

Heights Arts, 2175 Lee Avenue **NEOSonicFest 2017 to include
half a dozen new music concerts**

by Jeremy Reynolds



For the past three years, the Cleveland Chamber Symphony has sponsored NEOSonicFest, a new music festival that spotlights musicians and groups in Northeast Ohio. The festival begins on Friday, March 17 and runs through Sunday, March 26 (see below for concert dates and times).

“There’s always been an incredibly active new music scene in Cleveland,” said Steven Smith, music director of the Grammy Award-winning Cleveland Chamber Symphony. “Cleveland is unique in terms of the high level of its artistic institutions for a city of its size, and it’s been that way for a very long time.” New to the 2017 roster are the ensembles No Exit, the percussion and saxophone duo Patchwork, and harpist Stephan Haluska.

“The festival emphasizes reaching new audiences in new places,” Smith said. “It creates an immediacy, a vibrancy about performances — especially in smaller, club-like spaces like the Bop Stop — which definitely fits new music.”

Organist Jonathan Moyer kicks off NEOSonicFest on Friday, March 17. “We’re happy to welcome Jonathan back,” Smith said. “He gave a fantastic concert two years ago, and he’s excited about joining us again.”



The festival continues on Sunday, March 19 with a chamber music concert by the Cleveland Composers Guild. One of the nation's oldest new music organizations, CCG includes 50 professional composers representing a variety of musical styles.

The first Cleveland Chamber Symphony performance will be its annual Young and Emerging Composers concert, scheduled for Wednesday, March 22. An open rehearsal will take place on Sunday, March 19.



“We’re excited about this year’s Young and Emerging initiative, which has been part of the ensemble’s history since its founding in 1980,” Smith said. “This time we’ve worked more closely with composition teachers. We’ve asked them to nominate a student they felt was ready to write for chamber orchestra, and whom they felt strongly about mentoring through the process. The professors have responded well to this change.”

Smith noted that nurturing young composers has always been an important part of the mission of CCS. “It’s rare for young composers to have the opportunity for a

professional orchestra to perform their works. I think people will be interested in hearing what the younger generation of composers are up to. The seven pieces are all very different in their ideas about sound — some are more traditional, while others are more experimental.”

To close the festival, CCS will present the late Donald Erb’s *Reconnaissance* and *Music for Mother Bear* on Sunday, March 26. Born in Youngstown in 1927, Erb was a longtime faculty member at the Cleveland Institute of Music. This year marks the 50th anniversary of *Reconnaissance*, a piece Erb dedicated to Robert Moog of Moog synthesizers.



“It may be the first piece that combined electronic instruments with live performance and acoustic instruments,” Smith said. “What that spawned was a landmark for composers. Imagine what pop music would be like without the invention of the synthesizer.”

Smith went on to say that Erb and Moog created an electronic instrument specifically for *Reconnaissance* that still exists in a cannibalized state as the nucleus of the electronic music studio at the CIM. The Chamber Symphony will perform two versions of the work: the original and one that includes an additional movement composed later for a recording.

Looking ahead, Smith said that he’s excited to develop new partnerships with other performing arts groups in the region. “There are any number of directions NEOSonicFest could take, and we’re looking to take opportunities as they come along.”

FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

NEOSonic Festival performances are free, but a donation of \$10 per adult and \$5 per student is requested.

Jonathan Moyer, organ, with Roy Poper, trumpet

Friday, March 17, 2017 7:30 p.m.

Music by Arvo Pärt, Franz Danksagmüller, Moyer, Ligeti, Messiaen and Eben.

Church of the Covenant, 11205 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland

Cleveland Composers Guild

Sunday, March 19, 2017 at 3:00 p.m.

Music by Larry Baker, Matthew Saunders, Scott Michal, William Rayer, Paul Epstein, Mary Ann Griebing, Margi Griebing-Haigh, and Julián Fueyo.

Judson Manor, 1890 East 107th Street, Cleveland

Cleveland Chamber Symphony: Young and Emerging composers Concert

Wednesday, March 22, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.

Music by Daniel Bayot (Bowling Green University), Justin Frankeny (Baldwin-Wallace University), Andy Keller (Kent State University), Alex Morris (University of Akron), Gabriel Novak (Cleveland Institute of Music), Sean Parks (Cleveland State University) and Justin Weiss (Oberlin College).

(An open rehearsal will be held on Sunday, March 19, 2017 from 11:30 to 2:30 p.m.)

Baldwin Wallace Gamble Auditorium, Kulas Musical Arts Building, 96 Front Street, Berea

Patchwork and Stephan Haluska

Thursday, March 23, 2017 at 8:00 p.m.

Original works and improvisations.

The Bop Stop, 2920 Detroit Ave, Cleveland

No Exit

Friday, March 24, 2017 at 8:00 p.m.

Music by Ryan Gallagher, Michael Rene Torres, Bohuslav Martinů, Donald Erb, and Matthew Ivic.

Heights Arts, 2175 Lee Rd., Cleveland Heights

Cleveland Chamber Symphony

Sunday, March 26, 2017 at 4:00 p.m.

Music by Donald Erb

Harkness Chapel, Case Western Reserve University, 11200 Bellflower Rd. Cleveland

Published on ClevelandClassical.com March 13, 2017.

Click here for a printable copy of this article

[Return to the Front Page.](#)