

GVSU New Music Ensemble to give local performance of N.Y. concert

May 10, 2007

Grand Valley State University's New Music Ensemble, directed by Bill Ryan, will give a free local performance of the concert they have been invited to perform in New York.

The group will perform at the 20th anniversary of the prestigious Bang on a Can Marathon in New York City on June 2-3. Media and the public are encouraged to attend an open rehearsal on the Allendale Campus on Thursday, May 31, at 4:30 p.m., in the Louis Armstrong Theatre, Performing Arts Center. They will perform Steve Reich's "Music for 18 Musicians," which they have recorded for a fall CD release on Innova Recordings.

Last October the group traveled to New York City to attend a Steve Reich Festival which included Reich's own ensemble performing the same piece. In addition to lectures, other concerts, and workshops, they met with several members of Reich's ensemble to discuss strategies for performing the work, and were able to meet with Reich backstage.

"Just to watch how the ensemble interacted on stage and floated between the instrumental parts was fascinating," said Ryan. "We were all furiously making notes in our scores for our own performance."

Widely regarded as one of the most influential composers of the 20th-century, Reich's music draws from not only Western classical music, but from the structures, harmonies, and rhythms of non-Western and American vernacular music. Composed from 1974-76, "Music for 18 Musicians," at just over an hour, is a shimmering journey through lush, pulsing harmonies and slowly evolving melodic patterns. His ensemble's latest recording of the work won a Grammy Award in 1999.

This year's edition of the award-winning festival will be 26 hours of continuous music, co-produced with the River to River Festival and the World Financial Center Arts & Events. The free and open to the public concert will take place at the Wintergarden of the World Financial Center. More than 5,000 people are expected to attend.

For more information about the New York festival, visit www.bangonacan.org. For more information about the GVSU New Music ensemble, contact Bill Ryan at ryanwi@gvsu.edu or (616) 331-3087, or visit www.newmusicensemble.org.