

The Ph.D./D.M.A. Programs in Music

May 22, 2017, 7:30 p.m.

Baisley Powell Elebash Recital Hall



New Music featuring Contemporaneous

Tamp

Daniel Fox

Psalm 3

Hyun-Kyung Lee

Corporate Interiors

Austin Shaddock

Intermission

*If you threw yourself on her,
it would be like throwing yourself
from the parapet of a skyscraper.
You would do it with a scream.*

Nicholas R. Nelson

Frivolity No. 3

David Bridges

Variations

Joseph Prestamo

Please switch off your cell phones and refrain from taking flash pictures.

Program Notes and Bios:

Tamp

In performing the music of American experimental composers such as Alvin Lucier and Morton Feldman questions are raised about the level of control exercised by the composer, the performer, and the listener. I find myself thinking through these questions by turning back to the rise of early modern science in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, not because of an equivalence of aims—as if these 20th century composers were doing science—but because both moments involved reforming the borders of their disciplines and both involved a renewed interest in acoustic phenomena such as sympathetic vibration and acoustic beating.

In the late 16th century Francis Bacon argued for a new approach to the study of nature. The philosopher of science John Tiles explains that “the change in the conception of nature, which...made experimentalism possible as a scientific outlook, had to do not with the structure of nature or of the proper way to explain it, but with *where to draw the boundary between what is natural and what is not...*” The presence of ‘nature’ hinges on the degree of human intervention. Bacon posited that “Nature exists in three states,...either she is free, and develops herself in her own ordinary course; or she is forced out of her proper state by...the violence of impediments; or she is constrained and moulded by art and human ministry. The first state refers to the species of things; the second to *monsters*; the third to things artificial.” Bacon posited *monsters* as the proper category for scientific experiments. The gendered violence of this statement is disturbing and the historian Carolyn Merchant has investigated its links to judicial torture and witch trials.

“Tamp” is the name given to tools that compact granular material. Tamps are used to increase the power of explosions and the burning of fireplaces. This piece contrasts tamping, as a very overt instrumental activity, with Baconian monsters in which the performers force their instruments out of their proper states to create instabilities in the sound, such as acoustic beating. My music is generally concerned with the question of what is considered natural, including what performers consider natural within their practice. – D. Fox

Daniel Fox is a graduate student in musicology and composition at the Graduate Center, City University of New York where he has studied composition with Suzanne Farrin and Jason Eckardt. His interests both in musicology and composition revolve around materiality. His writing has appeared in *Perspectives of New Music*, *Hyperallergic*, and *Van Magazine*. His compositions have been performed by Either/Or, the Momenta Quartet, Contemporaneous, Miranda Cuckson, and Imri Talgam. He holds a PhD in mathematics and has published in *Transactions of the American Mathematical Society* and *Communications in Analysis and Geometry*.

For more information, please visit: www.thoughtstoodefinite.com.

Psalm 3

My haven calls for me, and I wish for nothing more than to run to its arms. However, this cannot be so, for I have come too far and this dream shines brighter than the safety of home. Now I grit my teeth and persevere, for I am assured that my God is with me in this journey. This piece consists of two movements that are inspired by Psalm 3. – H. K. Lee

Hyun-Kyung Lee is a composer, pianist, an arranger, and co-founder of Percussion Ensemble for disabled people (sponsored by Korea Ministry of Culture and Tourism). She has received numerous awards from distinguished Korean organizations, including: Contemporary Music Society in Seoul, Young Composers Work Shop Concert, ISCM Section Korea, Korea Times, Taegu Contemporary Music Festival of Young Musician's Society, the Interchange of International Youth and Grace Mission Foundation. Many Prominent Ensembles such as American Modern Ensemble, Contemporaneous, Vigil Ensemble, Mivos String Quartet, CME Ensemble, the Korea Wind Society Ensemble, Bang-Ta Percussion Ensemble, Les Beat Ensemble, and the ISCM section Korea have performed her works. As a pianist she has performed with the Korea Symphony Orchestra, Korea Wind Society Ensemble, con Tempo Ensemble, and CUNY Brooklyn College Percussion Ensemble. Born in Seoul, Korea. She moved to New York in 2009 and studied at CUNY Brooklyn College, with Prof. Tania Leon and Ben Bierman, receiving her master's degree in composition. She is currently studying for her doctoral degree at CUNY The Graduate Center, and teaching as an adjunct at CUNY Brooklyn College.

For more information, please visit: www.gc-composers.org/composers/hyun-kyung-lee.

Corporate Interiors

Austin Shadduck graduated from the University of Rochester with a B.A. in Music then relocated to Madison, Wisconsin to work as a Digital Sheet Music Specialist for Musicnotes.com. In Madison, a fascination with traditional Japanese culture led him to the shakuhachi, which he studies with Michael Chikuzen Gould. He returned to New York and earned his M.A. in Music Composition from Queens College under the guidance of Bruce Saylor. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate at the CUNY Graduate Center, composition studies with Tania Leon.

Austin's music has been premiered by Contemporaneous, Choro Down Neck, Washington Square Winds, American Modern Ensemble with Dance Theatre of Harlem, Mivos Quartet, Cygnus Ensemble, Lunatics at Large, Dynamic Motion String Quartet, Second Instrumental Unit, Binghamton High School Wind Ensemble, and numerous student performers. His works have been read by Queens College Orchestra, University of Rochester Wind Symphony and Eastman Jazz Ensemble. Austin is a member of ASCAP, and he self-publishes his works under Muraiki Music, an entity named for the breathy shakuhachi technique.

For more information, please visit www.austinshadduck.com.

***If you threw yourself on her,
it would be like throwing yourself
from the parapet of a skyscraper.
You would do it with a scream.***

The title is taken from the 1939 Novella "The Day of the Locust" by Nathaneal West. As the title suggests, it is a vision of the moral vacuity of 'Golden Age' hollywood; as well as an image of destruction—a world stripped of everything green and living. Leaving only dust. – N. R. Nelson.

Nicholas R. Nelson holds degrees from the University of Rochester and Brooklyn College of the City University of New York where his teachers have included Morton Subotnik, Jason Eckardt, David DelTredici and George Brunner. He has been performed by numerous ensembles,

including the Brooklyn College Conservatory Orchestra under George Rothman and the ConTempo ensemble of Brooklyn College under Ursula Oppens, as well as the Vigil ensemble, Ensemble Mise-En, the ECCE Ensemble, AuditivVokal Dresden and Ensemble Moto Perpetuo. His pieces have been premiered across the United States and in Europe on the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, the International Electro-Acoustic Music Festival, the Etchings Festival and recently the Society for Electro-Acoustic Music (SEAMUS) national conference in 2015.

Frivolity No. 3

I began conceptualizing *Frivolity No. 3* after the inauguration of the 45th U.S. President as he continually marginalized various groups of people. I was also inspired by the music of Julius Eastman, an African-American, homosexual composer active in the 1960s and 70s. As for me, being a middle-class, straight, white, male I had not yet been directly affected at the time of composition and it did not feel appropriate to “borrow” the language of those being marginalized for fear of inauthenticity. So, instead of writing a clear, pointed, serious protest piece, I decided to write a playful piece for anybody and everybody to join that would be different with every performance to emphasize the inclusiveness that we as a community can show. It is for indeterminate instrumentation and length, it does not prescribe who plays what, and, most importantly, it allows the performers to inject their own ideas and decisions, fostering a conversation of listening and responding. In addition, the piece uses the meter of 15/16, which is one 16th note shy of a standard 4/4 bar. This, at times, creates a rhythmic drive that pushes and progresses the piece forward. It also represents the imperfections of society and the struggle overcome. While the conception and reasoning for the piece’s existence are heavy, it is, in and of itself, a lighthearted celebration of the indeterminacy of diversity—a frivolity. – D. Bridges.

David T. Bridges is a New York City composer and clarinetist whose music is often driven by motivic transformations and unifies extended techniques with classic and narrative structures to provoke a visceral response. His music has been performed by groups including Del Sol, Contemporaneous, ensemble mise-en, MIVOS, and Cadillac Moon Ensemble, and has presented at festivals including the Red Note Festival at Illinois State University, Hot Air Music Festival at San Francisco Conservatory, and Composers Now Festival in NYC. He has taught at Brooklyn College, was the associate conductor of the CUNY Contemporary Music Ensemble, and is pursuing his Ph.D. at the City University of New York while continuing to write and perform.

For more information, please visit: www.DavidTBridges.com.

Variations

The idea for a variations piece was sparked by both the diversity of the mixed ensemble, as well as a book by Robert Coover called *Pricksongs & Descants*. Coover’s literary take on the idea of theme and variations works to effectively disrupt any sort of narrative or linear continuity by subjecting each moment of the plot to constant variation. As I was reading his work, I was also thinking about the fact that literary works will often jump around freely between different plots or points in time, yet I often feel constrained, musically, to compose a neat, linear progression of events. For *Variations*, I decided instead to create four musical spaces, and then simply began to imagine all of the different ways in which the material could move. Living with each musical space

felt like a bit like reliving moments from the day, when we search for patterns and imagine possibilities. In the end, the piece turned out to feel a bit like a wandering mind. – J. Prestamo.

Joseph Prestamo is an award-winning composer, pianist, and teacher living in New York. He is currently in the fourth year of his doctoral studies at The Graduate Center, CUNY, pursuing a PhD in Composition. He holds an M.Mus from the University of Michigan, and a B.Mus Queens College, CUNY. He is also the director of the GC Composers, and serves as an Adjunct Lecturer at Queens College.

For more information, please visit: www.josephprestamo.com.

Contemporaneous

Brandon George, flute
Stuart Breczinski, oboe
John Gattis, horn
Mark Broschinsky, trombone
Joe Tucker, percussion
Sarah Haines, viola
Eleonore Oppenheim, double bass
David Bloom, conductor

Contemporaneous is an ensemble of 21 musicians whose mission is to bring to life the music of now. Recently recognized for a “ferocious, focused performance” (The New York Times) and for its “passionate drive...setting an extremely high bar for other ensembles to live up to” (I Care If You Listen), Contemporaneous performs and promotes the most exciting work of living composers through innovative concerts, commissions, recordings, and educational programs.

Based in New York City and active throughout the United States, Contemporaneous has performed over 90 concerts at a wide range of venues, including Lincoln Center, Park Avenue Armory, (le) poisson rouge, Merkin Concert Hall, Baryshnikov Arts Center, St. Ann’s Warehouse, and the Bang on a Can Marathon. The ensemble has worked with artists as diverse as David Byrne, Donnacha Dennehy, Yotam Haber, Dawn Upshaw, and Julia Wolfe.

Contemporaneous has premiered more than 70 works, many of them large-scale pieces by emerging composers. Through its commissions and readiness to play challenging music, the ensemble encourages composers to take risks and defy constraints. Contemporaneous' debut album, Stream of Stars — Music of Dylan Mattingly (Innova Recordings), has been featured on radio programs around the world, including WNYC's “New Sounds” and WRTI's “Now is the Time.”

Contemporaneous also leads participatory programs for public school students in the communities where the ensemble performs. These workshops are designed to instill a passion for new music and to convey the power of careful listening and meaningful expression through music. The ensemble has held residencies at Simon's Rock College, the University of New Orleans, Williams College, and Bard College, where the group was founded in 2010.

Contemporaneous is a federally tax-exempt not-for-profit organization, supported by a dedicated community of listeners. Read more at www.contemporaneous.org.

GC Composers

GC Composers is a laboratory for a generation of young composers who desire to take risks, experiment, and transform the field of new music. Through this community endeavor young scholar-artists prepare themselves for a life of musical citizenship.

Founded and stewarded by current students, the GC Composers presents five to seven concerts of new works each academic year through collaboration with soloists and ensembles from New York's new music community, including DMA performance students. Our past collaborations have included residencies by Mivos Quartet, Either/Or, Miranda Cuckson, C4: The Choral Composer Conductor Collective, Ensemble Mise-En, The Curiosity Cabinet, Contemporaneous and many others.

For more information, please visit: www.gc-composers.org.