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Concert: Ithaca College Contemporary Ensemble

Ithaca College Contemporary Ensemble

Jorge Villavicencio Grossman

Paul Grobey

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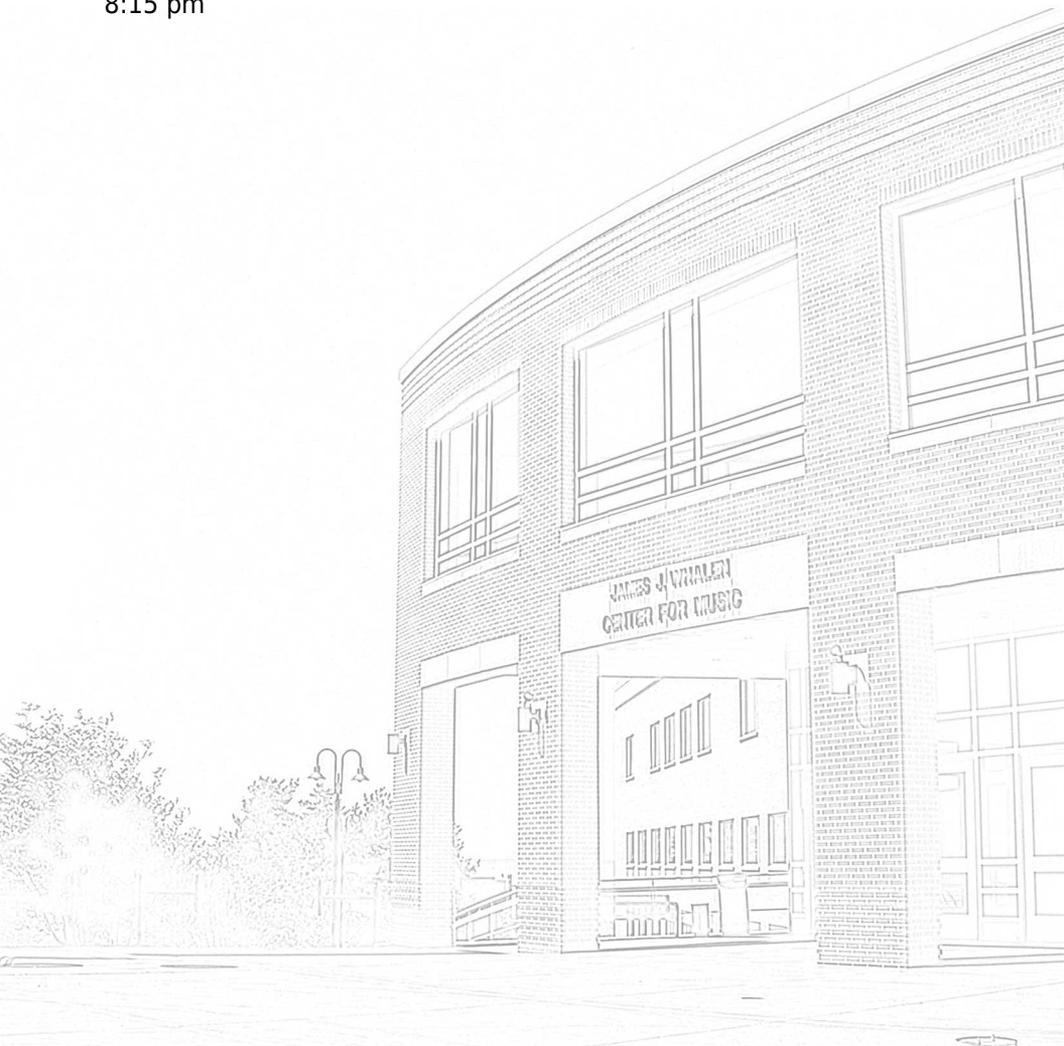
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Ithaca College Contemporary Ensemble

Jorge Grossmann, director and conductor
Paul Grobey, conductor

Hockett Family Recital Hall
Wednesday, April 15th, 2015
8:15 pm



ITHACA COLLEGE

School of Music

Program

Poco a Poco

Alex Mincek
b. 1975

*Marissa Mediate, flute
Gladys Wong, clarinet
Alexander Miller, trumpet
Brendan Fox, piano
Michael Petit, violin
Renee Tostengard, viola
Madeline Docimo, violoncello
Paul Grobey, conductor*

Mood Sequence**

David Crumb
b. 1962

Wendy Mehne, flute
Elizabeth Simkin, violoncello*
Diane Birr, piano**

Voicelessness (the snow has no voice)

Beat Furrer
b. 1954

Ni Zhang, piano

Ad Parnassum

Steven Stucky
b. 1949

*Sarah Peskanov, flute
Vivian Becker, clarinet
Martiros Shakhzadyan, violin
David Fenwick, violoncello
Kathryn Vorel, percussion
Ni Zhang, piano
Jorge Grossmann, conductor**

* = denotes IC faculty

** = 2014 Ithaca College Heckscher Composition Prize winner

Biographies

David Crumb

(2014 Ithaca College Heckscher Composition Prize Winner)

Composer David Crumb was born in 1962 into a musical family, and studied cello and piano from an early age. Later, he pursued advanced training in cello at the Eastman School (from 1980-85) before ultimately deciding to switch his focus to composition. His first important teacher, Samuel Adler, provided the initial spark that inspired him to pursue this new direction. Following Eastman, he enrolled in graduate studies at the University of Pennsylvania where he studied composition with Chinary Ung, Richard Wernick, Stephen Jaffe, and Jay Reise, and music theory with Leonard Meyer and Eugene Narmour. In the summer of 1987, Crumb received a fellowship to attend the Tanglewood Music Festival where he attended master classes held by Lukas Foss and Oliver Knussen. Shortly thereafter, he traveled to Jerusalem, Israel to study composition and counterpoint with Russian-born composer Mark Kopytman. While at the Rubin Academy, Crumb composed what he now considers to be his first mature work: *Joyce Songs* for mezzo-soprano, flute, clarinet, and cello (1989). Upon returning, Crumb received his first major commission from the Chicago Civic Orchestra (with support from the ASCAP Foundation). The resulting work, *Clarino*, was premiered in Chicago's Symphony Hall June 1991. *Clarino* served as Crumb's dissertation, for which he was awarded a Ph.D. in 1992.

Over the years, Crumb's music has been widely performed throughout the United States and abroad. His orchestral works have been performed by the Baltimore Symphony, the Cleveland Chamber Symphony, and the Chicago Civic Orchestra; his chamber works by the Parnassus Ensemble, Voices of Change, The Chicago Ensemble, Network for New Music, and Quattro Mani. A recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowship, he has received commissions from the Fromm and Barlow Foundations, the Los Angeles Symphony New Music Group, the National Association of Wind and Percussion Instructors, and the Bowdoin International New Music Festival. He has held residencies at the Yaddo and MacDowell artist colonies and participated in numerous festivals including La Biennale di Venezia, Cincinnati Conservatory's "Music 2005," Colorado College's Annual New Music Festival, and Bowling Green State University's 21st Annual New Music & Art Festival. Crumb has served as composer-in-residence at the Oregon Bach Festival Composers Symposium, and as featured guest composer at Washington State University's "Festival of Contemporary Art Music."

Crumb's music has recently become available on compact disc

recordings. In 2000, *Variations for Cello and Chamber Ensemble*, performed by cellist Ulrich Boeckheler and the Orchestra 2001, was released on the C.R.I. label. Two recent compositions for two pianos, *Harmonia Mundi* and *The Whisperer*, performed by Quattro Mani (duo-pianists Susan Grace and Alice Rybak), are available on the Innova label. His *Awakening* for trumpet and percussion has been released on Equilibrium.

Crumb joined the music faculty at the University of Oregon in 1997, where he continues to serve as an Associate Professor of Composition and Theory.

Program Notes

Alex Mincek, Poco a Poco

As the title suggests, ***Poco a Poco*** is a work in which a gradual accumulation of musical material transforms “little by little” from one state of instrumental interaction to another. However, these shifts are not simply represented by instrumental activity, but also by the ways in which the sounds themselves are perceived as either fused composites, or as collections of individually identifiable parts. While some of the transformations in the piece are gradual, they are not fluidly continuous and instead progress in leaps from one state to the next. In fact, a major feature of the work is the way in which “getting stuck” plays a role in the process of triggering these leaps. By pressing forward and overcoming various repetitive loops, the work hopes to express the simple notion that nothing is ever absolutely fixed. Nothing is ever truly stable.

Beat Furrer, Voicelessness (the snow has no voice)

Beat Furrer's *Voiceless (the snow has no voice)* was composed in 1986. The work was inspired by *The Munich Mannequins*, a poem by Sylvia Plath. In this piece, the typical piano grand staff is absent. Instead, Furrer notates a succession of single staves and treats the piece somewhat like a canon. Each musical line is played in combination with the following line, that is, line 1 with line 2; line 2 with line 3 and so on. In addition, each line bears its own time signature, allowing for complex polymetric and polyrhythmic textures. This compositional technique allows Furrer to realize a gradual unfolding of the piece, where a component of the overall texture is always a restatement of previously heard material. The slow tempo and quiet dynamics throughout suggest the voicelessness quality indicated in the title.

Steven Stucky, Ad Parnassum

The composer writes: "Beginning about 1930, Paul Klee, the most musical of painters, began using the term 'polyphonic painting' to describe the layering of various forms and colors to produce visual compositions of many 'voices.' My favorites among these paintings are those using a sort of pointillist or mosaic approach, in which grids of dense dots or squares in contrasting colors create a wonderfully rich, luminous effect. The magnum opus among these works is the 1932 Ad Parnassum, which overlays glowing fields of colored dots with a few strong, simple shapes: a mountain peak, a sun, fragments of temple architecture. Klee borrowed his title from *Gradus ad Parnassum* (Steps to Parnassus, 1725) by J.J. Fux, a manual of polyphonic technique that nurtured generations of musicians. I, in turn, borrowed my title from Klee's painting. My composition is not so much a translation of pictorial elements from Klee's Ad Parnassum as an attempt to think through some of its basic principles in my own, purely musical terms. These principles include the play of light and shadow, the contrast between activity and repose, and a tension between Klee's cool blues and warm oranges so engrossing that it results, paradoxically, in profound harmony. I have been inspired, too, by questions implicit in the Klee painting: What is figure, what is ground? How can the same element be first one, then the other, or even both at once! Above all, I have tried to learn from Klee how a busy surface, dense with small details, can cohere to produce large, clear shapes, simple yet powerful. This seems to me as valuable an aim in music as it is in art. My Ad Parnassum was composed to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the Boston Musica Viva, and it was premiered by that ensemble under Richard Pittman in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on 16 October 1998." (Reprinted from Stucky, Steven. *In Shadow, in Light*. Albany Records, TROY642. Compact Disc.)

ICCE - Ithaca College Contemporary Ensemble

Comprising both faculty and students, the Ithaca College Contemporary Ensemble focuses on the music of our time, with emphasis on the music of living composers. Currently under the direction of Jorge Villavicencio Grossmann, ICCE provides a uniquely formative and intense performance experience for IC students. The ensemble performs two concerts a year; its programs also include music by Ithaca College composition faculty and students, alumni, and guest composers.

In past seasons, ICCE has performed works such as Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* and *Five Pieces for Orchestra* (chamber version), Ligeti's *Chamber Concerto*, as well as works by Kaija Saariaho, Elliott Carter, Lukas Foss, Pierre Boulez, Sophia Gubaidulina, Karel Husa, Arthur Levering, among others.

Under its former directors Jeffery Meyer and Richard Faria, ICCE--previously known as "Kulmusik" --performed at the 20th International New Music Festival "Sound Ways" in St. Petersburg, Russia. The concert took place at Glinka Hall of the Philharmonic, one of St. Petersburg's most beautiful and prestigious halls.

During the 2013-14 season, ICCE was featured within the Ithaca College Latin American Music Festival, performing works by Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon (2014 Karel Husa Visiting Professor of Composition), Celso Garrido Lecca, and Mario Davidovsky. The season included ICCE's performance at the Americas Society in New York.

<http://www.ithaca.edu/music/ensembles/contemporary/>
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