

### **Pansonority/Luminance: Music of Ezra Sims and Daniel Rothman**

The two composers sharing this program have several things in common, things which are easy to talk about, write about and argue about. Sadly, some of these things can also be used as labels, to either wave as a standard of allegiance or a category to avoid. Neither composer has an institutional association, both composers work quietly in the calm, away from the frenzy of self-promotion. Both composers write meticulously considered music, consciously keeping the past in mind, but always stepping away from their last piece. Neither composer is on the tip of anyone's tongue, but they are as well regarded as any similarly controversial artist. They are comfortable writing music that departs from the 12 note equal-tempered scale that dominates music today, though they can and do otherwise. Hence, pansonority.

Luminance, because it's music that, for whatever reason, glows with its own light.

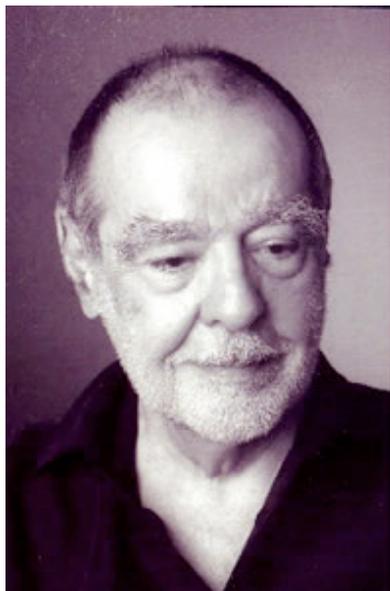


**Daniel Rothman's** musical and visual preoccupations wander beyond the concert hall into eccentric spaces and timescales both smaller and larger than life. I'll be performing a work Daniel wrote for me, aptly titled ***For Ted***, a short, simple cello monologue, composed almost exclusively on the extreme upper harmonic partials of the instrument, assembling a narrative from heard, barely heard, unheard (imagined) sounds, much in the same way that the mind assembles a darkened room's features from wisps of information from the dark adapted eye and the mind's fabrications rushing in to fill the void. Pianist Eric Huebner will be playing ***la música: mujer desnuda – corriendo loca pro la noche pura*** – the title being a poem by Juan Ramón Jiménez in its entirety, and ***Telling the Bees***, which Eric premiered last year, and concerns a ceremony performed by a younger member of a household when his/her master or mistress dies, who visits the beehive rattling a chain of small keys, and whispers:

*Little Brownies, little brownies, your master/mistress is dead.*

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**Ezra Sims** is a horse of a different color, and an older one, too, since we are celebrating his 80th birthday. Born in 1928, far off the musical reservation in Birmingham, Alabama, he showed intellectual and musical precociousness as a youngster and progressed through piano, string bass, choral singer, composer, Yale student, Mills student (with Darius Milhaud), New Yorker, Guggenheim Fellow in Japan, inventor of a 72-note per octave non-symmetrical notation system, resident of Cambridge, Massachusetts, co-founder of Dinosaur Annex (a Boston based new music ensemble) and still is writing music. In the 60s, driven by his ear to write down notes that were not reproducible on the piano, he developed a tonal system of 17 irregularly spaced notes, fully transposable, resulting in a 72 note sub-division of the octave. Taking it one step beyond the flattened system of Harry Partch (based on a root-ratio), Ezra's system evolved a harmonic language allowing for closely related and fully chromatic modulations. These vast tonal resources are tamed by a somewhat conservative, almost Brahmsian romanticism, and the resulting music is clear and expressive. Pianist Eric Moe, mezzo-soprano Mary Nessinger, and I will be playing a set of works spanning his career.