

some serious multiphonic head banging!

*everyone@universe.existence* is a poem dramatically presented through music, speech and sound. It is as much performance art as musical work. Marvin Bell, Poet Laureate of the State of Iowa, wrote the poem specially for this piece. Commissioned by the National flute Association for the 2003 Young Artist Competition, the piece is accompanied by pre-recorded sound. I made these sonic tapestries at the Electronic Music Studio of the Musik-Akademie der Stadt Basel—the setting they provide conjures the sound of heaven and hell at the same time.

*everyone@universe.existence* by Marvin Bell  
Owl wings, sing feather quiver and a bow  
sing Icarus say wax sing upside down and flutter  
say bush say fire say conflagration  
say cloud nine, seventh heaven, say bliss  
say the world turns say dig it, bone meal  
say kiss say chew say bonfire snowmelt  
excavate the sky, wing it in the earth  
blow back the sea, sirens in the dirt

*Sliding Life Blues*, for flute with Glissando Headjoint®—I invented the “Robert Dick Glissando Headjoint” to do for the flute what the “whammy bar” does for the electric guitar. Put simply, it is a telescoping headjoint (mouthpiece) for the flute. *Sliding Life Blues* celebrates two vastly different musical worlds. Only a slide away from each other are the familiar sounds of the western flute and the sounds of one of its family mates from Africa.

*Babylonish Gabble* was the comment the British flutist and flute historian H. Macaulay Fitzgibbon made in 1929 about the “extended flute techniques” of double and triple tonguing. It leads one to speculate: while many things have changed since George V reigned, surely the specific gravity of earwax has remained constant. To me, the marvelous phrase “Babylonish Gabble” is gilded inspiration. From the instant I first read it in an e-mail from Elizabeth McNutt, I knew it was to be the title of the piece I would write for her. As I have been increasingly involved with the integration of speech and drama into my music since the early 1990s, I was eager to get the babble going. Internet spammers were kind enough to provide the text. Spam e-mails would often contain blocks of random words in an effort to defeat filters. Many of these texts are poetic, evocative and just plain weird. I saved them. Nobody could think of these word sequences—and nobody did, since they were generated by computer algorithms plucking words from dictionaries or texts of some sort or other. The soloist needs to dramatically connect the text’s unconscious dots. With four microphones picking up every detail of the sound emerging from different parts of the flute, it becomes sound source, filter and mixer. The motion of sound across the aural plane is coming completely from the flute. No electronic manipulation is used at all. Among the many possibilities this system engenders is the creation of textures that startlingly recall the tape delay networks of early electronic music, networks that sometimes were used in the more abstract moments in rock, often with the tape being sped up or slowed. *Babylonish Gabble* was composed in 2005 for the flutist Elizabeth McNutt and commissioned for her by the Brannen-Cooper Fund and the Colorado Flute Association.

*IF* was composed in 1992, when I acquired my bass flute in F. The sheer size of the instrument lends itself to spacial effects. By using four microphones to capture the sounds from discrete areas of the flute, the spacial qualities can be dramatically emphasized. The piece *IF* consists of a structure that is consistent from performance to performance while the surface details are always improvised. *IF* is one of my works that are inspired by concepts from science fiction. Indeed the title *IF* comes from the name of an old science fiction magazine, *Worlds of If*.



The MidAmerican Center for Contemporary Music presents

Music at the Forefront

## ROBERT DICK, FLUTE

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2009

8:00 P.M.

BRYAN RECITAL HALL

MOORE MUSICAL ARTS CENTER

Bowling Green State University **BGSU**<sup>®</sup>  
College of Musical Arts

– PROGRAM –

**Techno Yaman** (2001) for flute with electric keyboard/drum machine  
**Gravity's Ghost** (2007) for piccolo  
**Eye in the Sky** (1992) for open-hole alto flute  
**Piece in Gamelan Style** (1978)  
**Air is the Heaviest Metal** (2008)

– INTERMISSION –

**everyone@universe.existence** (2003) for flute/speaker with prerecorded sound  
**Sliding Life Blues** (2001) for flute with Glissando Headjoint®  
**Babylonish Gabble** (2005)  
**IF** (1992) for bass flute in F

All works composed by **Robert Dick** and published by Multiple Breath Music, BMI

**Thursday, September 17, 2009**  
**8:00 p.m.**  
**Bryan Recital Hall**  
**Moore Musical Arts Center**

Please join us in the Kennedy Green Room  
for a reception following the concert.

Audience members are reminded to silence alarm watches, pagers and cellular phones before the performance. As a matter of courtesy and copyright law, no recording or unauthorized photographing is allowed. The Moore Musical Arts Center is a nonsmoking facility.

As a composer in the classical world, **Robert Dick** is one of only two Americans ever to be awarded both Composers Fellowships (twice) and a Solo Recitalist Grant by the N.E.A. He has received a Guggenheim Fellowship and commissions from the Jerome Foundation, Fromm Music Foundation, Mary Flagler Cary Trust, the city of Zurich, the Philharmonie in Cologne and many more. At the 1999 National Flute Association Convention in Atlanta, Dick was soloist in his *Concerto for Flute/Bass Flute Strings and Percussion*. Close to 2000 flutists gave his performance and his music a standing ovation. At the premiere of his *Concerto* at Town Hall in New York City, *The New York Times* spoke of the work as “riveting in its timbral variety and brilliant in Mr. Dick’s playing.” Current compositional projects, all commissioned, include works for the Hopkins Center at Dartmouth, the New Century saxophone Quartet and flutists Elizabeth McNutt (a work for amplified flute) and Jun Kubo (a flute duo). As one of the flute world’s most respected master class teachers, Robert Dick has been in residence in literally hundreds of universities, colleges and conservatories throughout the U.S., Europe, Asia and Australia.

Dick also does extended residencies at universities and music schools. He feels that the opportunity for in-depth instruction and follow up that a 5 or 10 day class provides is invaluable for students. At Chicago’s DePaul University, he used a five-day residency to create a new work with the flute class. Teaching both basic improvisation and introducing extended flute techniques, he led the class in a concert presentation of his *Transdimensional Lending Library*.

A look at Dick’s discography reveals a musician of major creative scope, with over 20 CDs of original solo and chamber works and collaborations with fellow creative musicians in such groups as the ambient/overdrive band King Chubby. Other CDs feature music by Telemann (the *Fantasies* for

flute alone) and Jimi Hendrix. Recent releases include King Chubby’s *IS* and *Columns of Air*, duos with multi-instrumentalist and virtual reality pioneer Jaron Lanier. As an improviser, Dick has performed and recorded with New Winds, Tambastics, Oscura Luminosa, the Soldier String Quartet, the A.D.D. Trio, Paul Giger and Satoshi Takeishi, Jaron Lanier, Randy Raine-Reush and Barry Guy, Mari Kimura, Steve Gorn and many more of Europe and America’s finest improvisors. Over three decades of collaboration, musicians he has worked with include Steve Lacy, George Lewis, Georg Gräwe, Evan Parker, Malcolm Goldstein, Shelley Hirsch, Jöelle Leandre and John Zorn.

Dick’s multifaceted musical life includes work on redesigning the flute itself. Brannen Brothers Flutemakers manufactures his invention, the “Glissando Headjoint”, which does for the flute what the “whammy bar” does for the electric guitar. He performs on a special flute that Brannen built for him, a radically expanded version of the their Kingma-System model. This flute has a myriad of new musical possibilities and many of Dick’s recent compositions embrace these freedoms. Dick also has a relationship with Emerson Musical Instruments, which produces the Robert Dick Model bass flute. Dick has authored and published, on his Multiple Breath Music imprint, a number of seminal works for contemporary flute: *The Other Flute: A Performance Manual of Contemporary Techniques; Tone Development Through Extended Techniques; Circular Breathing for the Flutist*; and *Flying Lessons: Six Contemporary Concert Etudes (Volumes I and II)*. Translations are published in German (Zimmermann), Dutch (Molenaar), Italian (Ricordi) and Spanish (Mundi Musica). These books on contemporary flute technique are the acknowledged standard in the field.

– NOTES –

*Techno Yaman*, composed in 2001, is a piece that blends aspects of the traditional North Indian raga Rag Yaman with very basic rock and electronica. The flutist also controls an electric keyboard/drum machine. The manipulation of the keyboard lends a certain “performance” element. *Techno Yaman* was commissioned by the James Pappoutsakis Memorial Fund and the Brannen-Cooper Fund for the 22nd Annual James Pappoutsakis Flute Competition in 2002. My heartfelt thanks to both the commissioning bodies. As a student of Pappoutsakis, it is an honor and joy to dedicate this work as a celebration of his memory. There was nothing “Mr. P” liked better than a beautiful, emotionally rich flute melody. *Techno Yaman*’s musical goals are the expression of joy and hope, fun and love.

*Gravity’s Ghost* was commissioned by the National Flute Association for the 2008 Piccolo Competition, and I’d like to thank the NFA for the opportunity to compose this piece, dedicated to Mary Kay Fink. Firstly, let me say that I LOVE the piccolo! I love its presence, its power, its projection and its sensuality. And I love the piccolo’s multiphonic world. *Gravity’s Ghost* is inspired by the Mississippi Delta fife and drum music, most notably that of the great Otha Turner. Without quoting Turner, I simply enjoyed his spirit, steeped myself in the vibe of tunes like *Everybody Hollerin’ Goat*, and let my imagination take flight. If Otha Turner had a fully chromatic instrument and was deep into multiphonics, maybe, just maybe, something like *Gravity’s Ghost* might have been heard in the Mississippi Delta.

*Eye in the Sky* is named after a novel by Philip K. Dick, my favorite writer, and unfortunately not a relative. The piece conjures up the paradoxical sense of the emptiness of interstellar space in conjunction with the certainty that sentience is not only out there, but actively observing. *Eye in the Sky* was commissioned by the Fromm Music foundation.

*Piece in Gamelan Style* is my vehicle for expressing love of flute music from the many world cultures, most notably Indonesia. When I invented a way to sustain a low pitch while simultaneously playing scales above it, the gamelan immediately suggested itself. The form of the work is introduction/chorus/verse/chorus/verse/chorus/verse/chorus. The verses are short improvisations inspired by different types of flute music and the chorus material is the “gamelan,” a Balinese slendro scale melody with microtonal counter melodies above it.

*Air is the Heaviest Metal* (2008) For many years, I’ve been a fan of the speed-metal period of bands like Metallica. And now there is a solo flute piece that takes this music to a new and driving place. Get ready for