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The Third Annual Santa Fe International Festival of
Electro-Acoustic Music

April 23-25
at The College of Santa Fe

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THE COLLEGE OF SANTA FE

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Funding from Meet the Composer, Inc. is provided with support from
ASCAP and the National Endowment for the Arts.

*Live performances
include:*

CSF Electro-acoustic
Ensemble

Joan La Barbara

Steina Vasulka

David Dunn

Aaron Davidson
& Shawn Onsgard

David Behrman,
Peter Gordon,
J.A. Deane
& Steven Miller

Lynn Raley

Sung Ho Hwang

Karl MacMillan

Willow Williamson
& Lynn C. Welch

Andrew Bucksberg



Steina Vasulka performing 'Violin Power,' 1999

Fantasizing about destroying buildings with violin

The two faces of Vasulka

By Paul Weideman

Steina Vasulka has two performance personalities. One enjoys playing Beethoven; the other fantasizes about destroying buildings with a violin.

The music experimentalist will perform today, April 23, as part of The College of Santa Fe's Third Annual Electro-Acoustic Music Festival. The festival will feature more than a dozen composers and performers — the words "musician" and "instrumentalist" are not always apt — today through Sunday, April 25.

For *Violin Power*, Vasulka will play her electric Zeta violin although the music she produces is only a by-product of the technology she wields. Vasulka is a pioneer in the use of a musical instrument interfaced with video and computer elements.

Her violin is equipped with an output that uses code written in MIDI, or musical instrument digital interface, which permits synthesizers to speak to each other.

"It's most interesting because if you have the right receiver, you can drive anything with the instrument," Vasulka, who was born in Iceland in 1940, said in an interview from her Santa Fe home. "I could use my violin to steer a bulldozer down the road and my dream is to demolish a whole building by playing the violin."

Her show today will be a bit less dramatic. She has set up the violin to control a videodisc player. With the violin, she calls up taped images of people dancing and talking. By playing particular strings, she controls which images appear as well as the replay speed and direction.

"It is the performers on the video that I use as musical expression," Vasulka said. "I never like to perform although I don't mind doing it with the Zeta violin."

"It's kind of abstract to me. As a soloist, I've realized what it is to hold an audience in your hand; I understand why people do it but I'm still a little cynical about it."

"I like to play chamber music with different people. We play at least once a week. We sort of play through the literature, Beethoven and Brahms. We do it like some people play tennis or golf."

Another standout in the festival is composer David Behrman, a

central figure in American experimental music since the late 1950s.

He is one of the pioneers in the use of personal computers as live performance instruments.

"Behrman's music, unlike what a lot of people think of when they hear about computer music, is not hard to listen to," said Steven Miller, director of the college's contemporary music program. "It's very beautiful."

"His technology is very sophisticated but that's not the focus. He sets up situations in which performers improvise in conjunction with computers that can respond to sounds the players make."

The local musicians who will perform Behrman's work Saturday are Miller on Balinese bamboo flute, David Dunn on violin, Peter Gordon on saxophone and J.A. Deane on trombone.

The festival will spotlight the college's student musicians too. Miller and Dunn will direct the eight members of the CSF Electro-Acoustic Ensemble Saturday. The group's assignment sounds daunting.

"We will perform Cornelius Cardew's *Scratch Music*," Miller said.

"Underneath, as sort of a bass layer, two CDs will simultaneously play Cardew's *Treatise*, with the recorded bits cued in random order. The score for *Treatise* is

entirely graphic; it's over 100 pages with no music notation.

"This is all coming out of improvisational music in general and the graphic scores of the '50s and '60s, where the composer's interest was in organizing situations where music events could take place more than in organizing the musical notes themselves."

Sunday's repertoire includes a beautiful solo piano piece by Sun Ho Hwang, who is traveling to Santa Fe from Seoul, South Korea, for the festival; and a zany appearance by Andrew Bucksburg.

"The video Andrew Bucksburg submitted was pretty hilarious and amazing," Miller said.

"He was in some mall in Los Angeles, walking around with all these sensors and speakers strapped to his body, and as he walks, the apparatus makes sounds. Both his movement and his proximity to other people produce sounds."

"So the video was basically made by someone following him around, recording the sounds amid shoppers who have absolutely no idea what he's doing. We'll have him walking through the seats here, sort of as entrance music."

■ For a complete schedule of festival performers, see www.csf.edu/perfart/cmp/sfifem/sfifemindex.html. **P**

DETAILS

WHO/WHAT:
Third Annual Electro-Acoustic Music Festival

WHEN:
8 p.m. today-Sunday,
April 23-25

WHERE:
The Forum
The College of Santa Fe
1600 St. Michael's Dr.

INFO:
Each concert \$10
Entire festival \$25
Call 473-6511



South Korean composer and pianist Sun Ho Hwang