

Special thanks: to Jeff Slayton who supplied us with most of the images of Viola Farber, both still and moving. Mr. Slayton was married to Viola for nine years, and was the principal dancer with the Viola Farber Dance Company. His recent book, *The Prickly Rose: A Biography of Viola Farber* was released in 2006. Retired from dancing, he is choreographing for various dance companies and working on a book about his career. In addition, some of the moving images are from a long lost film made for television entitled *Brazos River*. Directed by Robert Rauschenberg, it was made available to the composer by Anne Livet, President of Livet Reichard Company, Inc. And finally to Jumay Chu of the Cornell Dance faculty and former member of Miss Farber's Company for her encouragement and advice.

David Borden was educated at the Eastman School of Music and Harvard University. He was also a Fulbright student in Berlin Germany, where he studied at the Hochschule für Musik. He founded Mother Mallard's Portable Masterpiece Co. in 1969 with the generous support of Robert Moog. The group became the world's first synthesizer ensemble. "Mother Mallard turns out some of the best synthesizer music around." - New York Times His "The Continuing Story of Counterpoint," a twelve-part cycle of pieces for synthesizers, acoustic instruments and voice has been called the 'Goldberg Variations of minimalism.' Four recent books have cited and discussed his work. In keeping with his interdisciplinary approach to his life and work, two of the books deal with American music history, one with music technology and one with the paintings of George Deem: "America's Music in the Twentieth Century" by Kyle Gann (Schirmer Books, New York, 1997); "America's Musical Life: A History" by Richard Crawford (W. W. Norton & Company, New York, London, 2001); "Analog Days: The Invention and Impact of the Moog Synthesizer" by Trevor Pinch and Frank Trocco (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England, 2002); "How to Paint a Vermeer" by George Deem (Thames & Hudson, N.Y., 2004). Borden's music is available on the Cuneiform, New World Records, Lameduck and Arbitrator labels. His first composition teachers were jazz musicians Jimmy Giuffre and Jaki Byard. He collaborates and performs with his son, Gabriel Borden and stepson, Sam Godin. He resides in Ithaca, NY with his wife, Rebecca Godin. He is the retired founder and Director of the Digital Music Program at Cornell University.

Blaise Bryski is a graduate of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and received his Master of Fine Arts degree from the California Institute of the Arts. He was a member for three years of the master class of Aube Tzerko. Mr. Bryski performed for many years as an accompanist for the UCLA Department of Music and was a professional pianist in Los Angeles in many styles including rock and jazz. He also performed in such varied venues as the Nakamichi Baroque Festival and the Green Umbrella New Music series. In 2006, Blaise earned his DMA in eighteenth-century performance practice at Cornell University. As a fortepianist, Mr. Bryski's credits include the Los Angeles Baroque Orchestra Chamber Music series, the New York Concert Singers, and the Aldeburgh Connection/CBC Radio. He lives in Ithaca, NY with his wife, Kristen Sadd.

Josh Oxford is a performer, composer and arranger in many different styles of music, playing piano, percussion, and synthesizer. Josh graduated with a BM in Percussion Performance from the Ithaca College School of Music in 2007, having played in a wide variety of ensembles. Mr. Oxford is a full time Staff Accompanist at Ithaca College. He has recorded with award winning folk rock musician Michael Mazochi and with Klezmer clarinetist Joel Rubin. He has toured on percussion with Frank Zappa cover band Project/Object and is an avid transcriber and arranger of Zappa's music. Josh has also performed in and done synthesizer programming for over a dozen musicals in the Central New York area as well as making his music directorial debut in *Bat Boy: The Musical* in LA at the Hudson Theater. Josh composes and arranges primarily for his ensemble The OXtet, and also writes 12-Tone pop music. He is a collector of vintage keyboards and synthesizers.

Active as a performer on organ, clavichord, harpsichord, and fortepiano in North America and Europe, **David Yearsley** was educated at Harvard College and Stanford University, where he received his Ph.D. in Musicology in 1994. That same year he became the only musician in the history of the prestigious Bruges Early Music Festival to win all its major prizes. His organ recordings include: Music of a Father and Son: The Organ Works of Delphin and Nicolaus Adam Strungk heard on the Arp Schnitger organ in Norden, Germany and The Great Contest: Bach, Scarlatti, Handel; and, with Robert Bates, In Dialogue, featuring 17th- and 18th century music arranged for antiphonal organs. His musical partnership with violinist Martin Davids has yielded most recently the CD, All Your Cares Beguile: Songs and Sonatas from Baroque London. Energetically engaged with the historical context for his music making, Mr. Yearsley has written numerous articles on European musical culture in the 17th and 18th centuries, and his work has appeared in leading scholarly journals such as the Journal of the American Musicological Society, Music & Letters, Early Music, and Eighteenth-Century Music. His widely-praised book, Bach and the Meanings of Counterpoint appeared in 2002 from Cambridge University Press. Mr. Yearsley has been an Alexander von Humboldt Fellow at the Humboldt University in Berlin and a Wenner-Gren Foundation Fellow at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden. A member of the pioneering synthesizer ensemble, Mother Mallard's Portable Masterpiece Company, he is Professor of Music at Cornell University, in Ithaca, New York, where he lives with his wife, Annette Richards, the Cornell University Organist and Professor of Music, and their two daughters.

Gabriel Borden was born in Ithaca, New York in 1968. He began his musical training at the age of four with piano and theory lessons with his mother Trudy Borden. He has also studied music at Oberlin College and the Guitar Institute of Technology in Hollywood, California, where he completed a one year guitar performance program. Gabriel was part of an earlier incarnation of Mother Mallard from 1989-1991. In 1993, he performed David Borden's Notes From Vienna as featured soloist with the Cornell Wind Ensemble at Bailey Hall at Cornell University with Mark Scatterday conducting. Gabriel played with his own group, Göiter, from 1994-95, and with the Eczema Quartet in 1996. He graduated from Cornell with a B.A. in physics in 1998. Recently, Gabriel appeared again as a soloist with the Cornell Wind Ensemble, performing Leonard Bernstein's *Slava!* in the spring of 2007. He resides in Ithaca with his wife, Caroline and four children.

Noni Korf Vidal is an instructional designer and project manager at Cornell Information Technologies (CIT). She helps faculty who teach with technology. Independently, she is also busy editing video, designing websites, and attending online classes. Noni's most recent video project was editing the documentary "Angels of Change," an unguarded look at poverty, and how one group chooses to fight it.

Franck Vidal is a program manager at Cornell Information Technologies (CIT). He managed the redesign of University websites such as cornell.edu, the College of Human Ecology, the Law School and the School of Hotel Administration. Franck sings with the Cornell Middle Eastern and Mediterranean Music Ensemble and sings French songs in a local band Nuages. He also organizes and promotes concerts in Ithaca. Franck worked in the film industry and was an independent video producer for several years.



Mother Mallard's Portable Masterpiece Co. 40th Anniversary Concert

This concert was made possible in part by grants from the Cornell Council for the Arts, the Cornell Electroacoustic Music Center, the Department of Music, the Department of Theatre, Film and Dance, and the Johnson Museum of Art.

Barnes Hall
Cornell University
Sunday Evening
March 29, 2009
8:00 pm

Keyboards

David Borden, Blaise Bryski, Josh Oxford, David Yearsley

Electric Guitar

Gabriel Borden

Digital Video

Franck Vidal Noni Korf Vidal

PROGRAM

Odd Alien Ego 2002
Three Keyboards/Laptops & Electric Guitar

The Continuing Story of Counterpoint, Part 8.01 1979
Two Pianos
first performance

from Tribute to Ruth St. Denis & Ted Shawn 2007
01. Third Sunset.01
02. The Dawns.01
Four Keyboards/Laptops & Live Video

Dreams of Jimmy 2009
Moog Voyager/Laptop, MiniMoog & Electric Guitar
first performance

Intermission

Viola Farber in Seven Movements 2009
01. Be/Fore 04. Brief
02. Alive 05. Love/Fable
03. Love/Fear 06. Verbal
07. Voilà!

Four Keyboards/Laptops & Live Video
first performance

all music composed by David Borden

NOTES

The Continuing Story of Counterpoint (hereafter referred to as TCSOC) was begun in 1976 and completed in 1987 and consists of 12 lengthy parts. TCSOC began with one simple note-against-note idea and the desire to develop my own contrapuntal language. It was originally composed for Moog Synthesizers and electric keyboards. The numbering of the parts does not always correspond to the order in which they were composed. Although the full version of TCSOC Part 8 was completed during the summer of 1979, a full performance of TCSOC Part 8 didn't happen until 1988. Parts 8A, 8B and 8C were recorded in 1989; the full version was recorded in 1991. None of the recordings uses the original instruments. This was OK, because all of TCSOC was designed to change in terms of sounds to accommodate the evolution of electronic instruments.

Part 8 was composed a year after the third of the Moog-based Mother Mallard ensembles disbanded. I still had access to all of the original instruments, but no space big enough to set them up with a good sound system. After classes were over at Cornell in the spring of 1979, I talked the head of physical education programs into letting me use the firing range room off of the bowling alley in Helen Newman Hall (a women's facility for sports and dance-- I was composer/pianist for dance) to set up my Moog Modular and MiniMoog Synthesizers and my electric pianos. It was a perfect space because hardly anyone knew it existed; it wasn't marked, and it was sound proof. So, with the smell of gun powder in my nostrils and the crunch of spent shells underfoot, I set about composing TCSOC Part 8. I transplanted an entire keyboard part from Part 5 as the basis for Part 8.

Ten years later, during the post production sessions with producer Eric Feinstein, he discovered that Part 8 could be realized as four different versions that all retain their musical integrity. Since the full version in its basic form consists of three players (abc) the interrelationships between any two parts can be expressed as ab, ac, bc. So Parts 8A, 8B and 8C use different combinations of two of the three players' parts. I explored this method with other sections of TCSOC, but only Part 8 worked musically for me.

Part 8A is dedicated to Blaise Bryski, Part 8B to Lynn Purse (MM 1987–91) and Part 8C to David Yearsley. All have contributed many long hours of rehearsal and performance time to bring these pieces to life. Part 8.01 for two pianos is a slightly altered version of Part 8B to accommodate these instruments.

Tribute to Ruth St. Denis & Ted Shawn: Ruth Dennis was born in 1879 on a farm in Newark, New Jersey. Her mother, Ruth Emma Dennis, was a graduate of the University of Michigan with a degree in medicine. She was one of the first licensed women doctors in the United States. When "Ruthie" began to show interest in movement at an early age, her mother encouraged her to study dance. She learned ballet and social dance forms from an Italian ballerina. In 1900, when she turned 21, she met David Belasco, a powerful and influential producer. After an audition and interview he decided to hire her with the condition that she change her name to "Ruth St. Denis." He was struck by her professionalism and her work ethic. She arranged to use the theater every morning to work out and practise. This was a life-long routine. In her ninetieth year she was still showing up at her studio every morning for stretching and movement exercises

By the time Ted Shawn met Ruth, she was already an international star. Still, she was looking for a partner, and accepted his marriage proposal, although with ambivalence. When they married in 1914 she was 35 and he was only 23. Although the partnership was at times tumultuous, they formed their Denishawn Dance Company in 1915 and toured Europe, Asia and the United States until differences and the Great Depression ended it all in 1931. During this period, the seeds for modern dance were sown. Future stars Charles Weidman, Doris Humphrey, Louise Brooks and Martha Graham, were in their company and were greatly influenced by both Shawn and St. Denis. In the 1930s Ted Shawn founded his own dance company of all male dancers at Jacob's Pillow which remains a major center for modern dance to this day, hosting companies from all over the world.

I met and worked with Ruth St. Denis in 1965 when I was a graduate student at Harvard. To earn money, I accompanied modern dance classes around Boston, including Radcliffe. Miss Ruth was scheduled as a guest performer and lecturer. Before her arrival I was informed that she would need my services as a pianist. I was told that she was in her eighties but when we met, I noticed that she didn't look that old. I knew that she was an important figure, but was totally unaware of her accomplishments. When I asked if 10:30 AM was too early for a rehearsal she snapped at me in a benevolent way, assuring me that no time was too early. We rehearsed her dance "The Incense." She handed me the original piano sheet music which was wrinkled, yellowed and taped together. It bore the date of 1910. She had some other music too, which she showed me and said that ". . . Ted and I first did this in Paris." I had no idea who Ted was. When she started moving her arms I became mesmerized and as the dance went on, I was totally captivated. Her charisma was astounding. At the performance that night, with the costume, the set, the incense smoking away, it was fantastic. Afterwards, she delivered a lecture. It sounded to me like a very radical Eleanor Roosevelt. It was the first feminist speech I ever heard, and the audience was almost all women. Standing ovation. It was exhilarating. Bravo!

Third Sunset is an anagram of Ruth St. Denis. The Dawns is an anagram of Ted Shawn.

Odd Alien Ego is an Anagram Portrait written for composer/clarinetist Daniel Goode. It is also a piece from a series entitled *The Continuing Story of Classical Music* whereby I extract an entire instrumental part from a piece by a "classical" composer and surround it with a new sonic environment. Daniel suggested Brahms even though I have a limited affinity for nineteenth century music after Beethoven. But eventually I happened upon the Vivace from his Clarinet Sonata in f minor (although this movement is in F Major), Opus 120, No. 1. I decided I could work with the clarinet part from this piece, and Daniel approved. Tonight the clarinet part is being played on the electric guitar which removes it even further from its origins.

Dreams of Jimmy is an improvisatory piece based on samples of Jimmy Giuffre playing the clarinet. Giuffre was a gifted clarinetist/arranger/composer whose *Four Brothers* is a big band classic. He was a leading jazz performer in the late fifties and early sixties with his group The Jimmy Giuffre 3. He was my first composition teacher. Giuffre died last April at the age of 87. This is an elegy in tribute to his memory.

Viola Farber in Seven Movements was composed as a companion piece to the Ruth St. Denis/Ted Shawn work. The names of the seven movements are derived from the letters in her name. After I decided on the titles, I composed the music to fit the implied meanings of the words. The piece evolved after I ran into Jeff Slayton at a concert in NYC at the Merce Cunningham Dance Studio in November of 2007. I hadn't seen him in more than twenty years, and was interested to hear about the new biography of Viola he had written. Soon, I read the book and thought about a piece.

I first met Viola Farber in the fall of 1968 soon after I became Composer/Pianist for Dance at Cornell. Peggy Lawler, the Dance Program Director took us to NYC to see Merce Cunningham and a special event that featured Viola. Soon after, Miss Farber visited Cornell with her Company, and I accompanied her dance classes. She won me over immediately with her musicality, fluid movement and perceptive intelligence. Her group of dancers were all outstanding performers and beautiful to watch. Whenever I was in NYC I offered to accompany her classes as a gift. One time, I showed up only to find out that her piano had been stolen. I seemed to run into her or members of her company all during the 1970s, but after her company disbanded in 1985 I lost touch with her. Viola Farber, a founding member of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, a choreographer and the director of the dance program at Sarah Lawrence College, died on Dec. 24, 1998 at Lawrence Hospital in Bronxville, N.Y. She was 67 and lived in Bronxville. The cause of death was a cerebral hemorrhage. Here is what Jennifer Dunning, the dance critic for the New York Times has written about her life and work:

A tall, long-bodied individualist with uncompromisingly cropped hair long before that was fashionable, Ms. Farber was an unself-conscious study in quiet unpredictably. She moved with a fierce passion and intensity and a gentle lyricism. She could speak with the softness of a shy, reflective child or, in the studio, with the toughness of a drill sergeant. An edge of lazily subversive wit lay beneath her plain-spokenness in conversation and in her dancing.

In the quintessentially Farberesque "Legacy," which she choreographed in 1968 to a Chopin etude, Ms. Farber moved like a dreaming, elegant giraffe, dressed in a flowing shift but wearing a baseball catcher's mitt on one hand. Poetic and mysterious, the solo was not at all Dadaist despite the incongruity and potential humor of the mitt.

She met Mr. Cunningham and his collaborator John Cage in 1952 at Black Mountain College, where she was studying dance with Katherine Litz and music with Lou Harrison. Ms. Farber joined the Cunningham company in 1953, dancing there through 1965. She created roles in some of Mr. Cunningham's major early works, among them "Crises," "Rune" and "Nocturne." During her Cunningham years, she also performed with Litz, playing a vampire in her "Dracula," and with Peter Saul and Paul Taylor. Her last performance was in a 1995 collaborative duet, "Threestep (Shipwreck)," which she created with the choreographer Ralph Lemon, a former student, for his company's season at the Joyce Theater.

Ms. Farber formed the Viola Farber Dance Company in 1968, creating most of her choreography for the troupe, which disbanded in 1985. Writing in the International Encyclopedia of Dance, Christopher Caines describes her earliest dances as having a febrile atmosphere and "a dark, violent intensity that some interpreted as sadomasochistic, despite moments of tenderness." By the 1970's, Ms. Farber had mellowed considerably. "My dances report what I see," she told Jack Anderson in a 1978 interview in The New York Times. "They are my response to the way everything is mixed up together in this world -- people and microbes and elephants and cassowary birds."

Ms. Farber was especially popular in France, where she won a gold medal, with Mr. Slayton, in the Ninth International Dance Festival in Paris in 1971. From 1981 to 1983 she was the artistic director of the Centre National de Danse Contemporaine in Angers, establishing, at the same time, an institute for the training of dance teachers in Paris. Ms. Farber returned to the United States in 1988 to take the Sarah Lawrence post, but continued to teach and choreograph in France into the 1990's. She also taught at the London Contemporary Dance School from 1984 to 1987 and, from early in her career, at universities and dance festivals throughout the United States.

The French Government recently named Ms. Farber an Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in France.