



REVIEWS

“the next developments in the sphere (of) minimalism”, “...state-of-the-art examples of this style world” – All Music

“This is one of the most fun albums to come my way in a while”. “...this heavily minimalist-tinged music offers constant delight”, “...impeccably crafted and played by all concerned with pinpoint accuracy” – Fanfare

“...everything flows in linear and circular motion as though a beautifully eccentric segmented ballet simultaneously restrained and exuberant, more than once ecstatic”. “the entire concept of music top to bottom marvelously persists in non-stop hybridization and transmogrification” – Folk and Acoustic Music Exchange

“...unusual tonal combinations and perking up listeners’ ears through strongly jazz-inflected rhythms that tend to turn in unexpected directions” – Infodad

ABOUT

OCTET is a New York-based music ensemble comprised of a star lineup of instrumentalists performing contemporary compositions that push boundaries.

OCTET takes the instrumentation of American popular music to create a new and fresh sound with rich sonorous colors and vibrant energy.

Contributing to the unique sound of OCTET is its instrumentation. Essentially, it is a scaled down big band using one each from the brass section plus rhythm: saxophone, trumpet, trombone, drums, piano, electric piano, vocals, and double bass.

OCTET gathers together a stellar cast of artists who have worked with groups including eighth blackbird, SIGNAL, Alarm Will Sound, Victoire, and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. Their repertoire currently includes music by composer and founder William Susman such as a live film score performance to Native New Yorker, Best Documentary Short at the Tribeca Film Festival.

CONTACT

Operations Manager

Tel: 310.943.2233 | Email: info@octetensemble.com

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MEMBERS



Alan Ferber | Trombone

Alan Ferber is known internationally as a jazz trombonist, composer and bandleader. The Wall Street Journal affectionately describes his music as “somehow both old school and cutting edge”. Having performed in venues ranging from the Lincoln Center, the Blue Note, and Birdland, Ferber has also appeared on TV shows including the Tonight Show, The View, and Good Morning America. As an educator, Ferber currently serves as an adjunct professor at the Cali School of Music at Montclair State University in New Jersey, the Peabody Conservatory at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and New York University.

Mike Gurfield | Trumpet

Hailed as a "new music veteran" by New York Magazine, this Eastman School of Music alumnus serves as the Principal trumpet of New York's Signal Ensemble, Wordless Music Orchestra, is the Artistic Director of the contemporary music collective Deviant Septet, is a founding member of the Brooklyn Brass, and is a regular collaborator with Alarm Will Sound. In addition to performances on Broadway shows such as "South Pacific", he has been heard live in radio broadcast performances on Radio Bremen (Bremen, Germany), and nationally on NPR among others, and has performed in venues ranging from Carnegie Hall's Stern Auditorium, to London's Barbican, to NYC's experimental arts spaces like Le Poisson Rouge. Gurfield can be heard in recordings on Sony Classical, Warp Records, Warner Brothers Classical, Naxos America and many others.



Mellissa Hughes | Vocals

Hailed by Time Out New York as a “dazzling diva, adept at old and new music” Soprano Mellissa Hughes enjoys a busy career performing with Alarm Will Sound, eighth blackbird, Newspeak, SIGNAL, My Brightest Diamond, The National, Victoire and The Breeders. Upcoming season highlights include premiers with both the American Composers Orchestra, the Carnegie Hall Dawn Upshaw and Donnacha Dennehy Workshop and recording Reich's Music for 18 Musicians with SIGNAL. Miss Hughes records for Nonesuch, Cantelope, and Naxos Records, and is a New Amsterdam Records Artist. Ms. Hughes holds degrees from Westminster Choir College, Princeton; and Yale University.

Elaine Kwon | Piano

Prize-winning pianist Elaine Kwon made her orchestral debut with the Washington-Idaho Symphony at age 15 and has performed solo, concerto, and chamber music concerts throughout the US and internationally. She received standing ovations at her sold-out, 2008 Carnegie Hall debut concert in Weill Recital Hall as well as in her 2009/2010 solo concerto appearances with the Toronto Philharmonia, Slovak Sinfonietta and the New York Chamber Virtuosi. She is the co-founder and President of the interactive, music and wine concert series, Savor Your Senses. Kwon received a Doctorate of Musical Arts from Boston University; a Master of Music from New England Conservatory with highest honors. Elaine is an Affiliated Artist/Lecturer in the Music Department at MIT.



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MEMBERS (cont'd)



Eleonore Oppenheim | Contrabass

Bassist Eleonore Oppenheim is quickly gaining a reputation as both a valued ensemble player and an engaging soloist. Joshua Kosman of the San Francisco Chronicle observed that her performance was "...delivered...with particular eloquence," and Steve Smith of the New York Times has alternately described her playing as "...warm, round..." and "...plaintive, flutelike..." A tireless champion of new music, Eleonore has built a rich solo repertoire commissioned from some of today's most talented young composers. Equally at home playing everything from klezmer to jazz, experimental noise rock, soul and the more traditional variety of Western classical music, she has performed with the Philip Glass Ensemble, "all-star, all-female quintet" (Time Out NY) Victoire, the Wordless Music Orchestra, Signal Ensemble, and the pioneering indie rock band the Instruments.

Demetrius Spaneas | Music Director, Saxophone

Multi-wind instrumentalist, composer, conductor, and recording artist Demetrius Spaneas leads a varied international career and has worked with such diverse artists as John Cage, Ray Charles, and Kyrgyz traditional musicians. He has been featured soloist and composer at major concert venues and festivals throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. Through his work with the US Embassy system, he has presented concerts and lectures on American music and culture throughout the former Soviet Union. His current initiatives focus on Central Asia, the Balkans, China, and Russia. He has won grants and awards from ASCAP, Meet the Composer, the American Music Center, and other organizations, including a special certificate from the Russian Duma (senate). Mr. Spaneas, a New York City-based artist, is a native of Lowell, MA and holds both bachelor and master of music degrees from the New England Conservatory of Music.



William Susman | Artistic Director, Composer, Keyboards

William Susman belongs to the generation of American composers that came of age in the late twentieth century, received traditional academic training while remaining thoroughly engaged with popular music (in his case, jazz), and who went on to establish careers for themselves outside the academic establishment. Susman has written orchestral and chamber music for concert performance, as well as jazz and film scores. This Chicago native was trained in both classical and jazz piano. His music is notable for his integration of a variety of influences, including the Western classical tradition, Afro-Cuban music, free jazz, and a variety of non-Western folk traditions. He studied music composition at the University of Illinois and computer-generated sound at Stanford followed by studies at IRCAM.

Greg Zuber | Drums/Percussion

Gregory Zuber is principal percussionist with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, having joined the orchestra in 1986, and with its alter identities, the MET Orchestra and MET Chamber Ensemble. Prior to that, from 1985 to 1986, he was principal percussionist with the Toledo Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Zuber is an active soloist, recitalist, composer, and clinician, and performs regularly with Percussionists of the Met and his wife, flutist Patricia Zuber. Mr. Zuber holds a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Illinois where he studied with Tom Siwe, and a Master of Music degree from Temple University, studying with Alan Abel of the Philadelphia Orchestra. He is a faculty member of The Juilliard School and the UBS Verbier Music Festival.



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