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### Faculty Recital

Milen Kirov

*Chapman University*, kirov@chapman.edu

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Faculty Recital:  
**Milen Kirov, piano**  
November 17, 2012



fall **2012**

 **CHAPMAN**  
UNIVERSITY

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# FALL 2012 calendar highlights

## september

September 27-29, October 4-6

**Company**, Book by George Furth, Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Directed by Todd Nielsen, Music Direction by Bill Brown

## october

October 19-21

Opera Chapman presents **"2012: An Opera Odyssey – The Journey Continues"**

Peter Atherton, Artistic Director, Carol Neblett, Associate Director, David Alt, Assistant Director

October 26

**Chapman University Choir and Women's Choir in Concert**

Stephen Coker and Angel Vázquez-Ramos, Conductors

## november

November 2-3

**American Celebration**

Dale A. Merrill, Artistic Director and Producer

William Hall, Music Director and Conductor

November 7-11

**If All the Sky Were Paper**

By Andrew Carroll, Directed by John Benitz

November 10

**Chapman University Wind Symphony**

Paul Sherman, Music Director and Conductor

November 12

**University Singers in Concert**

Stephen Coker, Conductor

November 16

**Chapman Chamber Orchestra**

Daniel Alfred Wachs, Music Director and Conductor

November 28-December 1

**Fall Dance Concert**

Directed by Jennifer Backhaus

## december

December 7-8

**49th Annual Holiday Wassail** - Banquet and Concert

Presented by the University Choir and University Singers, Stephen Coker, Conductor,

University Women's Choir, Angel Vázquez-Ramos, Conductor, and the Chapman University Chamber Orchestra, Daniel Alfred Wachs, Conductor



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# CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

## *Conservatory of Music*

*presents a*

## Faculty Recital

### Modes & Meters

### The Piano Music of Milen Kirov

Milen Kirov, piano

*with guest*

Neema Pazargad, piano

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November 17, 2012 ■ 8:00 P.M.

Salmon Recital Hall

## Program

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Duplicitas (2011)  
Pharos (2012)  
Rotatio (2010)

Milen Kirov, piano

Vectors (2011)  
fado (2011)

Neema Pazargad, piano

The Shepherd and the Mountain (2012)  
Paidushko (2010)  
Back to Bulgaria (2005)

Milen Kirov, piano

~Intermission~

Thracian Blues (2012)

Milen Kirov, piano

Vortex (2012)

Neema Pazargad, piano

Montis (2012)  
Gorgon (2012)

Milen Kirov, piano I  
Neema Pazargad, piano II

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## Program Notes

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*Modes & Meters* is a book of concert etudes, and improvisational and finger dexterity exercises intended for the contemporary professional pianist. Based on the traditional asymmetric rhythms and unique modalities of Bulgaria and the Balkans, this ever expanding collection blends the sounds of the East with Western compositional organization, while searching for new and unique ways of expanding the pianist's virtuosity and repertoire.

**Duplicitas** (2011)  
(Latin – “doubleness; duplicity”)

The duplicity of this piece is embodied in the independent melodic lines based on different modes and metric groupings that are assigned to each hand. While the right hand plays repeated melodic patterns in the traditional Middle Eastern/Balkan mode (maqam) *Mustaar* on F with a time signature of 4/4 (2+2+2+2), the left hand loops patterns in the maqam *Karjagar* on B with a 7/8 time signature (2+2+3) - the rhythm of a traditional Bulgarian dance called *Rachenitza*. *Duplicitas* is a composition built on the simultaneous phasing of two pairs of musical structures – a smaller one that is played in the middle register of the piano and easily identifiable by the accented downbeats of two different meters, and a larger one, that builds on the pattern differences between the two hands and accentuated by sparse melodic lines appearing in the higher and lower register. The notes of these melodic lines are preset with the *sostenuto* (middle) pedal and ring out throughout the piece, creating a shimmering wall of sound in the process.

**Pharos** (2012)  
(Greek, Latin – “Lighthouse”)

*Pharos* is in the meter of 7/8 (3+2+2) and its texture creates a harmonic tapestry built entirely on the pitches of *Karjagar* maqam in D. The metric pulse, indiscernible in the beginning, slowly unveils itself as a beam of light breaking through the layers of a thick fog, only to be lost again.

**Rotatio** (2010)

The complex texture of this etude is based on the Bulgarian *Daichovo Horo* meter of 9/8 (2+2+2+3) and includes three melodic layers played against a constantly changing rhythmically ostinato pattern. Based on three different rows of pitches in three different modes, these layers are highlighted through the use of the *sostenuto* pedal. In this way, a thick resonating body of sound is created that keeps on growing and intensifying through the end, when it explodes into an organized mayhem of pitch layers and rhythmic figures. *Rotatio* is dedicated to the pianist Vicki Ray.

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## Program Notes

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### Vectors (2011)

This short piece employs a 7-tone row and its variants (inversions, retrograde, etc.) and is completely serial. Even though it is in the mode of *Mustaar* with a rhythmic pattern of 3+2+3 (8/8), *Vectors* was composed using a matrix and sounds the farthest from the character of traditional Balkan music.

### fado (2011)

(Portuguese - "destiny; fate")

*fado* is entirely in the traditional Middle Eastern/Balkan mode (maqam) *Mustaar* and rhythmic pattern 2+2+2+3 (9/8 time signature), used in Bulgaria in the popular *Daichovo Horo* dance. It explores the interaction between a lush, arpeggiated accompaniment rolling through both hands and an expressive, richly ornamented melody played in the middle range of the piano by the alternating hands, and evoking the epic vocal melodies of the Bulgarian unmetered songs.

### The Shepherd and the Mountain (2012)

Utilizing the traditional maqam *Karjagar* and a 3+2+2 (7/8) rhythmic pattern, this piece is based on a simple elegiac melody evoking the soulful sound and intricate ornamentation of the Bulgarian shepherd's flute *kaval* accompanied by a descending harmonic progression.

### Paidushko (2010)

Just like its namesake – the traditional Bulgarian dance Paidushko Horo, this etude is based on a rhythmic pattern of 2+3 (5/8) in a rather brisk tempo. However, the compositional material of the piece strays away from the folk dance character by utilizing two melodies that skip between hands in the high and low register of the piano and are based on two different modes – Hijaz and *Mustaar*. These quirky melodies are played against a smooth and unaccented four eighth-note ostinato pattern, which creates a polyrhythmic interplay effect.

### Back to Bulgaria (2005)

This exhilarating piece was composed right before Milen Kirov visited his homeland for the first time after years of life in the US and it definitely bares his excitement about the trip. It is in the meter of 11/8 (2+2+3+2+2) and the mode of *Mustaar* on D with rich ornamentation and almost a bluesy/gospel feel of the harmonic language. *Back to Bulgaria* is a thrilling example of Milen's original musical symbiosis between his Bulgarian roots and his American home.

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### Thracian Blues (2012)

An improvisation in 7/8 (2+2+3) - the meter of the traditional Bulgarian dance *Rachenitza*.

### Vortex (2012)

(1. A spiral motion of fluid within a limited area, especially a whirling mass of water or air that sucks everything near it toward its center; 2. A place or situation regarded as drawing into its center all that surrounds it)

Milen wrote this virtuosic piece for Neema Pazargad. It is based on a 9-note original mode and is in a 13/8 meter (2+2+2+3+2+2). *Vortex* is performed on two pianos (one of them – prepared) – a true test for the pianist's hand independence and technique.

### Montis (2012)

(Latin – “mountain; of the mountain”)

A slow, epic composition evoking the spirit of the traditional Bulgarian ornamented instrumental melodies. Written in 8/8 (3+2+3), this composition builds around a constant 2-note ostinato by systematically adding layers of melodies, harmonic accompaniment, and more ostinato patterns. It was inspired by the timeless beauty of Milen's favorite Bulgarian mountain – the Rhodopes.

### Gorgon (2012)

(In Greek mythology, the Gorgon was a terrifying female creature. The name derives from the Greek word gorgós, which means "dreadful" and the term commonly refers to three sisters who had hair of living, venomous snakes, and a horrifying visage that turned those who beheld it to stone. While two of the Gorgons – Stheno and Euryale, were immortal, their sister Medusa was not, and was slain by the mythical demigod and hero Perseus) This polyrhythmic and polymodal piece is truly horrifying to the performer and can make hands feel like they are made of stone, hence the title. It uses two different modes and two different rhythmic patterns (2+2+3 and 3+2+2) and most of the time each player's hands do not play in the same mode or rhythm (i.e. Piano I left hand is paired with Piano II right hand, whereas Piano II left hand is paired with Piano I right hand). Sections alternate between smooth and even phrases during which the listener cannot distinguish the different rhythms, and accented phrases where the difference is obvious. *Gorgon* is extremely demanding on the performers and requires great concentration, endurance, impeccable rhythm, and intricate ensemble work.

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## Artists

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**Milen Kirov** represents a new generation of 21<sup>st</sup> century artists. Combining his Bulgarian background, rigorous European and American conservatory training and education, and a vast experience in the music worlds of two continents, Milen has carved a successful and dynamic career as a performer, composer and educator working with equal success in a variety of musical settings and genres.

Milen Kirov was born in Plovdiv, Bulgaria in a family of professional musicians and started playing the piano at the age of 4. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Piano Performance, a Master's degree in Composition, and a Doctoral degree as a Performer-Composer. Milen has won numerous piano and composition awards and has performed in Bulgaria, Greece, Germany, France, Canada, and the United States. He has shared the stage with some of the most exciting musicians in jazz and contemporary music today and his compositions and performances have been featured on over 25 radio and TV stations in the US, England, Scotland, Germany, and Bulgaria. Currently, Milen Kirov is based in Los Angeles, where he serves on the faculty at Chapman University's Conservatory of Music and the Department of Music at California State University, Northridge, and maintains a very busy composing and performing schedule frequently giving concerts as a soloist or with his 11-piece Balkan brass ensemble *Orkestar MÉZÉ*. His personal website is [www.milenkirov.net](http://www.milenkirov.net)

**Neema Pazargad** has been playing and performing piano since the age of six. A Los Angeles native, Neema began his studies under concert pianists Claudine Perriere and Sheldon Steinberg. He then attended the University of Denver's Lamont School of Music on a full scholarship, studying with professors Alice Rybak, David Genova, and Theodore Lichtman. At Lamont, he attained a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance and was the recipient of numerous awards in solo and collaborative piano performance. Winner of the Most Outstanding Senior in Performance of 1999, Neema was the first student from the Lamont School of Music sent to Japan to collaborate and perform with Japanese musicians from Nagoya, Japan. In 2001, Neema began his studies at the California Institute of the Arts with pianist Vicki Ray. He completed his Masters of Music in Collaborative Arts in 2004. In June of 2010 Neema joined the Piano Technicians Guild and was recently accepted to the Piano Technician Internship Program at The Colburn Conservatory in Downtown Los Angeles. Neema resides in the San Fernando Valley, working as a performer, piano instructor and piano technician.

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