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CORKY SIEGEL'S CHAMBER BLUES

with the

SIEGEL-SCHWALL BAND

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CORKY SIEGEL, composer, blues harmonica & piano, singer/songwriter, and most recently the winner of the Lila Wallace/Reader’s Digest/Meet the Composer’s national award for chamber music composition and the Illinois Arts Council Fellowship Award for Music Composition.

Corky Siegel had a fortunate break at the age of 20 and at the very start of his career when he formed the legendary Siegel-Schwall Band that toured the major rock palaces and clubs in the 60’s and 70’s. He was introduced to the blues through his very first steady engagement at Peppers the internationally renowned blues club where his job included performances with the blues masters themselves, such as Willie Dixon, Little Walter, Muddy Waters, and Howlin’ Wolf. “For groups like the Rolling Stones...names like Muddy Waters and Howlin’ Wolf were exotic inspirations. For Siegel-Schwall they were the guys that played with them on 43rd Street.” - Lin Brehmer - Music Director for WXRT radio.

Corky Siegel has recorded 16 albums including five on Vanguard, five on RCA, two on Alligator Records (the exclusively blues label) and two album projects for the prestigious classical label Deutsche Grammophon (DG). The DG release of William Russo’s Three Pieces for Blues Band and Symphony Orchestra featuring Corky’s blues band, Siegel-Schwall (for whom the work was written) with Seiji Ozawa and the San Francisco Symphony, was a block-buster in sales and had “an unprecedented inter-generational impact on the American music scene.” - Music Critic - David Sckolnik. It prompted the only 45 rpm single release in Deutsche Grammophon’s history, and the selection from the album scored high on the Billboard charts.

Mr. Siegel’s solo recorded performance of William Russo’s Street Music with Seiji Ozawa and the San Francisco Symphony on DG won the French Government’s Grand Prix du Disque, and received the Recording of Special Merit in Stereo Review for the LP and again in 1988 for the re-released compact disc.
Corky Siegel has written and performed works for Arthur Fiedler and the San Francisco Symphony, the Grant Park Symphony, the National Symphony Orchestra (for a Kennedy Center performance where the Washington Post proclaimed that; "Siegel is a Phenomenon"). He also composed "Continuum" with Alwin Nikolias (father of modern dance) and Murray Louis. His music has been choreographed by 5 different international ballet companies and has been used for many national TV specials and motion pictures as well as the 1988 Olympic men’s figure skating competition, the 1997 World Championship skating competition with Olympic Gold Medalists, Torvill and Dean, and a recent ABC-TV series. His latest symphonic work Blues for A Green Planet - Opus 10 was commissioned and performed with the Grant Park Symphony in Chicago. This was his second commission from that orchestra.

Mr. Siegel’s partnership in the renowned Siegel-Schwall Band, his performances as soloist with orchestras worldwide, and his collaborations with conductor Seiji Ozawa in bringing a ground-breaking blues-classical sound to national attention are all a reflection of Mr. Siegel’s powerful and prodigious talent. Mr. Siegel continues to perform as guest soloist with symphony orchestras worldwide, including the New York Philharmonic, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, and the Boston Symphony Orchestras, as well as recent symphonic collaborations with Doc Severinsen.

Corky Siegel’s newest project Chamber Blues, with the West End String Quartet, and Frank Donaldson on world percussion, blends classical and blues styles in a chamber music setting. This ground breaking innovative sound (now on Alligator Records and Gadfly Records) has earned tremendous acclaim throughout the country and continues to open new doors for classical and blues/jazz listeners alike. "A Resounding Triumph" - Howard Reich - Chicago Tribune.
BIographies continued

Guillaume Combet, violin, was born in Chatellerault, France, and studied with world renown artist Gerard Poulet for 9 years. He also studied with Sylvie Gazeau and Jean Moulliere at the Conservatoire National Superieur de Musique de Paris where he completed 3 years, (1987-1990) and graduated with a Premier Prix (First Prize) de Violon as well as Premier Prix de Musique de Chambre. Mr. Combet received his Advanced Certificate from the Juilliard School (1991-94) studying with such luminaries as William Lincer of the New York Philharmonic, and Joel Smirnoff and Robert Mann of the Juilliard String Quartet. During this time, Mr. Combet served as the concertmaster of the Juilliard Symphony, and gave French baroque chamber music performances with Albert Fuller and Wendy Hilton at the Juilliard Theater. Mr. Combet distinguished himself as a consummate artist early on and has appeared as soloist worldwide with companies and venues that include: La Tour d’Auvergne, Paul Hall in New York City, Salle Berlioz in Paris, the Tanglewood Music Center, and with the Orchestre Symphonique de Tours. He has appeared in chamber music performances throughout France and Switzerland including “Les Virtuoses de France”, and in Paris at Salle Pleyel, Salle Gaveau and Theatre des Champs-Elysees, and Tanglewood. In addition, Mr. Combet has appeared with many leading orchestras as concertmaster or principal second violinist including the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra, with conductor, Seiji Ozawa, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, as well as numerous performances with Orchestre de L’Opera de Paris, and the Orchestre National de France. Having recently moved to Chicago, Mr. Combet is presently serving as the co-concertmaster of the Chicago Civic Orchestra with various performances under the direction of Maestro Barenboim, Maestro Boulez, Maestro De Priest, and Maestro Foster, (music director of the Aspen Music Festival). Mr. Combet’s newly formed piano trio “Balthus,” which is sponsored by Northwestern University and Chicago’s Civic Orchestra, has recently performed twice at the chamber ballroom of Chicago’s Orchestra Hall, with upcoming performances at De Paul and Chicago Universities. As the first chair violinist of Chamber Blues’ West End String Quartet, critics from coast to coast agree that Mr. Combet is “fantastic.”
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REBECCA MCFAUL, violinist, started playing the violin when she was three. Growing up, she had a performance scholarship to study at the MacPhail Center for the Arts in Minneapolis, MN. which was 100 miles away from her hometown in Chippewa Falls, WI. She won numerous awards during that time, including a concert tour in South America with a group of ten children from around the world to represent the International Suzuki Association, several appearances as a concerto competition winner, as well as a prize winner in the world-renown Fischoff National Chamber Music competition junior division. Rebecca spent summers at Tanglewood, where she was the concertmaster of the BUTI Young Artist’s Orchestra, and at Interlochen, where she received the Governor’s Scholarship to attend as well as at the Eastern Music Festival. Rebecca earned her Bachelor of Music Degree at the Oberlin Conservatory where she studied with Marilyn McDonald. She attended the New York String Seminar Chamber Music Festival. In 1993, Rebecca was a Chicago Civic Orchestra Fellowship recipient which brought her to Northwestern University to complete a Master of Music Degree and study with Gerardo Ribeiro. From 1993-1995 she spent summers in Spoleto, Italy, at the Festival of Two Worlds where she served as the concertmaster. Currently, in addition to world tours with Corky Siegel’s Chamber Blues, Ms. McFaul is also a member of the Fry Street Quartet which was one of ten quartets in the world recently invited to the prestigious Banff International String Quartet Competition and was also a finalist in the EMA/Dorian competition. As a soloist, Rebecca has appeared recently with Symphony Fantastique!, the Northshore Chamber Orchestra, and at Northwestern University. She was also a recent finalist in the WAMSO Competition in Minneapolis. Recent critical acclaim cheered Rebecca as; “remarkable.”
RICHARD HALAJIAN, Viola - studied viola with Milton Preves and violin with Mary K. Rosen. He was a music performance student at DePaul University and was coached in chamber music performance by Peter Salaff (of the Cleveland Quartet). An accomplished musician on both viola and violin, he has held principal positions with the Flagstaff Festival Orchestra, Arizona Dance Theatre Orchestra, Arizona Opera Company Orchestra and the Tucson Symphony Orchestra. He has performed and toured extensively with the Tucson Symphony Orchestra String Quartet and took part in a number of PBS-TV broadcasts and two world premieres. Mr. Halajian was a member of Chamber Music in the Mountains conservatory. He was also concertmaster of Orchestrai an experimental chamber orchestra that plays chamber music concerts as well as dance and other multimedia performances. He is also an accomplished jazz musician and has performed many different forms of music from time to time. At a recent performance at the world-renown Interlochen Festival the classical critic raved about Mr. Halajian’s performance with Chamber Blues as, “...outstanding.”

JILL KAEDING, Cello - began her study of the piano at age seven and the cello at age ten. She earned her degree at DePaul University where she studied with Gilda Barston and Joseph Sciacchitano and the late Frank Miller both of the Chicago Symphony. In addition to numerous solos recitals, Ms. Kaeding has appeared as guest soloist with many orchestras in the midwest and is a member of the highly acclaimed Symphony of the Shores. Recently she was invited to participate in the renown Banff Festival of the Arts in Canada which included extensive concertizing throughout British Columbia. As a member of Trio Elan (with a new nationally distributed CD), Kithara Trio, and Ensemble D’Accord, she has performed in many chamber music concert series including the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concert Series. Ms. Kaeding is heard frequently on nationally syndicated broadcasts on WFMT radio. Known for her versatility in all mediums of chamber music, Jill has performed with contemporary multi-media ensembles as well as jazz standard deconstruction and rock with Ingrid and the Alibi’s. Critic’s herald Ms. Kaeding’s performances with Chambers Blues as; “...world-class,” and “extraordinary.”
FRANK DONALDSON, Percussion - is a leading exponent of funk, fusion and jazz drumming, as well as an accomplished bandleader. Mr. Donaldson began studying piano at age seven and switched to drums at age nine. He turned professional at age fifteen. He was a member of Archie Bell and the Drells who had the number 1 Billboard hit The Tighten Up. In 1969 Mr. Donaldson entered North Park College where he studied with Don Koss of the Chicago Symphony. Throughout the 1970’s Frank Donaldson continued to expand his playing talents and musical options. He enrolled at the American Conservatory of Music in 1971, where he studied under James Dutton. Mr. Donaldson was the percussion soloist with the North Shore Philharmonic Orchestra, which gave more than thirty-eight performances of Milhaud’s Concerto for Percussion. Mr. Donaldson was the drummer with the Ramsey Lewis Trio for eleven years recording four albums on Columbia Records including a recording with the London Symphony Orchestra. He toured worldwide at auditoriums, festivals and symphony orchestras including the American Symphony Orchestra in New York. He is currently on the faculty of Columbia College and tours with his own jazz ensemble as well as the Chicago Jazz Ensemble. He has also toured and/or recorded with Curtis Mayfield, Angela Bofil, Ray Charles, George Shearing, Bill Withers, Freddy Hubbard, Stanley Turentine, Roy Ayers, Noel Pointer and Patty Austin, Carmen Macrae and others. As a member of Chamber Blues, Mr. Donaldson’s percussion work is described as; “...deliciously original,” by the Denver Post.

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JIM SCHWALL, Guitar, Mandolin, singer-songwriter - is the co-leader of the Siegel-Schwall Band, “one of the best acts in America”, Billboard Magazine. The Boston Globe has called Mr. Schwall “undoubtedly the best electric guitarist in the country.” In the 1960’s, the Siegel-Schwall Band was signed overnight by Vanguard Records and later RCA. During the late 1960’s and early 1970’s the band drew capacity crowds to the most popular clubs and auditoriums in the U.S., while their records received world acclaim. Along with their peers, Paul Butterfield and Charlie Musslewhite, Siegel-Schwall introduced Chicago blues to the large rock audience. At the suggestion of world-renown Music Director, Seiji Ozawa, Siegel-Schwall recorded an historic landmark work William Russo’s Three Pieces for Blues Band and Symphony Orchestra with Seiji Ozawa conducting the San Francisco Symphony on premier classical label Deutsche Grammophon. This 1971 recording was a blockbuster in sales worldwide, and scored very high on the Billboard charts. In 1974, at the height of their career, Siegel-Schwall disbanded. In 1988, the group reunited for a reunion concert for popular radio station, WXRT in Chicago, which resulted in their 13th recording, this time live on Alligator Records. The Chicago Tribune cheered the recording as, “...something to celebrate,” and Billboard calls it a “...stellar live performance.” Mr. Schwall has recently received a PhD in music, and has divided his time between performances and as a Professor of Music at the University of Michigan in Kalamazoo. Currently, Schwall lives in Madison where he’s a high school substitute teacher and a grad student in art at the University of Wisconsin. He has had many critically acclaimed shows of his photography work, and still plays the classic electrified Gibson B-25 acoustic guitar which he’s used extensively since acquiring it in 1959.
ROLLO RADFORD, Bassist, Singer-Songwriter - began his professional career at the age of 19 when the great jazz vocalist Dinah Washington gave him his start. He then served in the Army and upon returning joined with very popular Martha and the Vandellas. As part of the highly regarded Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, Mr. Radford has performed with various world-renown jazz ensembles. He was a member of the Siegel-Schwall Band recording 7 of their 12 albums on RCA, Alligator, and Deutsche Grammophon Records, and frequently performed at rock palaces such as Bill Graham’s legendary Fillmore West. Touring with Siegel-Schwall on their recent Reunion Concert Tour, he has performed this season at the Smithsonian Institute with an invitation to the Spoleto Festival in the spring. Mr. Radford’s televised performances include many appearances on NBC-TV’s rock show hit, Midnight Special with the great soul singer Walter Jackson, with blues legend Muddy Waters on the show Sound Stage, and on Great Performances, with Siegel-Schwall, Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops Symphony. His latest TV appearance was with Corky Siegel’s Chamber Blues on the ABC-TV series Missing Persons. Mr. Radford has toured around the globe with the innovative jazz master, Sun Ra, playing the great halls of the world such as Carnegie Hall, and appearances at the renown jazz and music festivals in Japan, Russia, and Europe. Rollo is featured in a documentary film on Sun Ra titled Mystery, Mr. Ra. Mr. Radford has lived in New Orleans for nearly 4 years where he performed with June Gardener (Sam Cooke’s drummer) and many great performers on Bourbon Street. Mr. Radford has a Master’s Degree for teaching behavior disordered students, and now divides his time between performances and teaching at the Montefiori School in Chicago. Rollo also serves as a member of the house band for the world-renown Black Ensemble Theater under the direction of Jackie Taylor.
SAM LAY, Drummer, singer-songwriter - is one of the most celebrated virtuoso drummers in blues history, and a mainstay since the late 1950's. He began his auspicious career in 1957 as drummer for the Original Thunderbirds and soon after became the drummer for the legendary harp genius, Little Walter. In the early 1960's Mr. Lay began recording and performing with the founding fathers of blues, Howlin' Wolf and Muddy Waters. The recordings Lay made during this time, (including Muddy Waters' Fathers and Sons album recorded in the 70's), are considered to be among the definitive works from the careers of Waters and Wolf. In the mid 60's Mr. Lay was persuaded to join with the Paul Butterfield Blues Band and recorded and toured extensively with this important blues group. Bob Dylan (with Sam Lay as his drummer) was the first performer to introduce electric-rock at the Newport Folk Festival. Lay also recorded with Dylan - most notably on the Highway 61 album. Mr. Lay's unique style of drumming can be heard on over 40 recordings for the famed Chess Records label with the most prominent names in the world of blues. He has recently toured the major Blues festivals around the U.S. with the Chess Records All-Stars. In the late 1980's Sam Lay was inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame, and was recently inducted into the Jazz Hall of Fame and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. He was nominated this year for a Grammy Award for Best Traditional Blues as well as a nomination for Best Instrumentalist for the coveted W.C. Handy Award. Mr. Lay has two very recent recordings with his own band on Appaloosa and Evidence Records, and a recording on Alligator Records with the Siegel-Schwall Band. Sam Lay was just nominated for a Grammy Award in 1999.
KEN GOERRES, sound designer, has done live sound for over three decades and has worked with many of the top performers in the business. In 1969 he established one of the first concert sound companies. He is involved in all aspects of sound and acoustics. One of his first acoustical consultations was for the prestigious Goodman Theater in Chicago. Mr. Goerres was awarded a Grammy nomination for producing and engineering the album “Bayou Cadillac” with the Cajun group BeauSoleil. He is also receiving accolades from audiophiles everywhere for his production of “Complementary Colors” the latest Chambers Blues recording. He has designed studios featured in Mix Magazine’s “Best New Studios of the Year”. He has also designed a full scale motion picture mixing stage for Andrew Davis, the film director of the award-winning movie, “The Fugitive” with Harrison Ford. Lately, Ken spends most of his time developing studio monitors under his own brand name, Exakte, which was used by the upper echelon of recordists and mixers in Los Angeles. He recently supplied and installed the entire Warner Hollywood lot with state-of-the-art subwoofers of his own invention used to mix the low frequency special effects for all Warner Brothers films.

“The Judicious use of the sound equipment is as important as the composition, the instruments, the players, and the room in order to properly get the music to one’s ears,” says Ken Goerres. In a world of sound gone mad Mr. Goerres feels he has succeeded in his work when the music sounds “As natural as possible” and to this end he uses a technique he refers to as “Haikustics” - the sound of one hand clapping through a series of digital delays.

Corky Siegel, award winning composer and the creator of Chamber Blues says; “Ken Goerres transforms the craft of live sound enhancement into a beautiful work of art unto itself that is relished by all who have seen him in action.”