

FiveOne Experimental Orchestra to perform at Flower Child September 26

by Mike Telin



Since May of 2008, the Cleveland-based FiveOne Experimental Orchestra (51XO) has presented concerts featuring an eclectic mix of repertoire that bridges the gap between pop and art music at out of the ordinary venues such as the Sculpture Garden and the East Cleveland Cemetery. On Saturday, September 26 at 8:00 pm, [51XO](#) will push the envelope of unusual venues even further with their

latest program, “Dream House,” a guided labyrinth of solo works performed by the ensemble’s eight members throughout the two floors of Cleveland’s premier retro vintage shop, [Flower Child](#), located at 11508 Clifton Boulevard.

“This is going to be a cool concert,” 51XO’s executive director Jeremy Allen said enthusiastically during a telephone conversation. “We’re asking people to arrive at 8:00 pm and spend the first half hour exploring the space. I’ve talked to a lot of people who know where it is but have never been inside, so we want to give everyone a chance to get a feel for the space, and do some shopping if they want to.”

Once the music begins, the eight musicians will perform in two shifts — four performances will take place simultaneously in different locations in the store. “It will be a progressive concert, and each audience member will choose where they want to begin. After the piece is completed, each of the four audience groups will rotate to the next soloist in a predetermined direction so that people don’t run into each other,” Allen explained. “All of the pieces are of equal length — eight and half to nine minutes. Performing them in this manner will give listeners a good sense of the piece because they can hear it from close proximity.”

During the concert listeners will be able to access program notes via the 51XO website. “There will be cards next to each soloist with a QR code that people can scan with their smartphones if they want to read more about the piece they are hearing.”

How did the idea for this concert come about? “John HC Thompson, our artistic director, has frequented Flower Child. He asked Joe Valenti, the owner, if it was possible to do a concert there. Joe has been very accommodating and has let us have free rein of the space. It is a Cleveland landmark, and it’s already such a fascinating space that we won’t need to do any decorating, so it’s a pre-packaged venue — at least for a group like 51XO.”



Allen said there were many problems to solve, not the least of which was sound bleed between rooms. “It was tricky to choose the spots for each of the performances, and which pieces should be performed at the same time. I’d like to think that we have found an optimal situation, but we’ll find out how that works. There is so much clothing, carpeting, and cloth hanging on the walls of the store. That, along with the angles of the walls, creates built-in sound barriers. And having two floors to work with is a big plus.”

I asked Allen to say a few words about each of the musical selections.

Group 1 upstairs:

Michael Bratt’s *Reverie Fall* will be performed by flutist Audrey Whartenby. “It’s a great piece. He wrote it for 51XO three or four years ago, and it was premiered at the Sculpture Center. It’s an adventurous piece that begins evocatively, and later moves into breathlessness.”

Pianist Rob Kovacs will perform his own work titled *Rapt in Transit*. “This piece has a pop minimalist feel to it, along with some jazz influences. I think it balances the program well by bridging the gap from pop music to pop culture and art music. The piece is also harmonically rich, and with each harmonic change you feel something new.”

Group 1 downstairs:

Robert Nicholson will play Jeremy Allen’s *Concoctions Cello*. “It’s a work in two movements. The piece has not been performed for about nine years, but I sent it to Robert and he loved it. It has a schizophrenic feel, going back and forth between two characters through both of the movements.”



Jörg Widmann’s *Fantasie for Clarinet* will be performed by James Lee. “Widmann is quite well known. I have a lot of respect for him. James suggested the piece and it fits the program perfectly. It explores all of the capabilities of the clarinet and it’s fascinating to listen to. On a side note, it’s going to be a challenging piece to perform four times in one evening.”

Group 2 downstairs:

Javier Álvarez’s *Temazcal* for maracas and tape will be played by Dylan Moffitt. “It is the oldest piece on the program, dating from 1984. It’s unusual for us to perform a piece that old, but it’s still so relevant. Dylan is amazing to watch when he performs because there is so much almost choreographed movement. And the electronics are paired perfectly with the acoustic parts.”

Jeremy Allen's *Nameless Grace* for solo violin will be performed by Chiara Stauffer. "She's an amazing violinist and is always willing to try adventurous things. The piece speaks to the beauty and strength of the female form. It was originally written to be danced, but it stands alone very well."

Group 2 upstairs:

Tracy Mortimore will play Alexandra Gardner's *Mint Conditioner* for double bass and electronics. "Gardner is another composer that I have a lot of respect for. The piece begins in an almost abstract way but moves into a jazz club feel. It's another piece that does a great job of combining pre-recorded electronics with live performance."

René Eespere's *Evocatio* will be played by guitarist Joshua Stauffer. "Eespere is an Estonian composer, and this will be the first time 51XO has played any of his music. It's a beautiful piece that immediately draws you in and holds your attention all the way through. It's not a wild ride but rather an invitation to sit and contemplate."

Click [here](#) for information about 51XO's 2015-16 season.

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