

21C Music Festival

Cinq à Sept

Saturday, January 19, 2019 at 5:00pm

Temerty Theatre

Daniel Koo, violin

Katya Poplyanksy, violin

Orin Laursen, violin

Nahre Sol, piano

Nicole Joshi, percussion

Glenn Gould School 21C Ensemble

PROGRAM

Lou Harrison: *Varied Trio* (Toronto premiere)

- I. Gending
- II. Bowl Bells
- III. Elegy
- IV. Rondeau in Honor of Fragonard
- V. Dance

Terry Riley: *G Song* (Canadian premiere of a string orchestra version)

Vinko Globokar: *?Corporel*

Arvo Pärt: *Tabula Rasa*: double concerto for two violins, prepared piano, and string orchestra

Ludus – Con moto

Silentium – Senza moto

Lou Harrison

Composer

“Born in Portland in 1917, the American composer Lou Harrison won a particular reputation for his percussion music, his experiments in intonation, and his synthesis of East and West in his music. A pupil and friend of Henry Cowell, whose interest in other musical traditions he shared, he also profited from a close study of the work of Charles Ives. He collaborated with John Cage in San Francisco, studied under Schoenberg in Los Angeles, wrote under Virgil Thomson in New York, continuing a varied career and the development of his many gifts as a poet, artist, and musician.” (Naxos Records) Harrison had a passion for world music, particularly gamelan, which inspired a unique style of tuning for his pieces, often utilizing microtones.

Varied Trio

Varied Trio was composed in 1986 for the Abel-Steinberg-Winant Trio, consisting of percussion, piano, and violin. The tonality and instrumentation of this piece exemplifies the composer’s interest in world music, particularly that originating in Asia. The percussionist is seen performing vibraphone, gong, and a full set of rice bowls – also relating to the interest in found object music that existed during this period. The piece is written in five movements titled I. Gending, II. Bowl Bells, III. Elegy, IV. Rondeau in Honor of Fragonard, and V. Dance. The piece receives its “varied” nature by maintaining a patchwork of musical styles that influenced and inspired Harrison. The first movement,

Gending, named after a Javanese music structure, has gamelan influences. It features luscious, flowing melodies between the piano and violin, with atmospheric accentuation from the percussion. The subsequent movements lead through experimental tonal structures, with the instruments often playing together as a single melodic unit. The fourth movement refers to French Rococo painter Jean-Honoré Fragonard – whose art often reflected the airy, hedonistic ideals of his period. This movement serves as an ethereal duet between the piano and violin. Written with more classically Western intonation and rhythmic devices, this movement perhaps serves as an acknowledgement that the composer is indeed a white male attempting to encapsulate his own visions and experiences with non-Western cultural/traditional music. This movement leads into the exuberant Dance, which features a playful yet rhythmically driven conclusion. *Varied Trio* is a lively display of the experimental interests exhibited by Lou Harrison, pioneer of the contemporary classical art form.

- Nicole Joshi

Terry Riley

Composer

Terry Riley (composer, pianist, vocalist) launched the minimalist movement with his classic *IN C*, composed in 1964, a seminal work which was to have an enormous impact on the course of western music. His music has been played in the great concert halls throughout the world and his discography includes 60 recordings on labels such as Columbia Masterworks, Wergo, and Nonesuch.

He attended San Francisco State University and the University of California graduating with a master's degree in music. He studied composition with Robert Erickson and piano with Adolf Baller.

Mr. Riley was professor of composition 1971-1981 at the prestigious Mills College in Oakland, California. Besides concertizing, he has given lectures and seminars in the USA, Europe, and Australia.

He is a recipient of two National Endowment for the Arts grants, a Guggenheim fellowship, and a Fromm foundation grant for music composition. He holds honorary doctorate degrees from Chapman University and Cal Arts.

In addition to his solo piano concerts, Mr. Riley performs extensively with his son, classical guitarist Gyan Riley, and also appears in duo with saxophone virtuoso, George Brooks. Over his career, he has worked with Zakir Hussein, Chet Baker, Krishna Bhatt, John Zorn, Leonard Slatkin, and the Kronos Quartet.

Mr. Riley has been a student of Indian classical music since 1970, when he became a disciple of the great Kirana master, Pandit Pran Nath. He accompanied Pran Nath-ji in his many concerts over a period of 26 years until his passing in 1996.

He is a prolific composer, having written in virtually every form, including solo piano, a chamber opera, a triple concerto for two guitars and violin, a violin concerto, a piano concerto, works for choir and orchestra, and 23 works for string quartet, which include a string quartet concerto and a piano quintet. His concerto for electric violin was premiered at Carnegie Hall in New York on May 13, 2012 and a new concerto for organ and orchestra premiered at Walt Disney Hall in Los Angeles April 9-11, 2014.

Mr. Riley was named one of the 1,000 makers of the 20th century by *The Times* of London. His music is published worldwide exclusively by G. Schirmer.

G Song

G Song was first created as part of the soundtrack for a French movie, *Le secret de la vie*, written and directed by Alexander Whitelaw in 1972. I performed the original version on soprano saxophone and electric organ. The version heard here was composed for the Kronos Quartet in 1980 and subsequently arranged for various ensembles.

- Terry Riley

Vinko Globokar

Composer

French-Slovenian composer and trombonist Vinko Globokar (1934) is recognized as a pioneer of the avant-garde. His work is strongly influenced by his fellow peers in experimental music, including Mauricio Kagel, Luciano Berio, Helmut Lachenmann, and Karlheinz Stockhausen. Among his contemporaries, Globokar made a name for himself through his unique compositional devices, often including unusual instrumentation or use of found objects, improvisation, as well as staging and lighting instruction. These elements may all be found in his piece *?Corporel*, composed in 1985 for percussionist Gaston Sylvetre, as part of a collection of over 50 experimental works by Globokar, known as *Laboratorium*. The title translates to “of the body,” and as this might suggest, the piece exists as both a sonic and visual exploration of the body in ways that challenge the traditional concept of musical performance. Written for a performer wearing nothing more than trousers, with scenic lighting and amplification these theatrical elements, are utilized to create a remarkably vulnerable and focused environment for the performer and audience members alike.

?Corporel

?Corporel has a form of ritualistic intensity that stems from primitive gestures and sounds, which often appear violent in nature. With the performer sitting cross-legged on the floor, the piece begins with sliding and groping gestures on the upper part of the body. They proceed to work their way down toward the lower body parts in various tableaux, which deal with their own unique musical actions, such as striking and slapping the face, skull, legs, and torso. In conventional instrumental music, it is often easy to disconnect the physical performer from the art being produced from their instrument. However, *?Corporel*'s use of the performer as the instrument itself make this form of detachment virtually impossible. By removing traditional instruments entirely, *?Corporel* exists as a poignant depiction of the human condition in relation to art. Globokar's simultaneous rejection and mutation of common musical implements creates an atmosphere of shock and discomfort. With no instrument to hide behind, there is a great sense of raw exposure for the performer, as the true form and artistic potential of their unique body is explored.

- Nicole Joshi

Arvo Pärt

Composer

Arvo Pärt's character was decisively moulded with an early life spent in provincial Estonia, initially under German occupation, subsequently under Stalin's ruthless Soviet thumb. The deportation of tens of thousands, including close relatives, to Siberia inevitably led to a mistrust of authority. Pärt's student orchestral work, *Nekrolog* (1960), is confrontational in the intensity of its expressionist voice, turning dissonance into a weapon of protest, and being noteworthy as Estonia's first serial composition. Pärt became the leading voice among a generation of innovative Estonian composers, winning support at home among audiences for his skilful use of contemporary techniques, respect, and a growing reputation in the West, but, predictably, disapproval from the Soviet establishment. *Collage über B-A-C-H* (1964) is a journey from transcription to destruction, while confrontation within the compressed, angst-ridden music of the Second Symphony (1966) collapses, enigmatically and, perhaps, not very convincingly, into a comforting spoonful of Tchaikovsky. Restlessly working his way through contemporary 20th stylistic techniques, Pärt was driving himself towards a stylistic crisis and it came to a head with the *Credo* of 1968. In this choral collage, Pärt's multifaceted musical identity confronts the 'purity' of Bach's Prelude in C Major (WTC Book 1), simultaneously and provocatively, in an officially atheist state, declaring his religious faith. The piece was viewed as a political statement and was banned. Pärt's first creative period came to an abrupt end.

Film score work helped the Estonian composer survive through eight years of outward creative silence (1968-76). Meanwhile, he was writing “thousands and thousands of pages” of notes while working his way through

the stark vocal lines of 13th century organum, Gregorian chant, and the austere, measured polyphony of Renaissance composers like Machaut, Josquin, and Ockeghem from the Franco-Flemish school. Together with his future wife, he simultaneously undertook a spiritual journey through his adopted Russian Orthodox faith. “Through one, you can understand the other,” he says. “The old music, when it was written, the focus of this music was the Holy Scripture for composers for centuries; it was the reality for every artist.” What emerged (after the transitional Third Symphony) was a simple little piano piece, *Für Alina* (1976), which became the fount of a radically new musical language. It was closely followed by *Tabula Rasa*, *Fratres*, *Summa*, and the *Cantus in Memoriam Benjamin Britten*, all in 1977. All remain works that bear Pärt’s distinctive thumbprint and are immediately recognisable as coming from his pen. All are, incidentally, the foundation of his immense popularity since leaving Estonia in 1980, first for Vienna, then for Berlin.

Tabula Rasa

Tabula Rasa was written for a concert that included Alfred Schnittke’s First Concerto Grosso, with similar instrumental resources to Pärt’s two solo violins, strings, and prepared piano. Screws placed between the piano strings generate a bell-like sonority, which can be amplified. Like the rest of Pärt’s mature music, its two movements – Ludus (Game) and Silentium (Silence) – consciously reject complexity. In them, Pärt seeks to uncover a simple truth in his music, using repetition as a foundation for its building blocks. This is the farthest music imaginable from the goal-oriented music of Beethoven. It is concerned with being and existing, not becoming. “Gregorian chant has taught me what a cosmic secret is hidden in the art of combining two of three notes,” Pärt said in 1988. He calls it his tintinnabuli-technique (tintinnabulum = Latin for ‘little bell’). Others have erroneously referred to it as holy minimalism, but that ignores the strict discipline that controls the movement of lines within his music and how the harmonic movement complements and transforms with a generally stepwise melodic line. Now in his early 80s, Arvo Pärt remains among a handful of living composers whose music speaks to both expert and non-expert audiences alike.

- Program note © 2018 Keith Horner

Nicole Joshi

Percussion

Nikki Joshi is a percussionist currently based in Toronto as a Rebanks Fellow at The Glenn Gould School. She holds a master’s degree from McGill University, where she studied with Aiyun Huang. During her time at McGill, she received a 2017 Mobility Award, through which she travelled to the Bern University of the Arts in Switzerland to conduct research at the school’s renowned Department of Music Theatre. She also holds a bachelor’s degree, performer’s certificate, arts leadership certificate, and 2015 John Beck Percussion Scholarship from the Eastman School of Music, where she studied with Michael Burritt. Other teachers of influence include Bill Cahn, Chip Ross, James Ross, Shawn Mativetsky, and Jacob Nissly. A passionate advocate for contemporary music, she has performed with a wide variety of organizations and artists, premiering works throughout Montreal, upstate New York, and Washington, D.C. She recently performed as a soloist on Olivier Messiaen’s *Des canyons aux étoiles...* at the 2018 Ensemble Evolution Festival in Banff, Alberta. She has appeared regularly in ensembles including the McGill Contemporary Music Ensemble conducted by Guillaume Bourgogne, Eastman BroadBand, and Eastman’s Musica Nova conducted by Brad Lubman, with which she performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., as part of the 2016 Conservatory Project. In past summers, she has attended the Ensemble Evolution Festival in Alberta, soundSCAPE Festival in Maccagno, Italy, the Universal Marimba Competition in Belgium, Chosen Vale Percussion Seminar, Leigh Howard Steven’s Marimba Seminar, and the NSO’s Summer Music Institute.

Daniel Koo

Violin

Described as “unstinting in energetic projection every step of the way” (Calgary Herald), violinist Danny Koo has carved out a distinctive professional profile as a chamber musician, soloist, and recitalist in appearances throughout the world.

An avid and sought-after chamber musician, he has most recently collaborated with Stephen Prutsman, Andrés Díaz, Roberto Díaz, Clive Greensmith, Soovin Kim, Randall Scarlata, Johannes Moser, Lluís Claret, Kim Kashkashian, Jaime Laredo, Sharon Robinson, Joseph Kalichstein, Barry Shiffman, Vivian Weilerstein, and Donald Weilerstein, among others. He regularly performs with leading ensembles, including ECCO, DITTO, Kafka Quartet, Music Street, Wellesley Chamber Players, and the Chameleon Arts Ensemble. In addition, he has participated in a number of renowned music festivals such as the Transatlantic Encounters at Snape Maltings, Rockport Chamber Music Festival, Music@Menlo, Lake Champlain Chamber Music Festival, Summerfest at La Jolla, Perlman Chamber Music Program, and Banff Chamber Music Program. He has also presented acclaimed recitals at the Kennedy Center, Jordan Hall, Fanneuil Hall, Old South Meeting Place, and just concluded a 10-concert Korea tour of Bach Concerto with DITTO Orchestra.

A passionate educator of the arts, Mr. Koo taught at New England Conservatory’s Preparatory School, as well as The Phil and Eli Taylor Academy for Young Artists at The Royal Conservatory of Music. Most recently, he shared his music and stories at two TEDxBeaconStreet conferences, one of which was held at the historic Fenway Park. Born in Chicago in 1991, he holds Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees from New England Conservatory in Boston, where he studied with Donald Weilerstein, Soovin Kim, and Malcolm Lowe. Mr. Koo is the 2018-19 Rebanks Fellow at The Glenn Gould School.

Orin Laursen

Violin

Described as possessing “superb technical skill” and “deep understanding and artistry” (CVNC), violinist Orin Laursen is an active performer of both chamber music and the solo violin repertoire. He presents works from the Baroque to the contemporary with equal passion and imagination.

He has collaborated on the concert stage with artists including Robert McDonald, Paula Robison, Richard Lester, and Misha Amory. He is also an advocate of contemporary music, having worked with such eminent composers as Christian Wolff, Unsuk Chin, Harrison Birtwistle, and John Zorn.

Originally from Durham, North Carolina, Mr. Laursen earned his Master of Music and Graduate Diploma at The New England Conservatory with violinists Soovin Kim and Nicholas Kitchen, and his bachelor’s at The Peabody Conservatory under violinist and pedagogue Victor Danchenko. He currently is pursuing his Artist Diploma at The Glenn Gould School with Paul Kantor and Barry Shiffman. He is the recipient of **the full-tuition** Neville & Vivienne Poy Scholarship.

Katya Poplyansky

Violin

Katya Poplyansky completed her Artist Diploma at The Glenn Gould School, with Paul Kantor and Barry Shiffman, in 2018. She received her master’s degree from the Guildhall School in 2016, with David Takeno, and her bachelor’s at the Curtis Institute in 2014, with Shmuel Ashkenasi, Victor Danchenko, Ida Kavafian, and Joseph Silverstein. Among other festivals, she participated in Festival Jong Talent Schiermonnikoog, the Banff Master Class Program, and IMS

Prussia Cove. She received second prizes at the Isabel Bader Competition and the Eckhardt-Gramatté Competition. As of September 2018, she continues her work at The Glenn Gould School as part of The Rebanks Family Fellowship Program and International Performing Residency Program.

Nahre Sol

Piano

Nahre Sol (also known as Alice Hwang) is a pianist and composer whose work often combines music with visual and digital media to create original works and educational content.

As a soloist and chamber musician, she has performed at venues across North America and Europe, including The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., The Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, Gusman Theatre in Miami, and various locations in Canada, France, Holland, Italy, Poland, and Germany. Upon completing her undergraduate studies in 2013 at The Juilliard School, she received the Harriet Hale Woolley Grant to study piano and music composition in Paris with Gabriel Tacchino and Narcis Bonet. In 2016, she completed her Artist Diploma at The Glenn Gould School at The Royal Conservatory of Music. She is currently a New Music Fellow for the 2018-2019 season.

As a composer, Nahre's works have been premiered in Costa Rica, New York City, Buenos Aires, Paris, Pittsburgh, and Toronto by artists such as Julian Martin, Han Chen, Jaewon Bang, Jeremy Smith, and Griffin McMahon. Recent works include a multi-movement set of miniatures based on the city of Pittsburgh commissioned by the Andrew Carnegie Free Library and Music Hall, a set of Pocket Pieces for on-site performances on a mini keyboard, and audio-visual works that include improvisation in response to moving pictures. Many of these works, along with educational videos, are featured on her Youtube channel.