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HRX

CONCORD CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

Chris  
BRUBECK

*danza del soul  
premiere*

Michael  
GANDOLFI

*line drawings  
premiere*

Lukas  
FOSS

*central park reel*



# CONCORD CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY



Left to Right: Owen Young, cello; Thomas Martin, clarinet;  
Michael Gandolfi, composer of *Line Drawings*; Chris Brubeck, composer of *Danza del Soul*  
Wendy Putnam, violin; Lawrence Wolfe, Bass; Vytas Baksys, piano;  
Daniel Bauch, percussion - *Group photo at Tanglewood by Tish Brubeck*

## CHRIS BRUBECK (b. 1952)

### *Danza del Soul*

– for violin, clarinet, cello, piano, bass & percussion

[Published by Soulessence Music]

Chris Brubeck bears one of the most distinguished names in American music as the son of, and for many years now a collaborator with, the jazz musician and composer Dave Brubeck. Growing up with the example of his father's wide-ranging musical activities always present, it cannot be a surprise that his own musical world is both wide and inclusive. He plays a number of instruments, sings, and composes in both jazz and classical genres.

For high school he went to the Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan, where he had rehearsals of the orchestra for two hours a day, of the big band jazz ensemble three times a week, as well as concert band, small brass ensembles, and informal student rock-and-roll groups. He then studied at the University of Michigan. But he says that the major influence on his own music was not composition lessons from his father, or any other particular teacher, but the “great learning process of playing in [Dave Brubeck's] classical pieces with orchestras.”

One of his compositional idols is Igor Stravinsky, who once declared, “Composition is selective improvisation,” a phrase that Chris Brubeck takes as his mantra.

The commission for *Danza del Soul* was made possible by a grant from the Harvard Musical Society. The idea to commission a work from Chris Brubeck for the Concord Chamber Music Society arose from the fortunate happenstance that Wendy Putnam was performing a violin concerto on the same Boston Pops program that included the world premiere of Brubeck's *Convergence* (written for the centennial of Symphony Hall). Relaxing after the concert, the violinist and the composer got acquainted. In addition, Tom Martin had been the clarinet soloist in *Convergence*, and



Brubeck had gotten to know bassist Larry Wolfe some years before when he was part of the ensemble accompanying Bill Crofut in Pops performances.

When writing for a classical ensemble, he likes to get to know the personalities of the musicians who will be playing his music and write specifically for them, a technique that is also very much a part of jazz composition. Others may play the music later, but the first conception is inspired by the personality and the performance style of the people for whom the work is written. “So,” explains Brubeck, “I made this piece ‘personality driven’; it affected how I wrote the work.”

He composed *Danza del Soul* in the summer of 2006, and completed the draft shortly before a “rough read-through” on Sunday, August 20. The reading was taped so that he could listen to it while considering revisions. He found that he particularly liked some of the things that happened as “mistakes,” so, using the reading as a source, he rewrote (by his own estimate) about 10% of the score on the basis of things that he liked from the players themselves.

The punning title, *Danza del Soul* (which hints at the proper Spanish for “dance of the sun” but instead suggests soul music that goes dancing), came because “without any intention from me, the piece took on a kind of ‘Spanish’ life.”

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*Composer Note:*

There is a theatrical flavor to the opening of “Introductions & Flirtations,” the first movement of *Danza del Soul*. I wanted to blur the idea of when a piece “officially” begins. The clarinetist sits all alone on stage and in the concert setting appears to be “warming up” before the audience is fully settled in their seats. Interrupted by a series of offstage violin flourishes, the clarinetist (as directed in the music) looks increasingly annoyed as the violin pierces the clarinet reverie several times. One can hear the violinist walking on stage and falling into a duet until the cellist comes running out to join the party. That trio breaks into a musical squabble which is settled when the double bass player marches out and overwhelms them with assertiveness. A quartet forms that is soon joined by the percussionist. The pianist leaps in (followed by the out-of-breath page turner) and launches into a cadenza. The introductions are over, the sextet is set, and a more traditional presentation of the music continues. This bit of staged mischief helps to tickle the classical veneer and allows the musicians to establish a more personal rapport with the audience. Last summer [2010] at the first public performance in Ozawa Hall at Tanglewood, the crowd was amused and engaged by these proceedings which opened them up to enjoy the music from a fresher perspective.

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**MICHAEL GANDOLFI (b.1956)**

*Line Drawings* – for violin, clarinet and piano

[Published by M51 Music/ASCAP]

Composed for the 10th anniversary of the Concord Chamber Music Society,  
with funds from the Harvard Musical Association [first performance 9/20/2009]

A native and lifelong resident of the Boston area, Gandolfi began his musical involvement in rock and jazz improvisation, starting at the age of eight as a self-taught guitarist. His increasing skill in improvisation drew him to composition, and he began formal study in his early teens. He received both his bachelor's and master's degrees in composition at the New England Conservatory, where he studied with William Thomas McKinley. He also attended Donald Martino's graduate seminar there and worked with Mario Davidovsky and Ross Lee Finney at the Composer's Conference. During the summer of 1986 he studied with Oliver Knussen at the Tanglewood Music Center.

Michael Gandolfi frequently finds musical inspiration in art and literature. *Line Drawings* derives its musical ideas from drawings of Pablo Picasso, one of the greatest masters of the last century. As he notes, “None of my pieces is tethered to a precise Picasso drawing but they are written in the spirit of the Picasso works: concise, clear, written with a sense of immediacy and sureness of ‘stroke,’ light and ‘airy.’ To this end, I decided that each of these pieces needed to be written quickly; each piece was written in no more than three days, and some (*e.g.*, ‘Canon, Cut and Paste’) were written in a single session.

“Lately, I have been interested in experiencing the act of composition through a visceral and exhilarating framework, which I have been able to achieve through these self-imposed limitations. One feature that binds each of these markedly different pieces is that they are all composed of lines, *i.e.*, they are pieces that place a premium on melody and linear activity.”



Each “drawing” is roughly three to four minutes in duration, and they are arranged in alternating fast and slow tempos. The composer provided a brief synopsis of each movement:

**Canon, Cut and Paste:** a very tight, strict, four-part canon that utilizes transposition, mirror and retrograde techniques. The most compositionally complex movement of the lot.

**A Farewell to Old Friends:** a simple accompanimental figure and a tetrachord/pentachord-derived melody that joins with it.

**Hidden Variable:** an embedded staple of the repertoire serves as the basis for this hybrid variation-form.

**Obbligato Aria:** a very simple rising spiral, adorned by lines that are an inversion of the spiral and contrapuntal ornamentation. The simplest composition of the group.

**Chickens:** An up-tempo romp with a decidedly jazzy flavor all of which is expressed through a modified rondo form.



## LUKAS FOSS (1922-2009)

*Central Park Reel* – for violin and piano

[Published by Pembroke Music/Carl Fischer]

Lukas Foss demonstrated precocious musical gifts when he began studying piano and theory as a child in his native Berlin. After moving to Paris in 1933 his family came to America in 1937, and the talented teenager continued his studies at the Curtis Institute. He developed as a triple threat—pianist (working with Isabella Vengerova), conductor (with Fritz Reiner), and composer (with Rosario Scalero and Randall Thompson). In 1940 he was invited by Serge Koussevitzky to be part of the first class at the Berkshire Music Center, where, like his fellow student that summer, Leonard Bernstein, he was eager to pursue all aspects of music.

In 1944, when he was just twenty-two, his cantata *The Prairie* (a setting of Carl Sandburg's poem) made a considerable splash when it was premiered by Robert Shaw and his Collegiate Chorale, receiving the New York Critics Circle award. For the next six years, he was the pianist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, an appointment Koussevitzky made in order to give him plenty of time to work on his own music.

After some time spent in Rome as a Fellow at the American Academy in 1950, Foss moved to Los Angeles to teach at UCLA. He founded the Improvisation Chamber Ensemble at UCLA, in order to experiment with musical improvisation in a contemporary style of concert music. He was conductor of the Buffalo Philharmonic, the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, and the Brooklyn Philharmonic. With all three orchestras he oversaw an adventurous program.



Foss was always interested in the whole range of musical possibilities. From the earliest years, his works showed the record of an inquiring mind, and—more than that—the mind of someone who loves music and who absorbs ideas and procedures from all over, then transmutes them with the philosopher’s stone of his own imagination into new guises. On the surface one would be hard put to identify the composer of *The Prairie*, with its spacious, almost romantic rhetoric, with the composer of *Time Cycle*, for soprano and orchestra, with its improvised interludes; or to find the rather Stravinskyan *Parable of Death* emanating from the same musical imagination as the *Baroque Variations*, which cheerfully twist passages from some of the most familiar Baroque composers; or yet again the Third String Quartet, with its obsessive, hypnotic repetitions, as opposed to the *Renaissance Concerto*, which the composer has described as “living myself into an era.” These diverse pieces, ranging widely in mood and character, share an extraordinary technical aplomb controlled by a searching, open musical mind that has never lost its sense of wonder.

*Central Park Reel* was commissioned by the U.S. Information Agency for performance by the winners of the 1986/87 Artistic Ambassador music competition, with the idea that they would perform it everywhere on the international tour sponsored by the USIA as part of their award. The winners were violinist Kathleen Winkler and pianist Dolores Berman, who gave the first performance in Singapore on June 17, 1987, and performed it widely in East Asia on that tour.

The title *Central Park Reel* hints cheerfully at a kind of musical twin bill. “Central Park” suggests a scene in New York (where Foss lived at the time), but “Reel” hints at a characteristic dance often accompanied by a bluegrass ensemble. Since the work was designed to represent American music overseas, it is no surprise that he chose a vernacular style like bluegrass fiddle playing and converted it into a lively “country” piece that still hints, here and there, at the big city.

—Steve Ledbetter

NOTE: The composer suggested an optional electronic addition to the end of *Central Park Reel*, via a tape delay offset by two beats. We cloned the edited master and overdubbed it, delayed by the required amount. Foss said, “The double-hearing resulting from the delayed canon will give the piece yet another ‘dizzy’ dimension.”



## THE CONCORD CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

was founded by Boston Symphony Orchestra violinist Wendy Putnam in January 2000. CCMS presents a yearly series of chamber music concerts in Concord, Massachusetts, and sponsors a variety of educational outreach initiatives throughout the region. The concerts and educational outreach regularly involve the Concord Chamber Players, who are the CCMS resident musicians. These accomplished artists include Boston Symphony Orchestra musicians, members of acclaimed chamber ensembles, and faculty members of musical institutions, including the Juilliard School and the New England Conservatory of Music. CCMS also presents guest artists, renowned chamber ensembles such as the Juilliard String Quartet, the Lyric Piano Quartet, the Muir Quartet, and world-class soloists, including Gil Shaham, Yefim Bronfman, Peter Serkin, Menahem Pressler, and Lynn Harrell. CCMS seeks to enhance the cultural life of the Concord area by presenting affordable concerts featuring artists and programs of the highest caliber and by implementing dedicated educational outreach initiatives.

### MUSICIANS

Wendy Putnam, violin

Owen Young, cello

Lawrence Wolfe, bass

Thomas Martin, clarinet

Vytas Baksys, piano

Daniel Bauch, percussion

*Generous support for the project comes from the  
Harvard Musical Association and the New England Conservatory*



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**Recorded:** September 3–5, 2010  
at Mechanics Hall, Worcester, Massachusetts

**Producers:** Chris Brubeck (1–3); Michael Gandolfi (4–8, 9)

**Recording Engineer:** Keith O. Johnson

**Recordist:** Sean Royce Martin

**Executive Producers:** Marcia Gordon Martin, J. Tamblyn Henderson, Jr.

**Editing/Post-production/Mastering:** KOJ, SRM, JTH

**Session Photographs:** Michael Lutch (lutchphoto.com)  
*(photograph of Lukas Foss courtesy of Boston University)*

**Piano Technician:** Barbara Renner

**Design:** Bill Roarty & JTH

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**Special Thanks:**  
Robert Kennedy and Joseph Chilorio, Mechanics Hall

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