

OBERLIN

COLLEGE & CONSERVATORY

Office of Conservatory Communications

Contemporary Music Ensemble

“Their level of preparation eclipses the highest standard... Each work on the program had something vital to say, something profound...” - Anthony Aibel

Winner of an award for adventurous programming by the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers and the American Symphony Orchestra League in 2002, Oberlin Conservatory of Music’s Contemporary Music Ensemble (CME) stands foremost among new music ensembles in higher education in the United States. Deemed by the *New York Times* as “a hotbed of contemporary-classical players” and a “rural experimental haven,” the Oberlin Conservatory of Music cultivates innovation in its students, and an interest in the continuation of music as an art form. In its six annual full-concert cycles, CME performs music of all contemporary styles and genres: from minimalism to serialism, to electronic, cross genre, mixed media, and beyond.

Under the direction of Timothy Weiss, the ensemble’s consistently innovative programming and high level of performance has led to considerable acclaim. Of a recent performance in Carnegie Hall, Anthony Aibel of the *New York Concert Review* raved: “Their level of preparation eclipses the highest conservatory standard and most professional contemporary music ensembles ... [they] presented unbelievably polished, superb performances—impeccable performances—of extremely challenging recent music.”

CME has worked with many prominent composers from a variety of backgrounds, including George Crumb, Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Helmut Lachenmann, David Lang, Joan Tower, Frederic Rzewski, and a long list of others, and has premiered many of their works. CME also regularly premieres works by prominent Oberlin faculty, student, and alumni composers.

Oberlin conservatory attracts some of the most well regarded contemporary music icons to perform as soloists with CME, including Jennifer Koh ’97, Claire Chase ’00, David Bowlin ’00, Tony Arnold ’90, Marilyn Nonken, Stephen Drury, Steven Schick, and Ursula Oppens. Distinguished students regularly receive opportunities to perform as soloists with the ensemble as well, a luxury that is seldom afforded at other institutions.

Oberlin has long been an undergraduate Mecca for nationally acclaimed composers, chamber musicians, and ensembles. It has produced scores of powerhouse new music performers and ensembles that began their careers as members of CME, including the two-time Grammy award-winning sextet eighth blackbird and the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), among others.