

# Nieuw Ensemble

Acclaimed as both 'groundbreaking' and 'adventurous' the group will perform in Nicosia next month

An oboe, harp, violin, viola and cello together? These are some of the instruments of the Nieuw Ensemble, and who on Wednesday September 26 will give a concert at The Shoe Factory in Nicosia as part of the 4th International Pharos Contemporary Music Festival.

Founded in 1980 in Amsterdam, the ensemble has quite a unique instrumental structure utilising plucked instruments in combination with wind, string and percus-

sion. The lack of repertoire for this combination has a beneficial side as the ensemble becomes dependent on composers to build its own library. Continuous contact with composers from different cultures, countries and generations has led to more than five hundred pieces being written for the ensemble.

The Nieuw Ensemble has also been praised for its innovative programming with Artistic Director Joel Bons being awarded the Prince

Bernhard fund Music Prize in 1998 for 'markedly lively and adventurous programming which can be described as groundbreaking, both in the literal and figurative senses of the word.'

The Nieuw Ensemble has performed in many international festivals to much acclaim including the Venice Biennale, Holland Festival, Agora, Stockholm New Music and Sadler's Wells in London to name a few. Their

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cds of Donatoni, Carter, Fernyhough, Gerhard as well as Chinese composers have been equally well received.

The programme in Cyprus includes two world premieres – that of Tassos Stylianou and the Chinese composer Musheng Chen considered today, to be one of the most remarkable of his generation.

Following his studies at the Shanghai Conservatory, where he now lectures, Chen settled in 2000 in Geneva until 2004.

In 2005, he moved to Paris as a composer in residence at the Cite International des Arts. He has received numerous international prizes and awards including the revered Queen Elisabeth Competition in Belgium amongst others.

At the premiere of his con-

cert-portrait suite Ch'an in Bern, Chen won considerable audience.

Seventy-two years after his death, Webern's name is mostly known as a composer, although few have knowledge about his music. Even during his lifetime, he struggled for recognition with limited success in his conservative home city of Vienna. Then, Boulez and Stockhausen began to set a new agenda for modern music and Webern was posthumously canonised as the founding father of modernism and seemed to symbolise the modernist ideal of scraping the musical past and starting again from scratch.

The programme ends with British composer and author Jonathan Harvey's Death of Light, Light of Death for oboe, harp, violin, viola and cello which dates from 1998.

Born in Warwickshire in 1939, Harvey has doctorates from the universities of Glasgow and Cambridge and has written for works in all genres including orchestral, chamber, solo instruments and opera. His opera Inquest of Love commissioned by the English National Opera was premiered in 1993 and his third opera Wagner Dream premiered to great acclaim in 2007.

Harvey is in constant demand from many international organisations with his music extensively played and toured by the major ensembles with 150 – 200 performances given with about 100 recordings of his music issued on CD.

Harvey is not only an accomplished composer but has published two books on inspiration and spirituality.

