Program

**From String Quartet No. 2 (2008)**
- Michael Nyman (1944 - ) (arr. David Roach)
  - I.
  - II.
  - III.

**July (1995)**
- Michael Torke (1961 - )
  - Douglas MacArthur, *photography*

**String Quartet No. 3 (2008)**
- Michael Nyman (1944 - ) (arr. David Roach)

**Strange Humors (2008)**
- John Mackey (1973 - )
  - Jonathan Miller, *djembe*
  - Krista Behling, *dance*
  - Morgan Kudlich, *dance*

*Intermission*

**Saxophone Quartet (1995)**
- Philip Glass (1937 - )
  - I. $J = 116$
  - II. $J = 144$
  - III. $J = 104$
  - IV. $J = 144$

*Reception to follow*

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Transaxual would like to thank Douglas MacArthur, Jonathan Miller, Krista Behling, Morgan Kudlich, Kyle Unruh and Jon Stein for their efforts on this project. Additionally, we would like to thank our parents and the faculty at CWU for their vested interest in our growth and development and our friends and peers for their continued inspiration.

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Central Washington University
Department of Music

Transaxual

Birkin Owart, *soprano*
Nicholas Sokol, *alto*
Terrell Stephens, *tenor*
Alison Visser, *baritone*

Music Building Recital Hall
17 May 2011
8:00 pm
Program Background

Minimalist composer, pianist, librettist, and musicologist, Michael Nyman is one of the most important contemporary musical figures of our time; he is known predominately for his film score to The Piano (1993), many operas, and collaborations with the Michael Nyman Band. Harmonically and melodically, Nyman’s String Quartet No. 2 (1988) uses techniques from the Western musical tradition, yet structurally and rhythmically, the inspiration is from the Carnatic and Bharata Natyam traditions of India. Each of the six movements is based on a different beat pattern, with the first being 4-beat, the second 5-beat, the third 6-beat, etc., in varying subdivisions. The piece was originally designed for a dance work entitled Miniatures and was choreographed and performed by Shobana Jeyasingh. Michael Nyman Band saxophonist David Roach (1955-) arranged this particular three-movement version—corresponding to the first, third and fourth movements of the original work—for saxophone quartet, along with additional edits that are necessary to make the work playable for saxophone quartet.

One of the most popular recent pieces for saxophone quartet, motives used in July were originally conceived from a pop tune heard by the composer. Contrasting themes, perhaps representing the daytime energy and the refreshing evening breezes of the summer months, are used to evoke the expression of multiple colors. This compositional idea is explored in the piece December (1995), which preceded July, and is a development of his compositional style as earlier works, such as Bright Blue Music (1985), Ecstatic Orange (1985), Purple (1987), Ash (1988), and many others, were focused on conveying a single impression. July was initially commissioned and premiered by the Apollo Saxophone Quartet. Local photography by Douglas MacArthur is used to augment the sensations produced by this piece.

String Quartet No. 3 (1990) uses material from previous works—in particular the choral piece Out of the Ruins—and is marked by an ascending seven-note scalar ostinato. The piece is based on Romanian folk music (gathered by a postgraduate ethnomusicological trip in 1965) and was commissioned by the virtuoso Romanian violinist Alexander Balanescu. Although in some cases entire sections were omitted in this edition for saxophone quartet (another David Roach arrangement), the piece nonetheless maintains its power of expression.

Originally for string quartet and djembe, Strange Humors (2002) melds African-style hand drumming with middle-eastern folk melodies to create a mysterious, sultry atmosphere. The piece is designed to incorporate dance choreography and initially gained notoriety through the Parsons Dance Company and the Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival. The piece was subsequently adapted for concert and saxophone quartet by the composer in 2006 and 2008 respectively, with the saxophone quartet version being instigated by the Michigan-based H2 Quartet.

One of the most important and influential composers of the late twentieth century and beyond, Philip Glass wrote his Concerto for Saxophone Quartet and Orchestra in 1995 for the world-renowned Raschèr Saxophone Quartet. Each of the four movements is stylistically distinct and features a different member of the saxophone quartet. The piece was designed with two versions: one for saxophone quartet and orchestra and another for saxophone quartet only. Particularly challenging and taxing from an endurance standpoint, the version for saxophone quartet alone requires all four members of the quartet to essentially be continuously playing to account for all orchestra parts.
About Us

The name Transxual takes its inspiration from an idea popularized by Alfred Kinsey (1894-1956) through his research, which supported that the suppression of natural sexual expression is psychologically detrimental to the individual. The poignant nature of the name is then used to support this idea. The name is also an extended metaphor for our conception of the saxophone: like a transgender individual, who may look one way yet behave quite differently, we use the saxophone family to play a different style of music than what is popularly expected.

Graduating this spring with baccalaureate degrees in biology and music, Birkin will be a graduate research assistant in the CWU department of biological sciences next fall. In the community he has served on the Arts Commission for the City of Ellensburg and presently serves on the Board of Trustees for Gallery One. He is an environmental health intern with the Kittitas County Department of Health and intends to work in public health administration in the future.

Nick is completing a double major in music theory/composition and jazz studies. Although graduating this spring, he plans on continuing his education to allow him to teach at the college level. Nick is the current president of the Central Jazz Organization. Wherever he finds himself after graduation, he hopes to establish himself in the local music community as a performer and educator of jazz and contemporary, improvisatory music.

Terrell is a third-year Music Education major, with minors in both Musical Theatre and Exercise Science. He is also the Artistic Director of CWU’s Crimsons Guard & Dance, as well as a Navy veteran and a drilling reservist. With backgrounds in dance, music, theatre, and visual art he hopes to inspire the youth of tomorrow through arts education and performance.

Also graduating this spring with a degree in elementary education and a minor in music, Alison is currently working as a student teacher at Valley View Elementary in Ellensburg. She loves the time she spends in the classroom and especially enjoys teaching the children through music.