

11-14-2014

## Concert: Ithaca College Contemporary Ensemble

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Jorge Grossman

Jeffery Meyer

Tiffany Lu

Paul Grobey

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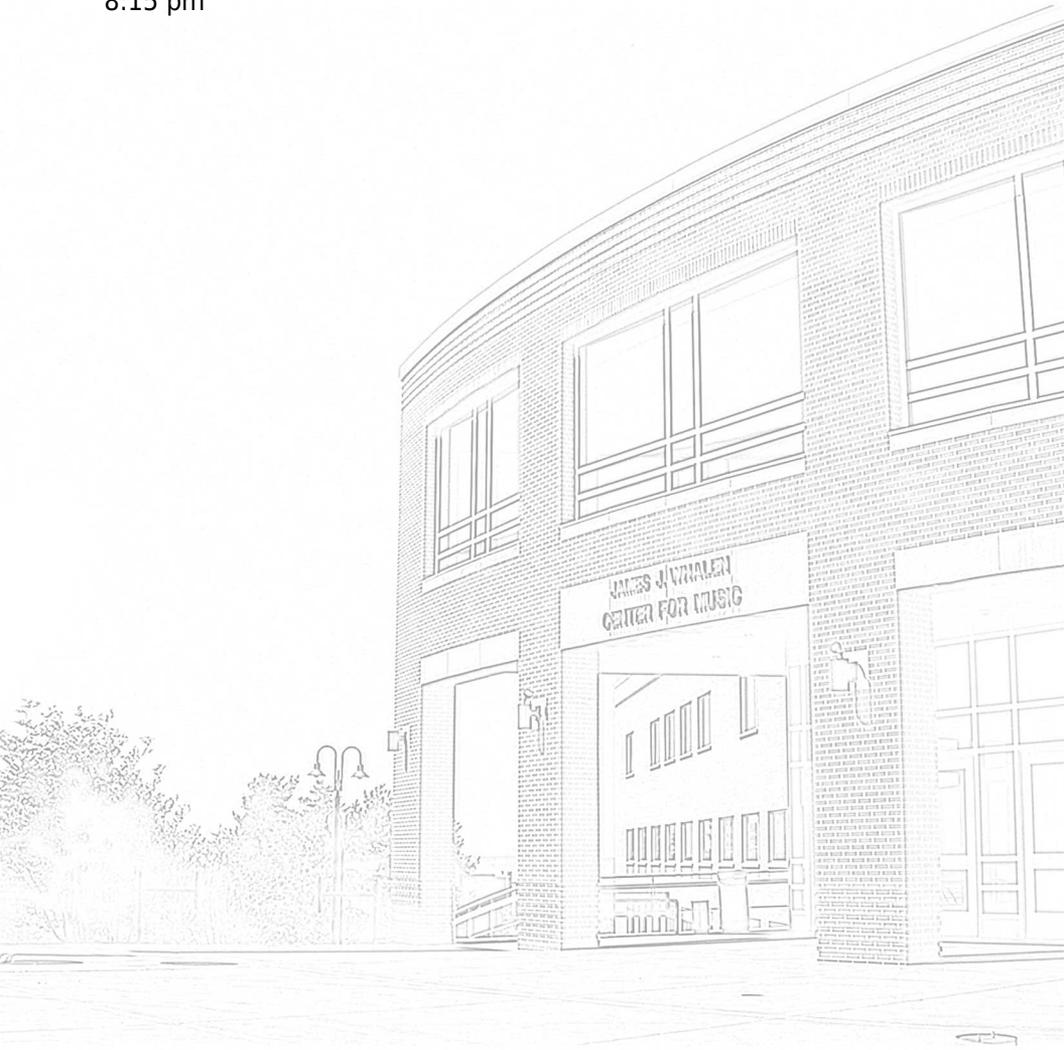
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# Ithaca College Contemporary Ensemble

Jorge Grossmann and Jeffery Meyer, directors  
Tiffany Lu and Paul Grobey, conductors

Hockett Family Recital Hall  
Friday, November 14th, 2014  
8:15 pm



**ITHACA COLLEGE**

School of Music

# Program

*Cloches II* (1997)

Arthur Levering  
(b. 1953)

*Kirsten Schmidt, flute*  
*Ryan Pereira, clarinet/bass cl.*  
*Christopher Sforza, violin*  
*David Quiggle, viola\**  
*Zachary Brown, cello*  
*Lindsey Orcutt, contrabass*  
*Kellen King, percussion*  
*Brendan Fox, piano*  
*Paul Grobey, conductor*

*Lakescape* (2012)

Lei Liang  
(b. 1972)

*Patrice Pastore, soprano\**  
*Nicholas Merillat, percussion*  
*Brendan Fox, piano*

Piano Etude no. 5 - Toccata (2003)

Unsuik Chin  
(b. 1961)

*Ni Zhang, piano*

*Dinah and Nick's Love Song* (1970)

Harrison Birtwistle  
(b. 1934)

*Paige Morgan\*, Chloe Washington, Catherine McGovern, english horns*  
*Caroline Reyes, harp\*\**

*Resonance Frames* (2003)

Michael Gandolfi  
(b. 1956)

- film by Pamela Larson

- I. Photon Waves
- II. Willow
- III. Zig Zag
- IV. U.F.O. / V. Spin / VI. Desert Dash

*Laura Hill, clarinet*  
*Peter Rovit, violin\**  
*Hamadi Duggan, cello*  
*Brian DeMaris, piano\**  
*Andrew Garay, percussion*  
*Tiffany Lu, conductor*

\* = denotes Ithaca College faculty member

\*\* = denotes guest performer

**Michael Gandolfi**  
**2014-15 Karel Husa Visiting Professor of**  
**Composition**

Michael Gandolfi has written works for the London Sinfonietta, Riverside Symphony Orchestra, Parnassus, Speculum Musicae, Sonor, Boston Musica Viva, San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, and the Orpheus, Los Angeles, and St. Paul chamber orchestras.

The Boston Symphony Orchestra has performed Gandolfi's *Points of Departure*, written for Orpheus, and excerpts from his suite *The Garden of Cosmic Speculation*. He received the first Paul Jacobs Memorial Commission from the Tanglewood Music Center in 1987, and has also received commissions and grants from the Fromm, Koussevitzky, and Guggenheim foundations and the NEA, among others. Gandolfi has received the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters' Charles E. Ives and Academy-Institute awards.

In 2008, a recording of *The Garden of Cosmic Speculation* was released on Telarc in a performance by its first interpreter, Robert Spano leading the Atlantic Symphony. The recording received a Grammy Award nomination. In 2009 Boston Modern Orchestra Project released a recording of *Y2K Compliant*, the outcome of several concerts in which Gandolfi's music has been performed.

Michael Gandolfi received both a B.M. and M.M. in composition with honors at New England Conservatory. He studied with Oliver Knussen, William Thomas McKinley, and John Heiss. A former faculty at Harvard University, he is currently on faculty at NEC and is the Director of Compositional Activities at the Tanglewood Music Center.

## **Program Notes**

### **Levering, Cloches II**

**Cloches II** contains many allusions to the sound of bells, from the oscillating 4th in the piccolo and clarinet at the start, to a shameless but brief reference to Big Ben in the cello near the end. It was written during an idyllic year in Rome and was inspired by the tolling of that city's thousands of church bells. Cloches II was commissioned by the Gruppo Strumentale "Musica d'Oggi".—A.L.

Arthur Levering (b. 1953) received his musical education at Colby College, Yale University (studying classical guitar under Eliot Fisk), and Boston University (studying composition under Bernard Rands). He has been a fellow in composition at the Aspen Music Festival, the June in Buffalo Festival, the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, the Bowdoin Summer Music Festival, the MacDowell Colony, and Yaddo. His awards include the 1997 Heckscher Foundation Composition Prize, a 1996 Barlow Foundation Commission, a 1994 National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, the 1992 Lee Ettelson Composer's Award from Composers, Inc., 2 Composers Guild 1st Prizes, and the 1988 Malloy Miller Composition Prize (Boston University). In 1996 he was awarded the Frederic A. Juilliard/Walter Damrosch Rome Prize Fellowship from the American Academy in Rome. He has received commissions from the Music Teachers National Association, the Dinosaur Annex Music Ensemble, the Brass Consortium, the Boston Conservatory Chamber Ensemble, Boston Musica Viva, Musica d'Oggi (Italy), the Raschèr Saxophone Quartet (Germany), and pianist Donald Berman. His works have been performed in Britain, France, Italy, and Germany, as well as in the U.S.A.

### **Liang, Lakescape**

Having been interested in Mahayana Buddhism for a number of years, I went to a Buddhist monastery in upstate New York to study meditation in 1999. One evening, while walking along by the side of the lake, I caught sight of a "V" shape floating and extending on the surface of the water. It was a beaver taking a swim under the moon. This image gave me insight into my relationship with silence: underneath the music I write is a profoundly deep silence upon which I seek to inscribe my

signature through sound. It inspired me to compose a number of works. --L.L.

Winner of the 2011 Rome Prize, Lei Liang is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and an Aaron Copland Award. He was commissioned by the New York Philharmonic and Alan Gilbert for the inaugural concert of the CONTACT! new music series. Having studied with Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Chaya Cernowin and Mario Davidovsky, he obtained his Ph.D. in composition at Harvard University. He currently teaches at the University of California, San Diego.

### **Chin, Etude no. 5 - Toccata**

Composer Unsuk Chin, in a similar manner to her teacher and mentor, György Ligeti, has produced a series of piano etudes which seems to be, as Ligeti's were, an ever-growing collection. Even though one may find Ligeti-like qualities in these pieces, they make a unique and original addition to the piano etude literature. In Etude no. 5, Toccata, Chin explores intricate polyrhythm between the two hands. The tightly woven multilayer counterpoint results in a complex but captivating texture that puts the pianist's skills to the uttermost test. A semi-spectralist harmonic language, a technique that draws pitch material from the overtone series, proves effective. The piece conveys a rounded and deeply satisfying musical narrative.

Unsuk Chin studied composition at Seoul National University with Sukhi Kang, and from 1985 to 1988 under György Ligeti in Hamburg. Chin enjoys an international career with works that have been commissioned and performed by the Berlin Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic, and Los Angeles Philharmonic. Unsuk Chin was awarded the renowned Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition in 2004 and the Arnold Schoenberg Prize in 2005.

### **Birtwistle, Dina and Nick's Love Song**

British composer Sir Harrison Birtwistle's *Dinah and Nick's Love Song* (1970) was composed as a wedding gift to a friend. The

piece is scored for three identical melodic instruments and harp. This evening's choice of three English horns was inspired by a recent performance by members of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra at the Philharmonie in Berlin, in which the piece was played as a concert-opener, immediately followed by Mahler's third symphony. The three english horns' lyrical lines resonate through the hall over the harp's delicate, almost hypnotic texture. Birtwistle aimed for every performance of this piece to sound different, not just because of the unspecified instrumentation, but also because the melodic instrument players are given the freedom to choose the order in which their themes are played—and this can vary greatly from one performance to another.

Sir Harrison Birtwistle is one of England's most distinguished living composers. His initial association with Alexander Goehr and Peter Maxwell-Davies linked him to the so-called Manchester school, a group that played a significant role in shaping music in England during the second half of the twentieth century. As Jonathan Cross points out, origins of Birtwistle's musical language "lie clearly in the European modernist tradition of Stravinsky, Varèse, Webern, Messiaen, Boulez and Stockhausen. These influences are synthesized and reworked to produce a music of striking independence and authority." Birtwistle's preoccupations are "with myth, ritual, theatre, time and with certain musical fundamentals of pulse and pitch." Birtwistle's music "confidently balances dramatic confrontation with narrative continuity; harmonic and rhythmic boldness with melodic expressiveness."

## **Gandolfi, Resonance Frames**

*Resonance Frames* was commissioned by Harvard University's 2003 *First Nights*, course. *First Nights*, authored and led by Professor Thomas Kelly, explores several landmark pieces of music from the 1600's to the present, the premieres of which raised provocative cultural and social issues relative to art and its role in society. As a final project, the class witnesses and critically assesses the creation, rehearsal and world premiere of a musical composition commissioned by *First Nights*.

For this occasion I chose to work with six non-narrative, abstract films by Boston-based film-maker Pamela Larson. The

creative process resembled the setting of poetry to music; each artistic discipline contributed equally to the finished product. Pamela Larson and I worked together to strengthen the overall form of the work by modifying the lengths and sequences of several of the films, which often provided me with strong musical ideas. For example, *Zig Zag* was originally an amusing seventeen-second film. I suggested that we repeat it twice to add length. In so doing, undesirable discontinuities in the light of the film were created. We then reversed the middle iteration, which solved the light problem but caused an abrupt change in the direction of motion in the film. This serendipitous result enhanced the humor of the original film and immediately suggested to me an appropriate musical response. The titles of each movement, descriptive of the visual and aural elements found within each respective movement, were created after the work was completed. It is desired that the music and film be performed and screened in a concert setting to best join the physicality of live musical performance with the raw, natural quality of the Super-8 films. --M.G.