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**Faculty Recital Series**

**2009-2010 Season**

Monday, February 15  
Helen M. Hosmer Hall  
7:30 PM

**Lyn Ellen Burkett**  
**An Evening of 20<sup>th</sup>- and 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Harpsichord Music**

Fantasy for Harpsichord (1983)	Ellen Taaffe Zwilich (b. 1939)
Toccatina (2008)	Paul Siskind (b. 1962)
Idée Prix Fixe: Six French Delicacies for Harpsichord (2004) Idée d'Indy Canapés Couperin Bouillon Boulez Légumes Lully Sorbet Satie Poulet Poulenc	Kari Henrik Juusela (b. 1954)
Phantasm 6-Z44 (2003)	Bryan Burkett (b. 1961)
Bridges to Span Adversity (1991) Moderately slow, very expressively Fast, and with a joyful spirit	Samuel Adler (b. 1928)
Dizzy Fingers (1923)	ZeZ Confrey (1895-1971)

**Dr. Lyn Ellen Burkett** has taught courses in music theory and history, including courses on women and popular music in the US and the analysis of rock music, at the Crane School of Music since 2001. She has studied piano with Gary Wolf, Mary Ann Covert, and Carolyn Bridger, and harpsichord with Karyl Louwenaar Lueck and Elisabeth Wright.

As a music theorist, she studies early twentieth-century composers and their approaches to teaching composition; her research has focused primarily on Charles Seeger, Paul Hindemith, and Ernst Krenek. She is particularly interested in the religious and metaphysical underpinnings of individual composers' creative processes, and continues to write on this subject. Another scholarly interest is the area of girls and popular music. Dr. Burkett is currently involved in documenting music as it was presented in *Seventeen* magazine from 1944 to 1981.

She especially enjoys teaching music fundamentals and music history to non-musicians and amateur musicians. As an adjunct faculty member at Indiana University, she taught music theory and music appreciation courses, including a course on avant-garde 20<sup>th</sup>-century music for non-music majors. Here in Potsdam she has taught a course on music reading for choir singers, offered free of charge to interested community members.

As a harpsichordist, she has performed with the Potsdam Community Choir, the Orchestra of Northern New York, and the Crane String Orchestra. In April 2008 she performed Bryan Burkett's *Phantasm 6-Z 44 for Harpsichord* at the College Music Society's Superregional Conference at Gettysburg College.

Dr. Burkett holds a Master of Music degree in piano performance from Ithaca College and a Ph.D. in music theory from Indiana University. She lives in Potsdam with her husband Bryan, a composer, and their dog Cookie.

In order to ensure a pleasant concert experience for both performers and audience, please refrain from:

- Entering or leaving during the performance.
- Bringing food or drink into the concert hall.
- Taking flash photographs.
- Using electronic devices (please remember to turn off your cellular phone, pagers and watches that chime on the hour).

Children who are able to sit quietly during the performance are welcome to our concerts.

Tape/video recording of performances is strictly prohibited without permission of the performers!

Thank you!

Schoenberg (formerly Schönberg before he Anglicized his name) used a Renaissance technique called *soggetto cavato*—literally, carved subject—to create a pitch pattern from his last name. Schönberg’s *soggetto cavato* is Eb, C, B, Bb, E, G.

S	C	H	Ö	N	B	E	R	G
Eb	C	B			Bb	E		G

In German, Es = Eb, H = B, and B = Bb. In a theoretical system devised by Allen Forte, these six notes comprise pitch set 6-Z44, hence the title of the piece.”

### ***Bridges to Span Adversity (1991)***

Composer and conductor Samuel Adler was born in Germany and came to the United States with his family in 1939. He has taught composition at North Texas State University, Eastman School of Music, and the Julliard School. He wrote *Bridges to Span Adversity* “in celebration of the life of my good friend and colleague Jan DeGaetani (1933-1989).” Mezzo-soprano DeGaetani specialized in avant-garde repertoire. In 1970 she gave the first performance of George Crumb’s *Ancient Voices of Children*, and her recording of Arnold Schoenberg’s *Pierrot Lunaire* is particularly notable.

The first movement of *Bridges to Span Adversity* offers quiet contemplation, with a rhythmic figure that suggests a gentle swaying motion. The movement’s reorientation from the harpsichord’s upper register in the opening measures to its lower register in the closing measures suggests prayer; perhaps a rising up toward the divine and a return to the earthly. The second movement, in stark contrast to the first, moves at a frenetic pace through many different musical ideas. For me, this movement brings to mind the spontaneous flood of happy and even humorous memories that one sometimes experiences soon after the death of a loved one.

### ***Dizzy Fingers (1923)***

ZeZ Confrey was born Edward Elzear in 1895 in Peru, IL. Composer of *Kitten on the Keys* (1921), he was one of the foremost composers in the American genre of novelty piano music in the 1920s. For the diligent piano student who has put in time practicing scales and arpeggios, *Dizzy Fingers* is a day at the playground, complete with a swing across the monkey bars and a coast down the giant slide. Although Confrey wrote this work for piano, I am taking the liberty of playing it on the harpsichord to close this evening’s program.

## **An evening of harpsichord music from the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries** **Dr. Lyn Ellen Burkett, harpsichord**

The fact that you are here, in a concert hall in the 21<sup>st</sup> century listening to a harpsichord recital this evening can be attributed largely to harpsichordist Wanda Landowska (1879-1959). Landowska popularized the harpsichord in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, introducing the nearly forgotten and often scorned instrument to audiences and composers. She performed and recorded both 20<sup>th</sup>-century and traditional Baroque repertoire. Her recording of Domenico Scarlatti’s sonata K 490, completed in Paris in March 1940 when the Germans were approaching, includes audible anti-aircraft fire. Both Manuel de Falla and Francis Poulenc wrote harpsichord concertos for her, helping to establish a tradition of harpsichord repertoire for the 20<sup>th</sup> century which now extends into the 21<sup>st</sup> and includes Elliott Carter’s *Double Concerto* for harpsichord, piano, and two chamber orchestras, György Ligeti’s *Continuum* for solo harpsichord, Philip Glass’s *Concerto for Harpsichord and Orchestra*, and several solo harpsichord works by Vincent Persichetti.

The sound of the harpsichord is just as comfortable in the world of popular culture as it is in the concert hall. Harpsichordist Stan Freeman accompanied Rosemary Clooney in her 1951 hit “Come Ona My House,” and in another house occupied by the Addams family, Lurch enjoyed playing the harpsichord (the music was actually played by the composer of the show’s theme song, Vic Mizzy). Contemporary composers working in both popular and classical idioms sometimes use the sound of the harpsichord to evoke a specific setting in the listener’s mind—a sense of antiquity, or, in the case of Mizzy, creepiness—but just as often, they use the instrument because its sound speaks to them in a special way. We can hear examples of both motivations for using the instrument in the Beatles’ oeuvre. In George Harrison’s song “Piggies,” the harpsichord evokes a sense of exaggerated formality, placing listeners in an imaginary drawing room as guests of the stuffy, hypocritical hosts that are the subject of the song. In Lennon & McCartney’s “Fixing a Hole,” the simple sweetness of the unadorned harpsichord sound in the opening bars provides a perfect introduction for the song’s joyfully goofy, meandering lyrics. More recently, glam-rocker Emilie Autumn has made extensive use of the instrument, wrapping her arrangements and compositions in tangles of harpsichord-saturated, goth-inspired sonic ribbons. Her two covers of Cyndi Lauper’s “Girls Just Want to Have Fun” that include harpsichord are worth a listen .

The selections on this evening’s program offer a sampling of works written for the harpsichord since 1980, with one piano composition thrown in for contrast. You will hear a number of different musical styles and a variety of sounds, some avant-garde, some post-romantic, and some jazz-inspired.

### ***Fantasy for Harpsichord (1983)***

Composer and violinist Ellen Taaffe Zwilich was born in Miami, FL in 1939. In 1975 she was the first woman to receive a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in composition from Juilliard, and in 1983 she was the first woman to receive a Pulitzer prize in music for her Symphony no. 1. Her *Fantasy for Harpsichord* was commissioned by the Concert Artists Guild for Linda Kobler. This composition showcases the many different sounds that can be produced by a harpsichord built in the style of an 18<sup>th</sup>-century French instrument. Both the upper and lower manual (keyboard) of the harpsichord can be set to pluck a single set of strings that correspond to the notated pitch; this registration is known as “single 8,” or 8'; the lower 8' produces a slightly more robust tone color than the same registration on the upper manual. The lower manual is also capable of producing two additional sounds. It can be set to pluck a set of strings that sound an octave higher than the notated pitch; this registration is marked on harpsichord music as 4'. It is usually used in combination with 8' and adds a certain sparkle and a bit more volume to the sound. The lower manual can also be adjusted so that a small piece of leather is wedged against each string. This registration, known as the “buff stop,” creates a sound similar to fingertips on the strings of a lute. The buff stop produces the quietest and gentlest of the harpsichord's sounds. Finally, a mechanism called a coupler enables both the upper and lower manuals to be played through the lower manual only, thereby doubling the sound. By using different combinations of all these timbral possibilities, Zwilich creates a dynamic arch that peaks in intensity, then gradually diminishes.

### ***Toccatina (2008)***

Paul Siskind is Professor of Composition and Theory at the Crane School of Music. At my request, he generously agreed to write this piece for me, and I am delighted to perform it this evening. Dr. Siskind shares the following thoughts on composing for the harpsichord in general and on *Toccatina* specifically:

“Writing a piece of ‘contemporary’ music for harpsichord presents a number of interesting challenges. Few instruments carry such immediate connotations of a specific style/era as does the harpsichord; should one conspicuously play upon these connotations, or conspicuously try to avoid them? I felt that the historic connotations of harpsichord were almost unavoidable (with the exception of very avant garde styles, such as Ligeti's *Continuum*), so I might as well play off of those connotations (although I wanted to avoid outrightly parodizing the idioms). As the title implies, *Toccatina* is a short, free-form fantasia that shows off keyboard idioms in a flashy manner. It evokes the stylistic traits of Baroque toccatas in a number of ways, but utilizes a more contemporary harmonic language.”

### ***Idée Prix Fixe: Six French Delicacies for Harpsichord (2004)***

Kari Henrik Juusela is on the faculty at Boston's Berklee College of Music, where he is Dean of Professional Writing. He offers the following comments on *Idée Prix Fixe*:

“Paris can feed both the flesh and the soul. This set of six character pieces was inspired by my love of French music of all eras and the gastronomical delights to be found in even the most humble of restaurants and cafes in the Latin Quarter. As a poor student I can recall my stomach grumbling while eagerly reading the offerings of the “*prix fixe*” (fixed price) menu posted at most establishments. After my body was satiated by good food and *bon vin* I could turn to the more noble pursuit of the muse. Each of these short works pays homage to a notable French composer and a portion of a fictitious “*prix fixe*” repast. As the consumer, the performer is welcome to digest these works in any order he or she sees fit (or to even skip a dish which may cause indigestion), although I will provide the order which is pleasing to me. As with any good meal, however modest, a theme is called for. This theme is presented in *Idée d'Indy*. The careful listener will hear this *idée fixe*, clothed in various adornments, in all of the pieces. The choice of wine is left to the diner. I would recommend a full bottle as the fare, although French inspired, may at times be rather coarse.”

*Idée Prix Fixe* was a finalist in the 2004 Aliénor Harpsichord Composition contest and was premiered at Duke University by harpsichordist Boyd Jones.

### ***Phantasm 6-Z44***

*Phantasm 6-Z44* was written by my husband, Bryan Burkett, who teaches music theory and film music courses at the Crane School of Music. One of the most rewarding aspects of living with a composer is watching the creative process unfold on an almost-daily basis; what a mystery! I find it especially pleasing when that process results in harpsichord or piano music that challenges my technical and interpretive skills. Bryan explains how *Phantasm 6-Z44* came into existence, and offers a few notes on the piece's pitch organization:

“I began composing *Phantasm 6-Z44* while I was studying composition with Arne Mellnäs in Stockholm, Sweden (as opposed to the Town of Stockholm, NY) in 1991-92. I got the idea of writing for harpsichord because Lyn was in Bloomington, IN studying harpsichord and working on her Ph.D. The piece was to be a gift to her. After working on it for a while and getting nowhere, I put it away and went on to more fruitful ideas. Finally, in 2003 I resurrected the idea, and the result is the piece that you will hear this evening. The construction of the piece is based on the name of one of my favorite composers, Arnold Schoenberg.”