festival’s theme is: “The Future of Music. Now.” ARTSaha! is a production of ANALOG *arts ensemble* in partnership with the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

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