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Crossing 32nd Street to Highlight Career of Composer James Tenney

Phoenix – On the marking of the one-year anniversary of his death, the new music ensemble **Crossing 32nd Street** will present a series of concert events examining the work of composer James Tenney. Special guest Larry Polansky, noted composer and Tenney scholar, will provide his unique commentary to the evening concerts. The group will present its work in three September shows on the 7th and 24th at the Icehouse in downtown Phoenix and on the 22nd on the campus of Paradise Valley Community College.

James Tenney is one of the most important and influential American composers of the last 50 years. Even the venerable John Cage has suggested that if he were young and studying composition he'd have chosen to do so with James Tenney. Larry Polansky states, "No one else's work, as a whole, is as profound, experimental, wide-ranging, accomplished, or revolutionary."

Crossing 32nd Street's artistic director Christopher Scinto says, "We're very pleased to be presenting this collection of interesting, important music. It's a great way to open our season." The music chosen for the concerts is representative of Tenney's career output. Scinto adds, "We've also included some of his tape pieces which trace back to his work in the Bell Laboratories developing composition software in the early 1960's."



James Tenney

Most of Tenney's music is written for acoustic instruments, however, and he used these resources to explore form, pitch perception, and the compositional process. Although process is important to his work, his humanity is infused in all his music. In the work *Pika-Don*, which means flash-boom, he examines the complex realities surrounding the bombing of Hiroshima. Half of the piece presents texts taken from the scientists developing the bomb in New Mexico, while the other half uses texts from survivors of the bombing. "It's a deeply moving work," says ensemble member Brett Reed, "the vivid imagery forces the listener to try and reconcile the wonderment of scientific discovery with the horrors of war."

Crossing 32nd Street will also use the music of James Tenney as part of their continued efforts to perform in alternative, downtown spaces. Scinto says, "On September 7th we will do two performances in the Icehouse's Cathedral Room as part of First Friday's events. The architecture of that space is a perfect match for the music of Tenney's *In a Large, Open Space*."

Guest lecturer Larry Polansky will be a part of the performances on the 22nd and 24th of September. He will provide commentary for both performances and on the 24th will present a lecture at Arizona State University. Brett Reed adds, "The inclusion of Mr. Polansky really elevates the whole presentation. Bringing together the best Tenney scholarship with great performances makes these one of a kind events."

The ensemble will present their work September 7th, 22nd, and 24th, venues and times vary. Admission to all the concerts of this series is free of charge.

crossing 32nd street
contemporary
experimental
music

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Upcoming concerts: Sept. 7th 8 and 9:30 pm, Icehouse
Sept. 22nd 7:30pm Studio Theatre, Paradise Valley Community College
Sept. 24th 7:30pm, Icehouse

The Ensemble

Crossing 32nd Street, Phoenix's premiere contemporary and experimental music ensemble, is dedicated to the performance of representative chamber music from the 20th and 21st centuries. Now in its sixth year as ensemble-in-residence at Paradise Valley Community College, the ensemble boasts a repertoire that includes music by Bela Bartok, John Cage, Elliot Carter, Lukas Foss, Peter Garland, Lou Harrison, Charles Ives, Olivier Messaien, Arvo Part, Steve Reich, Terry Riley, Edgar Varese, William Walton, and Iannis Xenakis. Crossing 32nd Street, which has recently been named as Phoenix's "Best New Classical Music Ensemble" by the Arizona Republic, is committed to increasing the awareness and understanding of contemporary chamber music by presenting artistic works of the highest quality and integrity to diverse audiences. In addition to performing music by some of the 20th century's most noted composers, Crossing 32nd Street strives to present the music of local and emerging composers. The ensemble's core instrumentation, comprised of new music specialists from Arizona State University, the University of New Mexico, and the University of California-San Diego, consists of flute, clarinet, saxophone, voice, violin, cello, piano, percussion and electronics. The ensemble regularly performs concerts in alternative spaces in Downtown Phoenix and on the campuses of Glendale Community College and Paradise Valley Community College.

Larry Polansky

Associate Professor, Dartmouth
Co-Director of the Bregman Electronic Music Studio
Department Chair (1998-2003)
MA University of Illinois, BA (Music and Mathematics) University of California, Santa Cruz

Larry Polansky has worked extensively in composition, computer music, software development, theory, performance and American musics. He was on the faculty of Mills College in Oakland, CA, and directed the Center for Contemporary Music there. He is the author of a number of books and articles, has several solo CDs released, is an editor for a number of major theoretical and computer music journals, and is the founder and director of Frog Peak Music (A Composers' Collective), an organization dedicated to publishing speculative theory and experimental music. He currently teaches in the graduate program in electro-acoustic music, and courses in computer music, theory and composition on the undergraduate level.

The 2007-08 concert season is sponsored in part by the Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction, and Paradise Valley Community College.