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Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the New  
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and the Aaron Copland Fund for Music.

The Kitchen and Composers' Forum present  
a 60th Birthday Tribute

**Frederic Rzewski**

*Coming Together*

*Celebrating  
25 Years of Piano Music*

April 16, 1998  
8:00 pm

The Kitchen  
512 West 19th Street  
New York, NY 10011  
(212)255-5793

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MAGAZINE

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The Road:  
a novel for solo piano

Book One

Composed and Performed by  
Frederic Rzewski

Part I Turns  
(miles 1-8, 1995)

Part II Tracks  
(miles 9-16, 1996)

Intermission

Part III Tramps  
(miles 17-24, 1997)

Part IV Stops  
(miles 25-32)

## Notes on the Music

(by Frederic Rzewski)

The road is an extended (probably about three and a half hours in duration when completed) composition for solo piano in eight large parts. Each part consists of eight individual sections or "miles," lasting between two and three minutes each. (The entire work, therefore, will consist of sixty-four miles.)

The writing was begun in August, 1995. The first two parts ("Turns" and "Tracks") were first performed by the pianist Dan Vandewalle at the Vooruit Kulturcentrum in Ghent, Belgium, in May 1996. Part Three ("Tramps") was first performed by the composer at the Synagogue-Muziek Centrum in s'Hertogen-Bosch, Netherlands, in November, 1997. The premiere of Part Four ("Stops"), also performed by the composer, was in February, 1998, at Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire.

Part I ("Turns," Miles 1-8) is a set of eight studies, some of which resemble fugues. No. 4 is a piano arrangement of a choral piece protesting the French nuclear tests in the South Pacific. *Stop the Testing!* was written on the 50th anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing, an event which left an indelible traumatic impression on Rzewski as a seven-year-old in 1945. It is dedicated to Max Cykiert.

Part II ("Tracks," Miles 9-16), written for Dan Vandewalle, is a set of sixty-four variations on the song "900 Miles," a railroad blues song from the thirties:

I'm walkin' down the tracks. I've got tears in my eyes,  
Tryin' to read a letter from my home.  
If that train runs right, I'll be home tomorrow night,  
"Cause I'm 900 miles from my home,  
And I hate to hear that lonesome whistle blow.

Part III ("Tramps," Miles 17-24) is a set of marches, the first four of which are based on a chant sung by U.S. army draftees, as it was sung to Rzewski in the early sixties by friend David Behrman, who was at that time doing his military service in Fort Dix, New Jersey:

A.W.O.L., A.W.O.L., where you been?  
Down in Washington drinkin' gin.  
A.W.O.L., A.W.O.L., what you done?  
Jody's got yo' gal and gone.  
(Refrain)

SOUND OFF: One, Two.  
SOUND OFF: Three, Four.

Part IV ("Stops," Miles 25-32) is more difficult to describe. The eight sections (with the exception of Mile 29) share the same tonal material, but otherwise have little in common. In Miles 25 and 28, durations are determined by the pianist's own breathing. Miles 31 and 32 are a kind of toccata, periodically interrupted by foot stomps and other noises. The text spoken in Mile 32 is taken from the end of Gogol's story "The Nose."

All four parts occasionally employ sounds other than those conventionally produced on the keyboard (whistling, singing, noises of various kinds), and from time to time the pianist is offered the option of adding improvised commentary upon the written music.

[From a letter to the composer Art Jarvinen:]

"I decided I wanted to write about the idea of the road. When you turn onto a road, it's usually already there, and when you turn off it to go where you want to go, it (the road) keeps on going somewhere else. So the piece has to be long enough to virtually guarantee that nobody (except a few nuts) will listen to the whole thing. I also wanted it to have an epic quality, in the sense that some things are constant (the piano, for instance), while others may appear just once, for no particular reason, and never again. While it has a structure (64 miles, each lasting two minutes, in eight groups of eight each of which [16'] can function as a separate piece), things happen for no reason at all, they're just there, like a Burma-Shave sign, or a wrecked car that appears for a moment. It's also supposed to be a kind of novel, in the sense that it's really written not for an audience but for pianists, who read through it at home, like the *Well-Tempered Clavier*. But it's a novel that doesn't really begin anywhere and doesn't really end either, so it's more like *Moll Flanders* than *Pride and Prejudice* and, although the language and characters are sometimes lofty, you may turn the page to find blood splashed over everything."

## Biographies

Frederic Rzewski (composer, pianist) became known as an interpreter of new piano music by Boulez, Stockhausen, Bussotti, Kagel, Cage, Feldman, and Wolff, performed world premieres, and recorded much of the music of these composers for the first time. In the summer of 1963, he and Charlotte Moorman organized the first New York Avant-Garde Festival at Judson Hall. He then returned to Europe, where he spent two years in West Berlin on the invitation of

Elliott Carter in the Ford Foundation's artists-in-residence program (1963 - 1965). The electronic tape-composition *Zoologischer Garten* dates from this time. With Alvin Curran and Richard Teitelbaum, he founded the M.E.V. (Musica Elettronica Viva) group, devoted to live electronic music and improvisation.

In 1968 he began, with *Les Moutons de Panurge*, a series of compositions based on additive melodic formulas which began to address social themes, and he became more and more concerned with the question of language, striving to express the most difficult and complex formal structures in a form which could be understood by a wide variety of listeners. He was also concerned with what appeared to be a crisis in theory, not only in music but in many different fields, including science and politics: the absence of a general theory to explain phenomena and guide behavior. He explored forms in which existing musical languages could be brought together. A series of variations for solo piano, *The People United Will Never Be Defeated!*, was the main expression for these ideas at the time.

In 1977 Henri Pousseur invited Rzewski to teach at the Conservatory of Liege, and he began experimenting with graphic notation and using unconventional instruments or combinations of instruments. In 1982 he became interested in new ways of exploring twelve-tone rows. With *Antigone-Legend*, a one-hour setting of Brecht's poem for voice and piano, he devised a technique using all-interval rows which he has employed in a number of compositions since then. In the last few years, in addition to purely instrumental music, Rzewski has written a number of pieces using texts, both large and small. He has also done a considerable amount of teaching, both at the Liege Conservatory and at Yale, the Royal Conservatory of The Hague, SUNY Buffalo, and the Hochschule der Kuenste in West Berlin.

**Anthony de Mare (event curator)** Recognized throughout the world as a leading exponent of 20th century music, pianist Anthony de Mare has been described as "fascinating, compelling, incredibly articulate, humorous, compassionate and alive" (*The Maui News*, Hawaii). His dedication to the music of our time has led him to create programs illuminating the spectrum of musical thought in the 20th century which are noted for their unique ability to communicate to a broad range of audiences. From traditional to modern to musically theatrical, he has premiered, recorded, and had works written for him by noted composers such as Chester Biscardi, Meredith Monk, Frederic Rzewski, John Zorn, John Rea, Donald Martino, Michael Gordon, Christian Wolff, Bernadette Speach,

Aaron Jay Kernis, José Evangelista, Rodney Sharman, Mary Ellen Childs, Paul Moravec, David Lang and Amnon Wolman, among others. His first full solo recording, *Pianos and Voices*, of works by John Cage and Meredith Monk (KOCH International) has been received with critical acclaim as well as his recent disc of music by John Jay Becker with the Monadnock Festival Symphony Orchestra (KOCH). His most recent recording, *Frederic Rzewski-Anthony de Mare* was released on O.O. Discs and hailed by Keyboard magazine as "astounding." Other recordings appear on CRI, Mode, Wergo, Gasparo, XI and Centaur.

Having performed with Meredith Monk and Company/The House, Mr. de Mare continues to incorporate interdisciplinary vocal and theatrical works into his repertoire. In response to his international success with Rzewski's dramatically powerful *De Profundis* (written for him), Mr. de Mare has created a project of new theatrical/vocal works featuring an intriguing fusion of classic and contemporary texts. Six of these newly commissioned works by American composers Paul Moravec, Jerome Kitzke, and Michael Gordon; Canadian composers Rodney Sharman and Peter Hatch; and British composer Christopher Fox will be premiered during the next three seasons.

This past season Mr. de Mare generated great excitement at the 1997 International Bergen Festival in Norway; his debut as guest artist was hailed as one of the highlights. A strong commitment to residency work and extensive schedule of performances throughout North and South America as well as Europe has brought enthusiastic responses. As concert soloist, he has performed with the San Francisco Symphony, Buffalo HPhilharmonic, orchestras in Dayton, Minneapolis and Caracas and with the Little Orchestra Society of New York in a performance of Lou Harrison's *Piano Concerto*. He was recently the guest soloist with the Essen Philharmonic at the ISCM World Music Days, performing Henry Cowell's rarely heard *Piano Concerto*.

Engagements during 1997-8 season included several performances on the "Music In The Morning" series in Vancouver, guest artist at the Mardi Gras Festival in Sydney, Australia and at the Edmonton New Music Festival, an appearance at the 92nd Street Y's "Meet the Virtuoso" series and a concert tour of Germany.

## About Composers' Forum, Inc.

Founded in 1935 as a program of the WPA Federal Artists Project, Composers' Forum's first concert was presented on October 30, 1935. The format of the early concerts included a question and answer period, led by a noted narrator, after the compositions were performed. This format became a model for many organizations. Many of America's finest composers have found a forum for their work in the Composers' Forum Concert Series. Muhal Richard Abrams, Robert Ashley, Milton Babbitt, John Cage, Elliott Carter, Ornette Coleman, Aaron Copland, Henry Cowell, Morton Feldman, Lou Harrison, Amina Claudine Meyers, Conlon Nancarrow, Pauline Oliveros, Ruth Crawford Seeger, Edgard Varése, La Monte Young are a few of those who have been presented in its lifetime.

Now in its 62nd year, Composers' Forum remains an advocate for authentic music making. We are committed to presenting and supporting composers whose diversity and style of approach reflects present reality. Our New Music/New Composers readings provide a forum for composers who seek exposure to audiences and performers. For established composers, we offer the chance to showcase new directions in a series known for bringing to New York City innovative and adventurous musical projects from around the world. Composers' Forum is funded by the New York State Council on the Arts, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, Consolidated Edison, the Foundation for the Contemporary Performance Arts, the Aaron Copland Fund for Music, the Virgil Thomson Foundation, Ltd., and the Friends of Composers' Forum.

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The Kitchen staff dedicates this show to  
Thomas LaChat, former head of security.

**Coming Together: 60th Birthday Tribute, celebrating  
Frederic Rzewski continues at The Kitchen...**

**Friday April 16, 1998 at 8 pm &  
Saturday, April 17, 1998 at 8 pm**

Friday, April 17, 1998 at 8pm

Compositions:

Piano Piece No.4...

De Profundis...

The People United Will Never be Defeated...

to be performed by:

Anthony de Mare

Anthony de Mare

Stephen Drury

Saturday, April 18, 1998 at 8 pm

Compositions:

*Chain of Thought ...*

*A Life ...*

*Piano Piece No.3 ...*

*The Turtle and the Crane ...*

*Lost and Found ...*

*Fougues ...*

*Four North American Ballads ...*

to be performed by:

Frederic Rzewski

Kathleen Supové

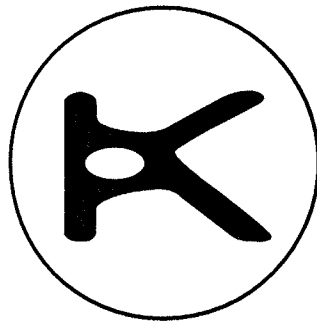
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