

DREAMING THE WAY TO SUCCESS

The Mission and Work of New Dynamic Records

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Recording Session (left to right): Tim Haertel, Niels Bijl, Johan van der Linden, and Erich Stem

Music. It's a powerful, amazing, and timeless thing. Very few things in this world can inspire someone to dance, console a child to restful sleep, bring a person to tears, or raise a sad soul's spirit. It's also everywhere. It's on our radios, on our Web sites, in our commercials, and in our movies and TV shows. It is enrapturing, mystical, and visionary. Many students in the liberal arts

seek a degree and eventually a career in music. The Indiana University Southeast Music Department offers, as described on their Web site, "one of the most musically intensive Bachelor of Arts degrees in the region." And part of that "musically intensive" program is a particular dream of Dr. Erich Stem, a composer and also an Associate Professor of Music: IU Southeast's own record label, New Dynamic Records (NDR).

Stem, who also coordinates the Music Department and advises music composition and sound engineering students, founded NDR in 2005 with help from sources such as students in the IU Southeast Graphic Design Center, Tim Haertel from TNT Productions, and music business students. Opportunities and frustrations from his experiences in the music industry gave Stem several reasons for initiating NDR. He dreamed of a label that records classical music by living composers and that is not another vanity label (i.e., a label that artists pay to record their work), and also offers interviews and backstories for the music, performers, and composers. According to Stem, the label was founded to be "the only contemporary music label that engages in interviews with the composers/performers, videos documenting each release, and promotion to younger listeners, all with a financial backing that expects no monetary return from either the composers or performers."

To make this dream a reality, the creators of NDR had to be clever about how they advertised. Stem describes NDR as a "non-profit on a shoestring budget." NDR relies mostly on CD reviews and feature articles in newspapers and publications such as *Fanfare Magazine* (a classical music magazine). The label sells CDs and



Prism Quartet (left to right): Matthew Levy, Timothy McAllister, Taimur Sullivan, and Zachary Shemon

MP3s through its Web site, <http://www.newdynamicrecords.com>. NDR also has frequently been featured on WUOL 90.5 as part of the station's "Brave New World" program.

NDR has worked hard on its vision. In December of 2010, the label upgraded its recording equipment to include possibilities for 5.1 surround sound. This will allow NDR to be unique, as classical music is usually not recorded in 5.1. Since its start, NDR has released five albums, its first, *Influence*, in 2006 and its most recent, *Journey*, in January of 2011. The label's current focus is on contemporary classical music performed by chamber ensembles, though there is a plan in the works to record a performance by a full orchestra, featuring the Chelsea Symphony Orchestra in New York.

NDR not only serves contemporary classical composers, musicians, and their listeners but also students at IU Southeast. Stem states that NDR is a "student-run label." In the past, NDR has offered paid internships, specifically to those in the music business track within the music industry concentration. Students also get to take credit for their efforts. NDR wants the world to know that the students at IU Southeast are a major part of the label. For example, students in the IU Southeast Design Center,



Erich Stem

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New Dynamic Records Cd Releases

currently headed by faculty artist Michael Koerner, have won top graphic design awards from the Louisville Graphic Design Association's 100 Show and from the Louisville Advertising Federation for logo and album design, and now have the opportunity to get their pictures and bios printed in the CD booklet as recognition for their artwork and design.

NDR faces the future with vibrant imagination, for example selling music clips on Facebook. The label will also consider easing into merchandising, thinking ahead to T-shirts, bumper stickers, and buttons. Stem has discussed what might lie beyond the traditional listening methods, such as a musical program connected to a GPS system that responds to a driver's environment, performing previously recorded music triggered by where the driver is located at the moment. Another long-term goal is that someday NDR can be a label for non-mainstream music that thrives and grows without the aid of grants.

Like every great success, NDR began with a dream. But unlike the easily forgotten dreams we have when we sleep, Erich Stem's dream lives on. Through past challenges and present success, NDR is building on its initial inspiration and looking ahead to making even more dreams come true.