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Saturday, September 8, 2018 | 7:30pm
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CONCERT PROGRAM

Petroushskates (1980)................................. Joan Tower (b. 1938)
Sinatra Shag (1997)....................................Michael Daugherty (b. 1954)
Endless Colored Ways (2018)..........................Michael Lanci (b. 1984)

I. To Find New Ways
II. Your Night Or Day
III. Some Very Distant Land

Waiting for Billy Floyd (2011)............................Eve Beglarian (b. 1958)
Endless Deeps (2015)........................................Emma O’Halloran (b. 1985)
Waves of Talya (1988).......................................Kamran Ince (b. 1960)

MUSICIANS

Kevin Stalheim..............................................Conductor & Artistic Director
David Bloom ................................................Guest Conductor
Jennifer Clippert .............................................Flute
William Helmers ................................................Clarinet, Bass Clarinet
Megumi Kanda ..................................................Trombone
Carl Storniolo ..................................................Percussion
Cory Smythe ......................................................Piano
Derek Johnson ..................................................Guitar, Electric Guitar
Eric Segnitz .....................................................Violin
Adrien Zitoun ....................................................Cello
Scott Kreger .....................................................Bass

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Petroushskates, Joan Tower
The title Petroushskates combines two ideas. One refers to Stravinsky's Petrushka and the opening Shrovetide Fair scene. The celebratory character and the busy colorful atmosphere of this fair provides one of the images for this piece. The other is ice skating and the basic kind of flowing motion that is inherent to that sport. While watching the figure skating event at the recent winter Olympics, I became fascinated with the way the curving, twirling, and jumping figure are woven around a singular continuous flowing action. Combining these two ideas creates a kind of carnival on ice – a possible subtitle for this piece. — Joan Tower

Sinatra Shag, Michael Daugherty
Sinatra Shag is part of my series of compositions inspired by the seminal 1972 book on American architecture entitled Learning from Las Vegas. Las Vegas was the final refutation of the “Either/Or” of traditional high culture. Architecturally, Learning From Las Vegas revealed the strip as a complex neon landscape of symbol and iconography in space.

In Sinatra Shag the combo is divided into various rhythmic groups to create layers of pulse and complexity. The performers play chromatically ascending passages to the groove of a “col legno battuto” bass line. Swinging lounge instrumental riffs and swirling glisses are looped and layered virtuosically throughout the composition, like a multi-colored shag carpet. The composition evokes the Las Vegas era when leading American popular music entertainers of the 1960s such as Frank Sinatra, and his daughter Nancy, performed at the Sands Hotel, known for its luxurious shag carpeting. Sinatra Shag was commissioned and premiered on October 7, 1997, by Present Music, conducted by Kevin Stalheim, at the 32nd Contemporary Music Festival, Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana.

— Michael Daugherty
Endless Colored Ways, Michael Lanci

Endless Colored Ways is a work consisting of three movements that explore the unique approaches to melody, counterpoint, harmony and various guitar picking patterns employed by mid-twentieth century singer-song writer, Nick Drake (1948-1974). The concept behind this composition was to create a work in memory of Nick Drake through the re-contextualization of certain musical aspects found in three of his more popular songs. The musical elements borrowed from these songs, such as a certain chord progression or the counterpoint created between melody and bass line are used as a spring board or source of inspiration in which to create a new composition of different character and design. — David Bloom

Waiting for Billy Floyd, Eve Beglarian

Waiting for Billy Floyd was written in response to Eudora Welty’s short story, At the Landing, which takes place in a town called Rodney, Mississippi, that I visited during a trip down the Mississippi River in November 2009 with Mary Rowell and again over Easter weekend 2010 with H. C. Porter. The river pilot and poet David Greer was my guide and compass, both practically and conceptually, through this part of Mississippi, and it was he who selected which Welty stories I needed to re-read and which towns I had to be sure not to miss. I am grateful to these three traveling companions, and to Despina Sarafeidou, who helped me when I got stuck. — Eve Beglarian

Alla l’aa ke, Alhaji Bai Konte/arr David Bloom

Alla l’aa ke (“God has ordained it”) is one of the most important traditional songs of the repertoire of the kora, a 21-string West African plucked string instrument that bears resemblances to the harp or the lute in Western musical traditions. Though Alhaji Bai Konte did not compose this song, the interpretation that he immortalized is a radical reimagining of an oft-played classic. In his recording, Konte’s formidable technique is on full display with rhythms and melodies layered in astonishing complexity, and the tempo occasionally surges into soaring dances. Tonight’s arrangement for Present Music with western instruments captures the bright sweep and the electrifying intricacies of Alhaji Bai Konte’s playing and maps them onto the instrumental ensemble. — David Bloom

Endless Deeps, Emma O’Halloran

Endless Deeps was inspired by my childhood experiences on the different coasts of Ireland. Looking out from Dublin bay, you have the serene Irish Sea, breathtaking in its beauty, and then in stark contrast, on the West coast you have the rough Atlantic Ocean, which seems to stretch out to infinity. This piece tries to capture the sense of awe I felt when watching the ebb and flow of the tide, the choppy blue-green waters, and the huge grey waves crashing against the cliffs. — Emma O’Halloran

Waves of Talya, Kamran Ince

Commissioned by the Koussevitzky Foundation, Waves of Talya was written in Rome in 1988 while the composer was there with a Rome Prize Fellowship. Talya is the ancient name of Antalya, the Mediterranean cost city of Turkey, where majestic mountains meet the dazzling, warm coast. The composer visited there on many occasions as a child, and was always in awe of the big waves that relentlessly crashed the pebbly shores. The piece was named one of the best chamber works of the 20th century by a living American composer in the June 2000 issue of Chamber Music Magazine.
Joan Tower is widely regarded as one of the most important American composers living today. During a career spanning more than fifty years, she has made lasting contributions to musical life in the United States as composer, performer, conductor, and educator. Her works have been commissioned by major ensembles, soloists, and orchestras, including the Emerson, Tokyo, and Muir quartets; the orchestras of Chicago, New York, St. Louis, and Washington DC among others. Leonard Slatkin and the Nashville Symphony recorded Tower’s Made in America commission which, in 2008 collected three Grammy awards. Nashville’s latest all-Tower recording includes Stroke, which received a 2016 Grammy nomination for Best Contemporary Classical Composition. Tower was the first woman to win the prestigious Grawemeyer Award for Silver Ladders. Other residencies with orchestras include a 10-year residency with the Orchestra of St. Luke’s (1997-2007) and the Pittsburgh Symphony (2010-2011). She was the Albany Symphony’s Mentor Composer partner in the 2013-14 season. Tower was cofounder and pianist for the Naumburg Award winning Da Capo Chamber Players from 1970-1985.

Michael Daugherty: Multiple Grammy Award-winning composer Michael Daugherty was born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa in 1954. He is the son of a dance-band drummer and the oldest of five brothers, all professional musicians. Daugherty has achieved international recognition as one of the ten most performed American composers of concert music, according to the League of American Orchestras. His orchestral music, recorded by Naxos over the last two decades, has received six GRAMMY awards, including Best Contemporary Classical Composition in 2011 and 2017.

Daugherty studied composition with many of the preeminent composers of the 20th century including Jacob Druckman, Earle Brown, Bernard Rands and Roger Reynolds at Yale (1980-82), Pierre Boulez at IRCAM in Paris (1979-80) and György Ligeti in Hamburg (1982-84). Daugherty was also an assistant to jazz arranger Gil Evans in New York from 1980-82. In 1991, Daugherty joined the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre and Dance as Professor of Composition, where he is a mentor to many of today’s most talented young composers.

Michael Lanci is a composer and educator currently residing in Brooklyn, New York. His music is viscerally engaging, stylistically diverse and draws from a wide range of influences. Recent projects include a collection of 5 protest songs dedicated to late nineteenth century singer-songwriter and labor rights activist Joe Hill, that was awarded the American Prize along with a new commission as part of the Beth Morrison Projects Next Generation Initiative that will premiere at National Sawdust in the spring of 2019.

Michael’s works have been performed at festivals such as the Cortona Sessions, Edmont Fringe Festival, Midwest Composers Symposium and the Vox Novus Festival. He has received commissions from the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Beyond Pluck, Unhread-of//Ensemble, Klangpar2, and the Vive! Ensemble.

Michael holds a BM in piano performance from SUNY Albany, where he also studied composition, and a MM in composition from SUNY Fredonia, studying with Rob Deemer and Karl Boelter. Michael completed his D.M.A. in composition at the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati.

Eve Beglarian: According to the Los Angeles Times, composer and performer Eve Beglarian “is a humane, idealistic rebel and a musical sensualist.” A 2017 winner of the Alpert Award in the Arts for her “prolific, engaging and surprising body of work,” she has also been awarded the 2015 Robert Rauschenberg Prize from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts for her “innovation, risk-taking, and experimentation.”
In 2009, “Ms. Beglarian kayaked and bicycled the length of the Mississippi River [and] has translated her findings into music of sophisticated rusticity… [Her] new Americana song cycle captures those swift currents as vividly as Mark Twain did. The works waft gracefully on her handsome folk croon and varied folk instrumentation as mysterious as their inspiration.” (New York Times). Beglarian’s current projects include a collaboration with writer/performer Karen Kandel about women in Vicksburg from the Civil War to the present.

Alhaji Bai Konte was one of the foremost players in his generation of the kora, a West African plucked string instrument that bears resemblances to the harp or the lute in Western musical traditions. Though his 1973 Newport Jazz Festival is believed to have made him the first solo kora player to perform in the United States, he lived his entire life in Brikama, The Gambia. As a griot, Konte was equal parts praise singer, oral historian, and instrumentalist. His epic tales with music, singing, and storytelling were heard on nationally syndicated radio programs throughout Senegal and The Gambia in the 1970’s. His style of kora playing was both highly original and deeply rooted in an ancient tradition, and his bright sounds and flamboyant technique were enormously influential in the evolution of the sound of kora. The honorific of Alhaji was added to his birth name, Bai Konte, following his pilgrimage to Mecca.

Emma O’Halloran is an Irish composer and musician whose work moves freely between acoustic and electronic forces. Emma has written for folk musicians, chamber ensembles, turntables, laptop orchestra, and symphony orchestra. Her work has been performed at the Bang on a Can Summer Music Festival, and MATA Festival, and she has collaborated with artists such as Crash Ensemble, Contemporaneous, PRISM Saxophone Quartet, and the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra.

In addition to concert music, Emma composes for theater, and has worked on original music and sound design for productions of ‘Hamlet’ and ‘Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead’ at the Wilma Theater, Philadelphia. She also performs and produces with Games Violet, a duo that makes hybrid rock/electronic music, and they released their debut LP ‘Tragic Milkshake’ in November 2016.

Kamran Ince: The music of Turkish/American composer Kamran Ince captures the energy and rawness of Turkish and Balkan folk music, the spirituality of Byzantium and Ottoman court music, the tradition of European art music and the extravert and popular qualities of the American psyche.

Hailed by The Los Angeles Times as “that rare composer able to sound connected with modern music, and yet still seem exotic”, Ince was born in Montana in 1960 to American and Turkish parents. He holds a Doctorate from Eastman School of Music, and currently serves as Professor of Composition at University of Memphis and at MIAM, Istanbul Technical University. His numerous prizes include the Prix de Rome, the Guggenheim Fellowship, the Lili Boulanger Prize, and the Arts and Letters Award in Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His Waves of Talya was named one of the best chamber works of the 20th Century by a living composer in the Chamber Music Magazine.

David Bloom is founding co-artistic director and conductor of Contemporaneous, a New York-based ensemble of 21 musicians dedicated to performing the most exciting music of the present moment. Noted for his “enthusiastic commitment and exactness” (Shepherd Express) as well as his “graceful sensitivity” (I Care If You Listen), David is a devoted advocate for new music, regularly working with composers and ensembles to bring new works to life.
PAUL MURPHY (Double Bass) Paul Murphy is a double bassist who has performed with a variety of ensembles including the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, The Philadelphia Orchestra, and The Cleveland Orchestra. Murphy has recorded with the Grammy Award-winning band, The Bad Plus, and has performed with the American Composers Orchestra. His discography includes works by composers such as John Adams, Philip Glass, and Steve Reich. Murphy has also been an active member of the contemporary music scene, participating in premieres and recordings of new works by composers such as Gordon Dale, Jörg Widmann, and Anna Gaal.

MARTIN SCHLIESSLER (Horn) Martin Schlisseler is a hornist who has performed with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, the Wisconsin Symphony Orchestra, and the Minnesota Orchestra. He has recorded with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and has been a featured soloist with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, the Milwaukee Chamber Orchestra, and the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra. Schlisseler has performed with a variety of chamber music groups including the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, the Milwaukee Chamber Orchestra, and the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra. Schlisseler has received several awards for his work, including the 2018 Wisconsin Arts Board Artist of the Year Award.
ERIC SEGNITZ (Violin) Eric Segnitz is a violinist, composer/arranger and a charter member of Present Music. He attended the New England Conservatory and the Banff Centre for the Arts. As an orchestral player, Segnitz has performed with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and held concertmaster positions with several regional orchestras. He has also worked in theater, television and film, and produced recordings in several genres.


SCOTT KREGER (Bass) Scott Kreger has been a member of the bass section of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra since 1984. He received his education at Illinois State and Indiana Universities, studying bass with Arthur Corra and Murray Grodner. After returning to the Chicago area, he studied orchestral repertoire with Joseph Guastafeste and as a member of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. His first orchestral position was as principal bassist of the Singapore Symphony. He has also performed with the Chicago and Cincinnati Symphonies. He performs in many styles of music and has appeared in the rhythm section on many Milwaukee Symphony Pops concerts, as well as on tour and in recordings with a wide variety of artists.


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