

# Bennington College Presents

Christopher Finckel and  
Stephen Gosling

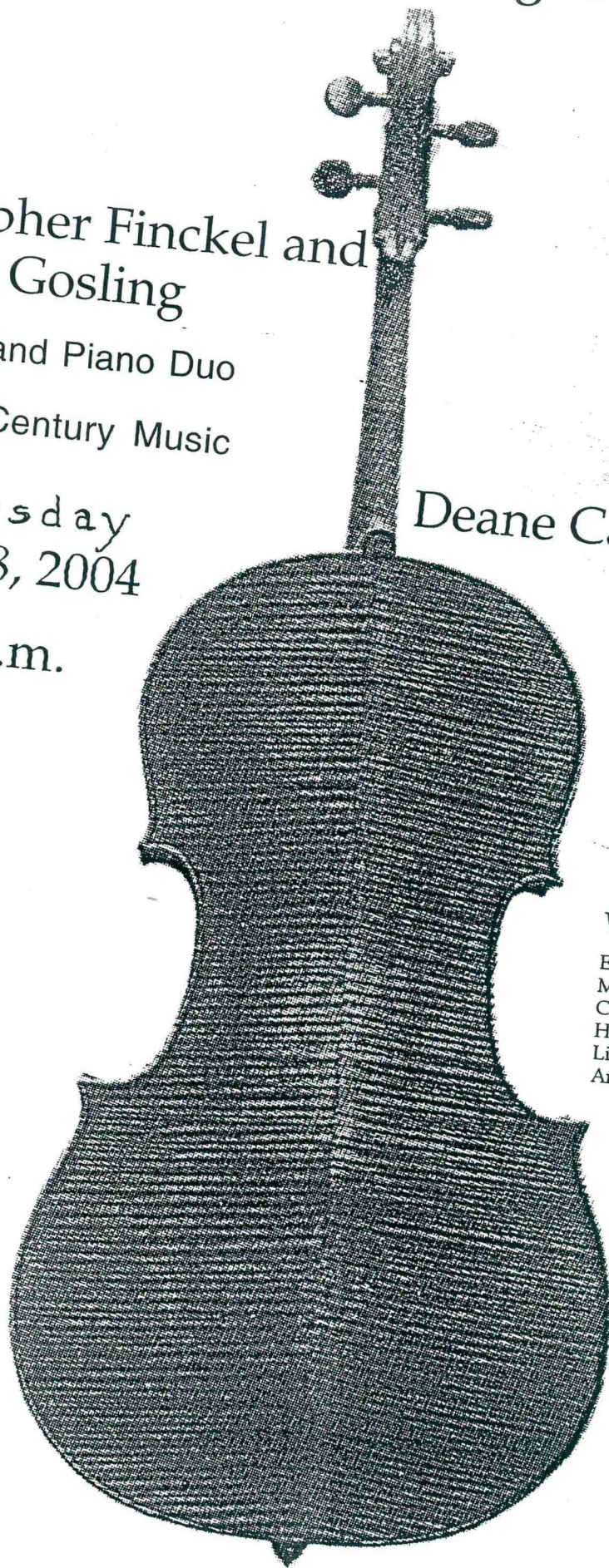
Cello and Piano Duo

20th Century Music

Thursday  
April 8, 2004

8 p.m.

Deane Carriage Barn



## Works By:

Elliot Carter  
Mario Davidovsky  
Claude Debussy  
Helmut Lachenmann  
Lionel Nowak  
Anton Webern

## Program

- |           |   |                               |
|-----------|---|-------------------------------|
| I         | Sonate en re mineur (1915)<br>Prologue<br>Serenade and Finale             | Claude Debussy<br>(1862-1918) |
| II        | Three Little Pieces (1914)<br>Moderate<br>Very Agitated<br>Extremely Calm | Anton Webern<br>(1883-1945)   |
| III       | Adagio from Sonata (1950)<br>for Cello and Piano                          | Elliot Carter<br>(1908- )     |
| IV        | Pression (1968)<br>Cello Unaccompanied                                    | Helmut Lachenmann<br>(1935- ) |
| **Pause** |   |                               |
| V         | Synchronism # III (1968)<br>for Cello and Electronic Sound                | Mario Davidovsky<br>(1934- )  |
| VI        | Sonata #3 (1960)<br>Prelude<br>Scherzo<br>Romance<br>Finale               | Lionel Nowak<br>(1911-1995)   |



## *About the Artists*

Widely respected for his performances of the music of all periods, cellist CHRIS FINCKEL has concertized in Europe, Australia, the Far East, Central and South America, and throughout the United States and Canada. He has appeared as a frequent guest with such acclaimed ensembles as the Tokyo String Quartet, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Orpheus Chamber Ensemble and Speculum Musicae and has collaborated with such diverse artists as Walter Trampler, Branford Marsalis, Heinz Holliger and Linda Ronstadt.

As cellist of the Manhattan String Quartet and the New York New Music Ensemble he appears on chamber music series worldwide and has participated in the Casals, Santa Fe, Ravinia, Saratoga, Madeira Back and Norfolk chamber music festivals. This season the Manhattan Quartet will host its third annual "cultural expedition" bringing more than 60 string players to Budapest to study Bartók First String Quartet. Very active in contemporary music, Mr. Finckel has participated in the premiere performances of the works of over 100 composers including Elliott Carter, Mario Davidovsky, Jacob Druckman, Donald Martino, Steve Reich and Charles Wuorinen.

Born into a family of cellists in Bennington, Vermont, Mr. Finckel began his studies with his father George Finckel, who taught at Bennington College 1942-1973, and was a winner of many prizes in his native New England. A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, he studied cello with Orlando Cole and chamber music with Mischa Schneider and members of the Guarneri Quartet. Mr. Finckel has recorded extensively for the Nonesuch, New World, CRI, Bridge and Vanguard record labels and teaches at Sarah Lawrence College.

Pianist STEPHEN GOSLING, an ubiquitous presence on the New York new music scene, has also performed throughout the U.S., Europe, Latin America and Asia. His playing has been hailed as "brilliant", "electric", and "luminous and poised" (*New York Times*), "possessing utter clarity and conviction" (*Washington Post*), and "extraordinary virtuosity" (*Houston Chronicle*).

A native of Sheffield, England, Mr. Gosling relocated to New York in 1989 to begin studies with Oxana Yablonskaya at The Juilliard School. Upon graduation from the Bachelor of Music program in 1993, he was awarded the Mannin Prize for Outstanding Leadership and Excellence in Music. Earlier that year he performed John Corigliano's Piano Concerto with Leonard Slatkin and the Juilliard Orchestra at Avery Fisher Hall, and gave the European premiere of Paul Schoenfield's *Four Parables* with the Dutch Radio Philharmonic under Lukas Foss.

In 1994 Mr. Gosling received his Master's Degree from Juilliard and was awarded the Sony Elevated Standards Fellowship. He subsequently enrolled in the Doctor of Musical Arts program, from which he graduated in 2000.

Mr. Gosling was for three years pianist of the Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, and appeared in several seasons of The Summergarden Series at MOMA. He has also performed at The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., The Grant Park Festival in Chicago, The Bang on a Can Marathon, Bargemusic, The 2001 Great Day in New York festival, and The PAN festival in Seoul, Korea. He is a member of the New York New Music Ensemble, Ensemble Sospeso, and VIA (an inter-arts collective), and has performed with Orpheus, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Speculum Musicae, the DaCapo Chamber Players, the Orchestra of St. Luke's, Continuum, the League of Composers/ISCM Chamber Players, and Da Camera of Houston. He has also participated in Off-Broadway productions and collaborated with a number of dance companies, including American Ballet Theater and Parsons Dance Project.

Mr. Gosling has been heard on the NPR, WNYC and WQXR radio networks, and has recorded for New World Records, CRI, Mode, Innova, and Rattle Records.



## Program Notes

HELMUT LACHENMANN was born in Stuttgart in 1935 and studied there at the Musikhochschule between 1955 and 1958. His interest in the current avant garde was reinforced by his first visit to the Darmstadt Ferienkurse in 1957 where he met Luigi Nono with whom he studied in Venice between 1958 and 1960. Stockhausen was added to the pedagogical mix three years later when Lachenmann attended the Cologne New Music Course.

In 1966 Lachenmann embarked on his own academic career, lecturing first on music theory at the Stuttgart Musikhochschule and subsequently teaching at the Ludwigsburg Pädagogische Hochschule and the Musikhochschule in Hanover before returning to live in Stuttgart in 1981.

When Lachenmann's music began to be performed in the early 1960's, first at the Venice Biennale and at Darmstadt, his works appeared to fit comfortably into the aesthetic of the post-Webern serialists, in particular revealing the influence of Nono's pointillist techniques. From the last 1960's onward, however, Lachenmann began to look for a new approach to the problems of musical language and syntax. In a series of works, beginning with *temA* (1968), *Pression* for solo cello (1969), and *Air* for percussionist and orchestra (1969), he started to exploit a new, alienated sound world that treated instrumental technique in a radically unconventional way.

Throughout the 1970's and 1980's, with scores such as the string quartet *Gran Torso* (1972), *Salut für Caldwell* for two guitars (1977), and *Mouvement (vor der Estarrung)* for chamber orchestra (1984), Lachenmann continued to question many of the basic assumptions about the function of music and the expectations made of it, backing up his musical achievement with the vigorous polemics of his writing and lectures. Always though, the pressure of tradition remained a background presence in his explorations, sometimes even emerging as audible points of reference in his scores. In his most recent pieces, Lachenmann has begun to pick up recognizable elements of a post-serial language which reveal the tradition from which his music evolved.

Since 1983, Lachenmann has been a featured composer at numerous festivals and concert series in Germany and abroad, including the Holland Festival in Amsterdam, Ars Musica in Brussels, Musik der Zeit in Cologne, Festival d'Automne in Paris, Wien Modern in Vienna, and Tage für neue Musik in Stuttgart and Zurich. He is a member of the Akademie der Künste in Berlin and of the Akademien der Künste in Hamburg, Leipzig, Mannheim, and Munich.

Lachenmann writes about *Pression*:

"*Pression, for one Cellist, was composed in 1969 in the context of ideas about an 'instrumental musique concrete.' By which I mean a music in which sonic events are selected and organized in such a way that their mode of origin becomes no less a part of one's experience of the music than the resulting acoustical characteristics themselves. Timbres, dynamics, pitches, etc., do not sound for their own sake or for the sake of the forms from which they are built, rather they characterize or signal the concrete situation of the origin: from them one hears under which conditions, with which materials, with which energies, and against which (mechanical) resistances each sound or noise is produced. Such a perspective has no effect by itself: it must first be called to attention, exposed, and given a musical sense through a compositional technique that makes use of a nuance alienation in playing techniques. Thus, the unthinking path to the music, i.e., using one's usual, ingrained habits of listening, is obstructed. Through its insistent scrutiny of new visions of the context of sound, the totality becomes an aesthetic provocation: beauty as an invalidated habit.*"



MARIO DAVIDOVSKY was born on March 4, 1934, near Buenos Aires, Argentina. As a child, he studied violin and began composing at the age of 13. While studying composition, theory and history, he had lessons with Teodoro Fuchs, Erwin Leuchter, Ernesto Epstein and his principal teacher was Guillermo Graetzer. In 1958 he studied at the Berkshire Music Center with Aaron Copland, who encouraged him to settle in the United States, where he has lived since 1960.

Davidovsky has taught at the University of Michigan, the Di Tella Institute of Buenos Aires, the Manhattan School of Music, Yale University, City College, CUNY, and at Columbia University where he directed the Columbia Electronic Music Center. In January 1994 he joined the music department at Harvard University. Since 1971 he has served as director of the Composers Conference at Wellesley College. He was composer-in-residence at the Tanglewood Music Festival in 1981 and 1994.

His many honors include two Guggenheim Fellowships, two Rockefeller Fellowships, a Koussevitsky Fellowship, the Brandeis University Creative Arts Award, an American Academy of Arts & Letters Award, the 1971 Pulitzer Prize, a Naumburg Award, a Guggenheim Award, and the 1994 Seamus Award. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts & Letters in 1982. In addition, Davidovsky has received commissions from such major institutions as the Pan American Union, the Fromm and Koussevitsky Foundations, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the San Francisco Symphony, the Juilliard and Emerson String Quartets, Speculum Musicae and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, among others.

Mr. Davidovsky prefers to point to no specific influence on his his music. Despite the fact that his main teacher, Graetzer, was a hindemith student, he was greatly influenced early on by the second Viennese school, and later by the wide range of styles and techniques found in the musical life of New York. But perhaps the most defining influence on his music is born out of his own seminal work in the field of electronic music. He is best known for his compositions combining live instrumental performance with recorded electronic sound. For tape music he draws on the full range of "classical" studio procedures and requires performers to match the inventiveness of his electronic compositions by using an expanded spectrum of playing techniques. Davidovsky has never been interested in "sound effects;" rather, his concerns are those of continuity and expression.

*Synchronism #3* for cello and electronic sounds was composed in 1964-65. It shares with the other synchronism an attempt to "preserve the typical characteristics of the conventional instruments and of the electronic medium respectively--yet to achieve integrations of both into a coherent musical texture". The Seductive quality of Davidovsky's music stems perhaps from the composers obvious visceral delight in sound and gesture, and a sophisticated sense of pacing that relegate even the most rigid pitch generating systems to the needs of the larger dramatic conception.

In *Synchronism No. 3*, Davidovsky's fertile imagination is reflected in the variety of relationships between cello and tape. Sometimes confrontational, sometimes supportive, at other times simultaneous and separate dynamic postures in the interaction between tape and cello shift through the course of the piece. The opening "cadenza" proclaims the solo cello's wide range of expressive gestures; dynamic differentiation is great, the registral range is broad, the gestural language extreme and diverse. In addition, the method of sound production is varied through bowing, plucking, tapping the bridge with the back of the bow and the knuckles, and plucking strings behind the bridge. The rapid juxtapositions of material with different qualities and characters, to create more or less coherent larger gestures, becomes the model for the electronic sounds which appear for the first time in the second section.

After a relatively long, multi-sectional dialogue between cello and tape, the cello is once again heard alone, distilling material from previous moments in the piece. This gives way to a duet between cello and tape--an active, scurrying, twittering, music that leads dramatically to the last short section. This section (beginning with the low, sustained pitch in the cello) is allusive enough to the beginning of the piece to sound recapitulative. Some of the gestures from the solo opening of the work return in compressed form to produce a sense of arrival of great intensity.



LIONEL NOWAK (1911-1995) was born in Cleveland, Ohio. He made his debut as pianist at the age of four and at 12 years old was the youngest pianist to solo with the Cleveland Orchestra. As a teenager he was organist, choirmaster and composer of anthems. He graduated from the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he studied theory and composition with Roger Sessions, Quincy Porter and Herbert Elwell. His piano teachers included Beryl Rubenstein and Edwin Fischer. From 1938 to 1942 he was music director and composer-pianist for the Doris Humphrey-Charles Weidman Modern Dance Company in New York City. He wrote several large ballets for the company, each receiving many performances. Mr. Nowak was on the music faculties of Converse College and Syracuse University in the mid-40's then settled permanently in Bennington, Vermont, teaching at Bennington College for over forty years.

From 1946 to 1963 he toured nationally for the Association of American Colleges Arts Program. He composed music for all mediums from solos to concertos to song cycles and has been recorded on CRI, Golden Crest and Opus One.

Sonata #3 for Cello and Piano (the third sonata written for cellist George Finckel, a long-time colleague at Bennington College) was complete on January 5, 1960, and is approximately 23 minutes in length. In 1976 the four movements were given the titles of Prelude, Scherzo, Romance and Theme and Variations.

*Excerpts from and interview:*

*Michael Finckel:* You have written a considerable amount of music for cello--eight compositions with piano (three of the full length sonatas), two sets of pieces for unaccompanied cello, a solo work for a staged production of Lorca's *Blood Wedding*, a set of duos for two cellos and a work for cello quartet--is there something about the instrument or its sound that attracts you, or has this body of work arisen from your association with specific cellists?

*Lionel Nowak:* In December of 1948 a portion of the Nowak collection of visual art was shown in the Usdan Gallery at Bennington College. For that occasion I offered the title, *Art as Personal Relation*. All the works were those of close friends and acquaintances. My compositions for cello carry the same theme; neither the instrument nor the person are primary. No question that the cello offers and exceptional range of tonal possibilities and sonorities nor that the persons for whom the works had been written were possessors of challengeable skills, dedicated to the substance of music, and vital human beings. I consider myself most fortunate in the qualities and characters of the musicians whom I have been associates with as a composer.

*Michael Finckel:* Have you drawn inspiration from works written for the instrument by other composers?

*Lionel Nowak:* In a general sense no. My long career as an ensemble player clearly gave me introduction to the work of the masters and in that how can one help taking note of the integrity of their structures. My delight in *Schelomo*, the Concerto of Dvorák, and the Beethoven Sonatas must have left intense marks on my sub-conscious, but I have not analyzed this.

*Michael Finckel:* Do you consider your music to be in the classical, romantic, or modernist traditions? Or any tradition at all?

*Lionel Nowak:* The culture has been so bombarded with every style of musical composition that at this moment I see only a stew of eclecticism. As the temperature of the faddish notion of "creativity" diminishes, we may discover that something essentially new and vital had been added to the art but only later generations will be able to discern this. Art never belies the culture and who will deny that turmoil and fragmentation are the substance of today.

*Michael Finckel:* Do your sonatas for cello and piano follow any classical precedents in relation to form?

*Lionel Nowak:* The use of the word “classical” must be better defined. In that the sonata each exist in several movements there is a relation to history. There can be no present without precedents; the fanciful extrapolations which may occur as sudden intuition is molded into reasonable and auditory satisfaction. It is the sound properties that may shift from one era to another as these reflect changes in the mode of existence; and the tempo of changes; but unity in variety must remain the essential core of western music and most others.

*Michael Finckel:* Much of your cello music makes uncommon demands on the performers technical abilities. Any thoughts on this?

*Lionel Nowak:* This may be due to my delight in testing the wondrous sounds of the instrument without sufficient understanding of the technique necessary to performance. This never worries me since I believe that an earnest musician will extend the technique to the demand. Aren't we prone to fall short of our limits?

*Michael Finckel:* Any further advice to musicians concerning performance of your music?

*Lionel Nowak:* There is more to a person than his physical self. The ages stir within each one of us, how to express this too latent essence? The music is deeper than the spots we see, how to construct a new reality, a vibrant amalgam of the self and the given score.

*Michael Finckel:* Your dreams of a future music?

*Lionel Nowak:* I hope for and try to work toward the condition wherein each person can more deeply and more widely accept and use music as a means of self-understanding and of touching others. No class of sound production should be denied nor any original utterance be slighted. One must aspire to being a slave to sound; errant methodism and institutionalization are bogies which must be overcome. If I were to encourage dreaming, it would be of the sort that includes all forms of self-disclosure and human relationship.