



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 10, 2009

**CORNISH COLLEGE OF THE ARTS PRESENTS  
DRUMS ALONG THE PACIFIC**

**SEATTLE, WA** – This March, the Cornish Music Series presents *Drums Along the Pacific*, a four-day festival featuring the music of American composers John Cage, Henry Cowell, and Lou Harrison. Produced to commemorate the legendary percussion concerts organized by Cage and Harrison throughout the Pacific Northwest in the 1940s, the festival showcases performances by the Pacific Rims Percussion Quartet and the Seattle Chamber Players, and will conclude with a special concert featuring Gamelan Pacifica.

Noted guest artists include Boston-based pianist Stephen Drury, whose recordings and performances of the solo piano works of Cowell and Cage have received worldwide accolades, and internationally acclaimed tenor John Duykers, long associated with the music of Lou Harrison. Symposium presentations will be offered by Elena Dubinets, artistic administrator of the Seattle Symphony, Dr. Leta Miller, biographer of Lou Harrison and professor at the University of California Santa Cruz, composer Larry Polansky of Dartmouth College, and Cornish faculty members Jarrad Powell and Matthew Kocmierski.

The complete festival program and tickets to all events are available for purchase online at [www.cornish.edu/drums](http://www.cornish.edu/drums).

**Drums Along the Pacific**

**Thursday, March 26, 8pm - Henry Cowell**

**Friday, March 27, 8pm - Lou Harrison**

**Saturday, March 28, 1pm – Presentations**

**Saturday, March 28, 4pm - John Cage (part 1)**

**Saturday, March 28, 8pm - John Cage (part 2)**

**Sunday, March 29, 1pm - Presentations**

**Sunday, March 29, 4pm - Gamelan Pacifica**

**PONCHO Concert Hall, 710 East Roy Street, Seattle**

**Tickets: \$15 general, \$7.50 students, alumni & seniors**

**Festival Pass: \$45 general, \$30 students, includes admission to all festival events**

**Presentations are free and open to the public.**

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For additional information or to request images please contact Meike Kaan or Beth Fleenor (see information above) or visit [www.cornish.edu](http://www.cornish.edu).

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## About Drums Along the Pacific

"During the last two years an extraordinary interest in percussion music has developed on the Pacific coast. In Seattle, San Francisco, Oakland and Los Angeles, orchestras have been formed to play music for percussion instruments alone... directed chiefly by two young Western composers, John Cage and Lou Harrison."

– Henry Cowell, *Drums Along the Pacific* (1940)

In the spring of 1939, noted American composers John Cage and Lou Harrison presented a series of percussion concerts at the Cornish School in Seattle. By January of the following year the two young composers had embarked upon a Northwest tour presenting percussion concerts at Whitman College (Walla Walla, WA), Reed College (Portland, OR), the University of Idaho (Moscow, ID), and Montana State University (Missoula, MT) – a bold experiment that composer Henry Cowell famously dubbed “*Drums Along the Pacific*.”

Cornish celebrates the seventieth anniversary of these landmark percussion concerts with this special four-day festival devoted to the music of John Cage, Lou Harrison and their mentor Henry Cowell.

Through concerts and presentations exploring the range of repertoire and philosophies behind the work of each of the composers, *Drums Along the Pacific* focuses on the creative work that made Cage, Cowell, and Harrison, American masters in terms of their groundbreaking artistic visions and ideas. The festival, presented in Cornish’s historic PONCHO Concert Hall, features performances by the Pacific Rims Percussion Quartet, tenor John Duykers, pianist Stephen Drury, and the Seattle Chamber Players, among others.

Additional information can be found online at [www.cornish.edu/drums](http://www.cornish.edu/drums).

*Drums Along the Pacific* has been made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts as part of American Masterpieces: Three Centuries of Artistic Genius. Additional support for *Drums Along the Pacific* has been provided by PONCHO, The Boeing Company, The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, the Estate of Henry and Sidney Cowell, and the Seattle Drum School. Media sponsorship has been provided by KUOW 94.9 Public Radio.

## About Cornish College of the Arts

Cornish College of the Arts is nationally recognized as a premier college of the visual and performing arts offering Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees in dance, theater, art, design and performance production, and a Bachelor of Music degree. A pioneer in arts education, Cornish College of the Arts sprang from the remarkable vision of Nellie Cornish, a woman determined to cultivate the arts in Seattle when it was scarcely more than a frontier town. Her philosophy of educating the artist through exposure to all the arts was progressive at the time, and continues to be innovative today.

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