

## DAVID J. SIMONS - composer's biography

David Simons composes music for theater, dance, film, installations, and concert ensembles. His unusual collection of sounds from self-built and non-European instruments combines with digital sampling technologies to create a unique pan-cultural music. He has devised his own method of using the Theremin as a Midi controller. David is a graduate of the California Institute of the Arts (BFA 1974), studying composition with **Earle Brown**, **Morton Subotnick**, **James Tenney**, **Harold Budd**; percussion teachers include **John Bergamo** (Cal Arts), **Paul Price** (Manhattan School Of Music), and **Alan Dawson** (Berklee). David has researched and performed music from many of the world's cultures, and furthered his music studies in Bali, Bangkok and Seoul. As a founding member of the FUTURE PRIMITIVE ENSEMBLE his pieces were heard live on radio and in concert throughout the U.S. He has also performed on tour in Java, Bali, Korea, Japan, Eastern and Western Europe, Canada, Cuba and Hawaii. For many years he has been a member of Gamelan Son of Lion and Music for Homemade Instruments in New York, both of which regularly premiere his works.

David has received numerous awards and grants, including a 2003 Rockefeller Foundation residency at Bellagio, Italy to compose music for NEWBAND and their collection of Harry Partch instruments. In 1998 American Composers Forum and Jerome Foundation funded the Gamelan Son of Lion's commission for David to write *Music for Theremin and Gamelan*, and an Arts International travel grant and Asian Cultural Council grant enabled him to perform it in Bali (2000); other awards include Harvestworks Artist-In-Residence ('95 Project Residency, '89 computer music Programming Residency); Canada Council Visiting Foreign Artist ('92) for sound installation at Art Metropole in Toronto; Composer-in-Residence at American Dance Festival ('91); NY Foundation for the Arts Composition Fellowship ('90, 2000); ASCAP Special Awards (1987-02); and several Meet the Composer commissions. The American Music Center's recovery grant 'Music Liberty Initiative for NY', was awarded in 2002. The Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation sponsored a teaching and instrument building residency in 2005 with artist Ken Butler, Lisa Karrer and David Simons at the Avampato Museum in Charleston, West Virginia. In 2009 David curated the INTERACTIVE MUSIC FESTIVAL on the Coney Island Boardwalk for Make Music NY, produced by Manhattan New Music Project with support from the NYC Dept of Cultural Affairs.

In collaboration with **Lisa Karrer**, David has received Artslink and Arts International awards for projects in Estonia (95-03), and the Mary Flagler Cary Commissioning Grant to compose their chamber opera "**The Birth of George**" ('96). This opera was produced by Harvestworks and American Opera Projects and had its workshop premiere at La Mama in '97, supported by the Jerome Foundation and Greenwall Foundation, and an Aaron Copland Recording grant was received in '98 to make a CD, released on *TELLUS* in 2003. David's CD on *TZADIK* "**Prismatic Hearing**" was released in 2004. His second *TZADIK* CD "**Fung Sha Noon**" was released Fall 2009.

Other recordings include MUSIC FOR WORDS PERHAPS by Denman Maroney on Innova 2010; SONOGRAM by Gamelan Son of Lion 2008 on Innova; THE HENRY BRANT COLLECTION vol.9 on Innova 2007; AURAL SHOEHORNING by Barbara Benary on New World Records 2006; Laura Andel's DOBLE MANO 2009 and IN-TENSION 2005; Bob Hoffnar's NEW MUSIC for PEDALSTEEL GUITAR '05; BENDING THE GENDING, Gamelan Son of Lion 2002; PICK OF THE LITTER, Music For Homemade Instruments '00; FLIGHT OF WHISPERS, Jason Kao Hwang CRI '99; FIELDS AMAZE, Patrick Grant '97; NEW GAMELAN NEW YORK, Son Of Lion '95; GOD IS MY CO-PILOT, Knitting Factory Works '93 ; CHUNK/LIVE AT THE KNITTING FACTORY VOL.2, A&M Records '89; A DECADE OF DEBRIS, Music For Homemade Instruments '89; SHELLEY HIRSCH / SINGING, Apollo Records Holland '88; SHORTWAVE/ KURZWELLEN by Stockhausen with the Negative Band, Finnadar '76. David's writings on music and sound are published in EAR Magazine and Radiotexte (Semiotexte '94).

In theater David has composed music for plays by Pinter, Hawthorne, Dostoyevsky, Poe, Jarry, New Peking Opera, Arabian Nights, The Epic of Gilgamesh, and children's theater. His scores for choreographers have been performed at the Merce Cunningham Dance Studio, DTW, Riverside Dance Festival, St. Mark's Church, PS 122, Franklin Furnace, DIA Art Foundation, Yellow Springs Institute, Fashion Moda and the Port Authority Bus Terminal.

Some of the choreographers David has written for and worked with include Sin Cha Hong, Douglas Dunn, Ronald K. Brown, Colin Conner, Lauri Nagel, Harry Streep, Erin Martin, Anita Feldman Tap Dance, Wendy Osserman, Laura Shapiro, Nadine Helstroffer, Deena Burton, Islene Pindar's Balinese American Dance Theater, Tjokorda Gde Arsa Artha, Man Hong Kang, Eun Me Ahn. Other credits as multi-instrumentalist include: NY Shakespeare Festival's THE TEMPEST directed by **Lee Bruer**; JUAN DARIAN by **Elliot Goldenthal** and **Julie Taymor**; MARCO POLO opera workshop by **Tan Dun**; THE PASSIONS by **Shelley Hirsch** in Munich, Vienna and Berlin; Microtonal Music Festival and SECOND SPECIES opera by **Skip LaPlante**; **Samm Bennett's** electronic percussion trio CHUNK at New Music America '89 and European tour; DHARMA SWARA Balinese Gamelan at NY Indonesian Consulate, Asia Society, Museum of Natural History, the United Nations, Merkin Concert Hall; WORLD POWER Gamelan music by Lou Harrison for **Mark Morris Dance** at BAM; A POPOL VUH STORY directed by **Ralph Lee** with music by **Glen Velez** at The Public Theater, Intar, and on tour; UNIVERSE SYMPHONY by **Charles Ives** arranged by **Johnny Rheinhard** at Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center; DORMANT CRATERS by **Henry Brant** at Lincoln Center (World Premiere); OPERATION KRACKPOT by **David First** at Roulette, Harvestworks and Diapason; and WOMAN'S SONG by **Lisa Karrer** at The Kitchen and on tour to Tallinn.

## MAJOR WORKS

- 2009 - GONG-HUMPING CEREMONY *for gamelan*, commissioned by Arts Council of Rockland, premiered by Gamelan Son of Lion outdoors at Fellowship of Reconciliation, Nyack NY.
- 2008 - CIPHER (1992) *for string quartet*, premiered by the Downtown Ensemble at Greenwich House Music School. NYC (and 2010 by Momemnta Quartet)
- 2007 - ASSENT *for cello, tuba, voice and Theremin*. Commissioned by Issue Project Room
- 2005 - UNCLE VENUS *for gamelan and string quartet*, premiered by FLUX Quartet and *Son of Lion* at Greenwich House, NYC. Commissioned by Meet the Composer. (Tzadik CD)
- 2004 - ODENTITY *for NewBand and the Harry Partch instruments* premiered 2007 at Kasser Theater, Montclair, NJ
- 2003 - PICASSO/ROSSINIRAPE *for sampler*, MASS (for election-day silence, dead body behind the wall, & hoofs in the throat) dance/theater by Ivana Sajko BAD Co, Zagreb Croatia
- 2002 - THE UNRAVELING *for Gamelan Son of Lion*, NY Indonesian Consulate and Wesleyan University, Tzadik CD
- 2000 - MUSIC FOR THEREMIN AND GAMELAN commissioned by American Composers Forum SACRED RHYTHM *Millennial Percussion Festival*, Ubud Bali (and 12/99 at Knitting Factory, and 1/05 at The Kitchen, NYC)
- 1999 - VIRTUAL PERCUSSION TRIO *for viola, voice, and Theremin*, with Stephanie Griffin and Lisa Karrer, Galapagos, Brooklyn (and Ubud, Bali; and Brussels Theremin Convention, 2000)
- 1998 - ETHERS, *for Midi-Theremin, slide guitar and voice*, Kunsthalle Krems, Austria  
- COOL IT WAYANG, *for gamelan, trombone and voice* (on Gamelan CD)
- 1997 - THE BIRTH OF GEORGE, a *Chamber Opera* for 20 performers, co-written with Lisa Karrer, commissioned by Harvestworks and American Opera Projects, at LaMama NYC
- 1996 - TUGU ANEH (STRANGE MONUMENT), *for Gamelan and Homemade Instruments*, Yogyakarta Gamelan Festival, Java
- 1995 - KEBYAR LEYAK, *for digital gamelan and acoustic instruments*, studio PASS recording for Son of Lion CD  
-ZHANG BOILS THE OCEAN, Chinese Opera *for Pedal Steel Guitar, Percussion and voices*, Henry St. Settlement, NYC  
- THE GOD OF MUD (from THE BIRTH OF GEORGE), for six-piece ensemble, NYXD Festival, Tallinn Estonia
- 1994 - THIS HOARY PERCH, *Just Intonation String Quartet*, Music For Homemade Instruments, Rhode Island School Of Design (and at Microtonal Music Festival, NYC) and *Pick of the Litter* Homemades CD
- 1993 - CHAIN OF INCIDENT, *quadrasonic sound installation* for artist Margo Pelletier, Trans-Hudson Gallery, Jersey City (Tzadik CD)  
- DIG, for orchestra and organ, (unperformed )
- 1992 - GATE, collaboration with Samul Nori, Sincha Hong and Jason Hwang at Sejong Center, Seoul, Korea  
-DUETS FOR DIGITAL SAMPLERS, *with Denman Maroney* - Festival of Improvised Music, Berlin; Ijsbreker, Amsterdam; De Salon, Groningen; Apollonhuis, Eindhoven; Zaal De Unie, Rotterdam. Sponsored by the Gaudeamus Foundation.  
- EIGHT EMPEROR PENGUINS SANG A DIRGE, *audio visual installation* at Art Metropole; concert at Music Gallery, Toronto
- 1991 - CORE, *ensemble work* for American Dance Festival, Ronald K. Brown choreographer, at Durham, NC and Lincoln Center Out of Doors, NYC

- JIMMY AND TITO, *electronic composition on tape*, Sao Paulo Bienale, Brazil
- 1989 - A TEAR IN THE FABRIC OF TIME and other works, Roulette, NYC
- STOCHASTIQUE, *computer generated score* for RUSH Dance Co., The Kitchen, NYC
- 1986 - NATIVE CAT SONGS *ensemble concert* at Roulette and live broadcast on radio WNYC
- ISLE, *tape music* for Sincha Hong Laughing Stone Dance Co. at La Mama, NYC (and 1989 in Beijing, China)
- NAKED WE STAND, at International Gamelan Festival, EXPO '86 Vancouver, Canada (and 2003 in Estonia)

## PUBLISHED WORKS

- 2010 - "The Tappan Zee Bridge" by Roger Panetta, with oral history sound assemblage CD by David Simons, **Historical Society of Rockland County**
- 2009 - "Sitting at the Feet of Gurus" by Deena Burton, **Xlibris Press**, David Simons, editor. The book is about Claire Holt, Asian Dance ethnographer
- 1994 - "Radio Galaxy" article about radio waves in outer space, Radiotexte, **Semiotext(e)**, Neil Strauss, ed.
- 1986-91 - Articles, reviews, critical essays, contributing editor, **EAR Magazine**, NY
- 1979 - "LISHTA 3" for the Xperimental Chorus, score and article **EAR Magazine**, California
- 1978 - "An Arch is a Key" for 4 ensembles, **EAR**
- 1977 - "Undifferentiated Tissue" and "The Night Sky in October" **Lovelights**, David Moe, ed.
- "The World Will Never Know" **Mills College** Center for Contemporary Music Anthology
- 1973 - "Whether or not to die in love" for mixed ensemble, **Soundings**, Peter Garland, ed.

## RECORDED WORKS

- 2009 - "FUNG SHA NOON" includes ODENTITY for the Harry Partch instruments, UNCLE VENUS for FLUX Quartet, MUSIC for THEREMIN and GAMELAN with Rob Schwimmer, Stephanie Griffin, and Gamelan Son of Lion, and CHAIN OF INCIDENT epic soundscape for sampled cans and bottles. CD on **TZADIK**
- 2008 - "Naked We Stand" and part of "9-11 Suite" *Gamelan Son of Lion* **SONOGRAM** double CD on INNOVA
- 2004 - "PRISMATIC HEARING" works for Theremin, sampler and mixed ensembles, including THE UNRAVELING for *Gamelan Son of Lion* and COLLECTIVE CHOK for *Music for Homemade Instruments* CD on **TZADIK**
- 2003 - "The Birth of George" a chamber opera for 20 players, co-written with Lisa Karrer, conducted by Yvonne Hicks, Harvestworks/TELLUS
- 2002 - "Cool it Wayang" for gamelan, voice and trombone *Gamelan Son Of Lion* BENDING THE GENDING
- 2000 - "Cremation Music" and "This Hoary Perch" *Music For Homemade Instruments* PICK OF THE LITTER 1995
- "Kebyar Leyak" for digital gamelan, trombone, ocarina and text - *Gamelan Son Of Lion* - NEW GAMELAN / NEW YORK, GSOL
- 1994 - "Pygmy Dream" and "Honey Ant Song" for rock band *God is My Co-Pilot* HOW TO BE, The Making of Americans
- 1989 - "Native Cat Songs" for percussion, strings, winds and voice. *Music For Homemade Instruments* A DECADE OF DEBRIS, MFHI cassette
- 1980 - "Floating Worlds" for Zheng (Chinese zither), flute and harp. Self produced cassette