



THIS YEAR'S MODEL
Haas envisions a new way to hear the classics.

there is in the room—and working it into a piece,” Haas explains. Live remixing continues into the concert proper, as Morales and Penman spontaneously rework material sampled from works played live by the musicians.

While it might sound like a lift from nightclub culture, Haas actually drew inspiration from an older source. “At one point I was fascinated with the idea of tropes, the pieces that were between the movements of the high mass,” he explains. “Out of the dark recesses of my mind came that memory of new music interspersed between old pieces, commenting on what came before and leading you into what

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comes after.” Additional interstitial pieces are being composed by Judd Greenstein—an ideal choice, given that this versatile young composer started his musical career by making hip-hop beats in high school.

“The challenge that immediately fascinated me in this project was to help create a large-scale form,” Greenstein explains. “The Schoenberg is the mountain at the center of the evening, the longest and most overtly dramatic work on the program. So how do you build up to that, and what do you do afterwards? How do you keep threads running through the hour and a half of uninterrupted music?”

Visual elements by artist Kate Raudenbush and the dispersal of performers throughout the concert space lend further interest to Haas’s visionary presentation. It seems pertinent to wonder, however, whether all that activity might threaten to draw attention away from the music and its creators. For Greenstein, Rewind isn’t any different than a “normal” concert in that respect. “In being a composer—in sending out pieces of paper with instructions on them—you’re giving up control of the performance of your work,” he says. “Those pieces of paper are simply tools to be used toward the ultimate goal of creating an emotionally moving experience for someone. If the result is positive, then it’s all good.”

Rewind will be presented at the Angel Orensanz Center Thursday 8.

Culture club

Paul Haas remixes the classical concert with Rewind. By **Steve Smith**

Music begins where words end: The whole purpose is to explain things that are not possible in words,” *Financial Times* chief music critic Andrew Clark wrote in an April 14 editorial. His subject was the increasing practice of performers addressing the audience from the stage, but his comments also apply to the ritualistic air of classical music concerts. “The traditional concert format—uniform dress, subdued lighting, no speaking—evolved with that in mind. It was designed to throw a cloak of impersonality over the concert process, to create a directness of communication between music and listener...”

But for a growing number of audience members—seasoned

hands and neophytes alike—what Clark describes as direct communication has precisely the opposite effect. One commentator on a popular blog maintained by *Wall Street Journal* critic Greg Sandow put it bluntly, stating that “sitting like a nice girl, holding my program, listening to technically good but unimpassioned playing (sometimes by musicians who look like they are preparing their taxes) will be the end of me.” Recently, some musicians have begun to address that issue, adjusting not only what they play but the manner in which they present it. An especially novel approach will be unveiled this week at the Angel Orensanz Center, when conductor Paul Haas leads chamber ensemble the Knights and guest soloists in a new concert format he calls Rewind.

Haas isn’t a radical out to overthrow orthodoxy; instead, as music director of the accomplished

New York Youth Symphony, he has a vested interest in the traditional format. He came up with Rewind after attending countless concerts as a patron, taking note of what didn’t work, as well as what did.

“One thing that leapt out at me was all the dead time in a concert, and how that adds to a feeling of malaise for the audience,” Haas recalls. Accordingly, in this introductory event, the music will flow nonstop, from Baroque selections by Purcell and Corelli to contemporary scores by Schnittke and MacMillan, with Schoenberg’s *Verklärte Nacht* at dead center. In fact, thanks to the presence of electronic musicians Joel Morales and Joshua Penman, the concert experience will begin before the first note is played. “When people walk into the hall, Joel will be capturing digital samples—conversations, footsteps, whatever ambient noise