

American Modern Ensemble's releases *Powerhouse Pianists II* featuring Stephen Gosling and Blair McMillen, a dazzling all-American disc of piano duos on AMR label

Powerhouse Pianists II explores a wide-ranging and intriguing collection of repertoire for two pianos by John Corigliano, John Adams, Frederic Rzewski, Robert Paterson, Mary Ellen Childs, Amanda Harberg and Doug Opel. Through their unparalleled collaborative artistry, Gosling and McMillen demonstrate that music for two pianos is infinitely more than the sum of its parts on this groundbreaking disc, for release on March 31st on American Modern Recordings

Hailed as the “the dynamic duo of contemporary pianists” who “share a messianic devotion to modern music” by *The New York Times*, pianists Stephen Gosling and Blair McMillen are releasing the long-awaited follow-up to the 2008 recording *Powerhouse Pianists*, which featured an electric collection of solo works for piano by American composers. The new recording, called simply *Powerhouse Pianists II*, doubles the stakes, with Gosling and McMillen applying the full force of their artistry to seven shining examples of music for two pianos by living American composers. Impeccably produced by Grammy®-winning producer Adam Abeshouse the disc will be released on March 3 by the American Modern Ensemble's house label, AMR.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the recording is how the simple addition of a second piano explodes the textural and coloristic possibilities within a composition. *Deep Blue Ocean*, a poetic and powerful three-movement rumination on the sea by AME founder Robert Paterson, opens the disc with intense waves of resonance holding up tinkling rising patterns that burst into block chords, punctuating the pastoral subaquatic scenes.

Doug Opel indulges the playful possibilities of the dueling pianos in *Dilukkenjon*, with the two pianos engaged in a tension-filled championship race to the finish. In *Subway*, a swinging take on mass transit, composer Amanda Harberg takes full advantage of the 176 keys available to her to capture the swirl of activities and personalities that flow underneath New York City. The frenetic pulse melts into the simple patterns of Mary Ellen Childs' *Kilter*, which evoke a sense of mystery and mysticism as they become inextricably entwined.

In John Corigliano's show-stopping *Chiaroscuro* for two pianos tuned a quartertone apart, traditional harmony and musical gestures swim in a sea of microtonal surrealism to great expressive effect that goes out with a bang. John Adams evokes the vast expanses of the American west with his ecstatic brand of minimalism in *Hallelujah Junction* and the disc closes with a two-piano arrangement of Frederic Rzewski's raging industrial masterpiece “Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues” from *Four North American Ballads*.

McMillen and Gosling will perform selections from the disc at the American Modern Ensemble's BLUE AT SUBCULTURE concert on March 3, 2015 at 8pm at SubCulture in New York City.

STEPHEN GOSLING, pianist, is a ubiquitous presence on the New York new music scene, and has also performed throughout the U.S., Europe, Latin America and Asia. His playing has been hailed as “brilliant,” “electric,” and “luminous and poised” (*New York Times*), possessing “utter clarity and conviction” (*Washington Post*) and “extraordinary virtuosity” (*Houston Chronicle*).

A native of Sheffield, England, Mr. Gosling received his BM, MM and DMA degrees from The Juilliard School where he was awarded the Mennin Prize for Outstanding Leadership and Excellence in Music, and the Sony Elevated Standards Fellowship.

Mr. Gosling was for three years pianist of the Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, and appeared in several seasons of the Summergarden series at MOMA. He has also performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., the Grant Park Festival in Chicago, the Bang on a Can Marathon, Bargemusic, the 2001 Great Day in New York festival, and the PAN festival in Seoul, Korea. He is a founding member of the American Modern Ensemble, as well as a member of Ensemble Sospeso and the New York New Music Ensemble. He has performed with Orpheus, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Speculum Musicae, DaCapo Chamber Players, the Orchestra of St. Luke's, Continuum, the League of Composers/ISCM Chamber Players, and Da Camera of Houston. He has also participated in Off-Broadway productions and collaborated with a number of dance companies, including American Ballet Theater and Parsons Dance Project. Mr. Gosling has been heard on the NPR, WNYC and WQXR radio networks, and has recorded for New World Records, CRI, Mode, Innova, Rattle Records and American Modern Recordings (AMR).

BLAIR MCMILLEN has established himself as one of the most versatile and sought-after pianists today. The New York Times has described him as "riveting," "prodigiously accomplished and exciting," and as one of the piano's "brilliant stars."

McMillen has performed in major venues both traditional and avant-garde: from Carnegie Hall, the Moscow Conservatory, Lincoln Center, Caramoor, Miller Theatre, and the Library of Congress; to (le) Poisson Rouge, Galapagos, and the Knitting Factory. Highlights from recent seasons include the Prokofiev Piano Concerto No. 1 at the Bard Music Festival, the Walter Piston Concertino for Piano in Carnegie Hall, and numerous appearances with the New York Philharmonic, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and Albany Symphony.

2014 also saw McMillen's debut at the Gilmore International Keyboard Festival, where he performed a solo recital featuring Morton Feldman's Triadic Memories (a McMillen calling card; Alex Ross praised his "acute feeling for those remarkable passages...") right on the heels of a sold-out performance with his tour de force piano sextet, Grand Band. Of his solo performance, the Kalamazoo Gazette wrote, "McMillen played with complete control, meticulously observing Feldman's tempos, meters, and dynamics, making the high notes sing and the bass resonant...It was like watching the stars come out on a clear night by Lake Michigan, exquisitely played."

Blair McMillen leads a multifarious musical life as pianist, chamber musician, conductor, and improviser. He thrives on playing a wide variety of musical styles: from medieval keyboard manuscripts to improvisation-based music of all types; from Classical/Romantic-era piano repertoire to the music of young 21st-century composers. Known for imaginative and daring programming, McMillen has premiered hundreds of new works both as a soloist and with numerous ensembles. He constantly collaborates with composers and artists of other genres in commissioning works that stretch the boundaries of the piano and the traditional recital format.

Blair McMillen holds degrees from Oberlin College, the Juilliard School, and the Manhattan School of Music. He lives in New York City, and has served on the music faculty at Bard College and Conservatory since 2005.

www.blairmcmillen.com/

###