

9-30-2012

Concert: Chamber Orchestra

Ithaca College Chamber Orchestra

Jeffery Meyer

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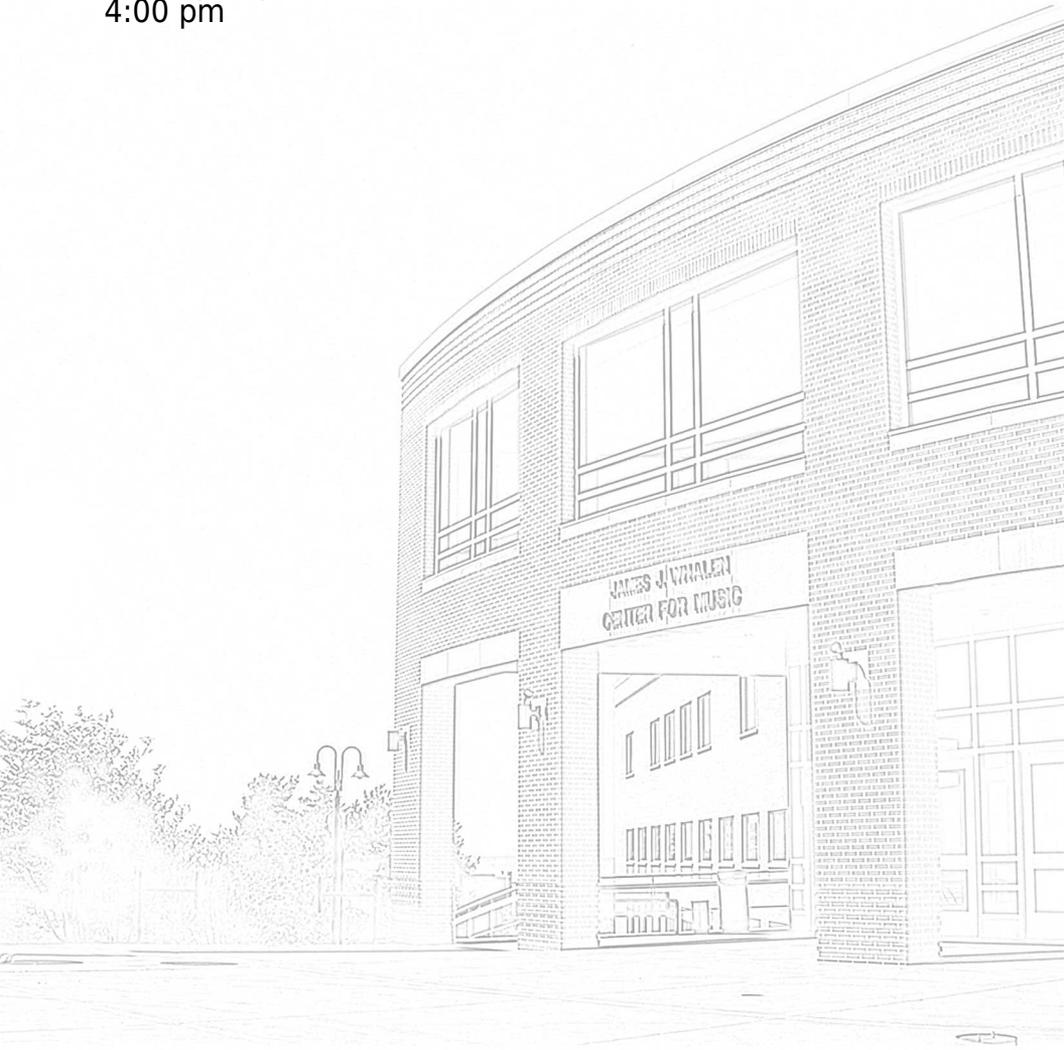
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Chamber Orchestra

Jeffery Meyer, conductor
David Friend, prepared piano

Ford Hall
Sunday September 30th, 2012
4:00 pm



ITHACA COLLEGE

School of Music

Now in its second century, the Ithaca College School of Music affirms its fundamental belief that music and the arts are essential components of the human experience. The School of Music prepares students to be world-class professionals and the music leaders of tomorrow - ready to transform individuals and communities by advancing the art of music.

Program

Concerto for Prepared Piano and Chamber
Orchestra (1951)

John Cage
(1912-1992)

- I.
- II.
- III.

David Friend, prepared piano

Intermission

Symphony No. 38 in D Major, K. 504
"Prague"

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

- I. Adagio-Allegro
- II. Andante
- III. Presto

Biographies

Jeffery Meyer, conductor

Born in Chicago, Jeffery Meyer began his musical studies as a pianist, and shortly thereafter continued on to study composition and conducting. He is the Director of Orchestras at Ithaca College and since 2002 he has been the Artistic Director of the St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic in St. Petersburg, Russia one of St. Petersburg's most innovative and progressive ensembles. He has appeared with orchestras in the United States and abroad, including ensembles such as the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Syracuse Symphony Orchestra, Cayuga Chamber Orchestra, Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra, Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra, Sichuan Symphony, and the Orchestra Sinfonico "Haydn" di Bolzano e Trento. In recent concert seasons, he has been seen conducting, performing as piano soloist and chamber musician, as well as conducting from the keyboard in the United States, Canada, Russia, Italy, Spain, Germany and throughout Eastern and Southeastern Asia.

Called "one of the most interesting and creatively productive conductors working in St. Petersburg" by Sergei Slonimsky, he is an active participant in the music of our time, has collaborated with dozens of composers, and commissioned and premiered numerous new works. The New York Times described his performances with the St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic in its United States debut at Symphony Space's 2010 "Wall-to-Wall, Behind the Wall" Festival in New York City as "impressive", "powerful", "splendid", and "blazing." His programming has been recognized with two ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming (with the Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra), as well as the Vytautas Marijosius Memorial Award for Programming. In 2007, he made his Glinka Hall conducting debut in the final concert of the 43rd St. Petersburg "Musical Spring" International Festival, featuring works by three of St. Petersburg's most prominent composers, and in 2009, he conducted the opening concert of the 14th International Musical Olympus Festival at the Hermitage Theatre and was recently invited back to perform in the 2011 festival. He has also been featured numerous times as both a conductor and pianist as part of the "Sound Ways" International New Music Festival in St. Petersburg, Russia. He has been distinguished in several international competitions (2008 Cadaqués Orchestra Conducting Competition, 2003 Vakhtang Jordania International Conducting Competition, 2003 Beethoven Sonata International Piano Competition, Memphis, Tennessee) and was a prizewinner in the 2008 X. International Conducting Competition "Antonio Pedrotti" and the 2011 American Prize in Conducting.

As a pianist, Meyer has been in residence at the Banff Centre for the Arts, and in residence at the Aspen Festival as part of the Furious Band. He performs frequently with percussionist Paul Vaillancourt as part of the piano-percussion duo *Strike*, which, in January 2010, released an album of world-premiere recordings of works written for the duo on Luminescence Records, Chicago. The duo has recently appeared in the Beijing Modern Festival and at the Tianjin Conservatory in China. He has been broadcast on CBC, has recorded and performed with the Philadelphia Virtuosi (Naxos), and has been heard as a soloist at the Aspen Festival. During the 2001-2002 academic year he lived and studied in Berlin and Leipzig as the recipient of a DAAD grant in music, during which time he wrote incidental music to David Mamet's *Duck Variations*, which was performed throughout Berlin by the theater group Heimspieltheater.

Passionate about working with young musicians and music education, Meyer is an active adjudicator, guest clinician, and masterclass teacher. He has judged competitions throughout the United States, including Alaska, as well as at the Hong Kong Schools Music Festival. He has given masterclasses throughout the United States as well as Canada and Asia, and recently led conducting masterclasses at the Central Conservatory in Beijing, China. He has served on the faculties of the Icicle Creek Music Center, Dorian Keyboard Festival, Opusfest Chamber Music Festival (Philippines), Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp, Marrowstone Music Festival, and the LSM Academy and Festival. In the summer of 2011, he returned to China as the guest conductor of the 2011 Beijing International Composition Workshop at the Central Conservatory in Beijing, China. Recent and upcoming activities include appearances in Southeast Asia with the Sichuan Symphony, the Xi'an Conservatory Orchestra, several return engagements with the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra and guest engagements in the United States with the Meridian Symphony orchestra and Stony Brook Symphony Orchestra.

David Friend, piano

David Friend is dedicated to ensuring the continued relevance of the art of the piano in contemporary culture. In his programming, his special projects, and his philosophical approach, his mission is to connect the dots between an art form with a glorious but rusting history and the digitized, post-modern society around us.

As a champion of new and experimental music, David Friend is taking piano performance in new directions. As a founding member of the TRANSIT collective, he collaborates closely with emerging composers from around the world. At the same time, he has worked with the preeminent composers of our time including Steve Reich; Julia Wolfe, David Lang, and Michael Gordon; and Charles Wuorinen. He has performed at many of the world's top venues including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Royal Festival Hall (London), the Chan Centre (Vancouver), the Belem Cultural Center (Lisbon), and the Reina Sofia Museum (Madrid), but also enjoys special projects at alternative venues including art galleries in NYC, Issue Project Room (NYC), the Winter Garden of the World Financial Center, Le Poisson Rouge (NYC), and the grounds of the Aspen Art Museum.

As a chamber musician, David has performed with members of the American Brass Quartet, Talujon Percussion, and the Trio Mediaeval; with members of the Metropolitan Opera, Toronto Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and American Composers orchestras; and with faculty-members of the Juilliard, Eastman, Oberlin, Cincinnati, Manhattan School of Music, Cleveland, and Glenn Gould conservatories. He has appeared with established and emerging new music groups including the Bang on a Can All-Stars, Ensemble Signal, Ensemble Pamplemousse, Either/Or, Le Train Bleu, Mantra Percussion, Hotel Elephant, and Red Light New Music, and he was the pianist of the Aspen Contemporary Ensemble for three years. David also enjoys projects that go beyond the common stylistic or performance practices of classical music including cross-disciplinary projects with Dance Imprints, live sound installations at the Aspen Art Museum and for Make Music New York, the Corps Exquis project in NYC, creating a large scale multimedia piece for Webster Hall, and working with musicians from different traditions such as Bill Frisell (guitar innovator), Don Byron (clarinet rebel), and Ryuichi Sakamoto (Japanese pop icon). He is also a founding member of Grand Band, NYC's new music piano sextet, a unique ensemble that has been described as a 'super-group of soloists' (*The Glass*) that include the 'finest, busiest pianists active in New York's contemporary-classical scene' (*New York Times*).

As a soloist, David Friend presents programs that seek to revitalize the experience of piano performance for the 21st century. Rather than dressing up a Belle Epoque convention with modernist

harmonies, he seeks out composers who are rethinking the vitality of the piano recital format and experimenting with new concepts in sound, technology, and performance practice. A core goal remains David's dedication to making new and contemporary music meaningful and relevant to audiences today. Creative programming, vocal remarks, and question and answer sessions are strategically employed to further engage audiences, and he also teaches a workshop for college pianists delving into the innovative history of American pianism.

David Friend was raised in the small city of Lake Charles in coastal Louisiana, a region renowned for its rich cultural and natural beauty. He moved to NYC to study with Phillip Kawin at the Manhattan School of Music, where he attained both Bachelors and Masters degrees and also got involved in the underground art world, the experimental performance scene, and social activism. Currently, he is pursuing doctoral studies at Cornell, where he focuses on contemporary performance practice with Xak Bjerken.

Program Notes

Concerto for Prepared Piano and Chamber Orchestra (1951)

American composer John Cage (1912-1992) remains one of the most iconic and iconoclastic musicians of the 20th century, and one of the most distinctive and divisive figures in all of music. He is known to his disciples and detractors alike as a pioneer of new methods of composition, and a proponent of new conceptions of what art is (or could be).

Cage famously said “my purpose is to remove purpose”. This credo became manifest in his increasing use of chance procedures in determining the parameters of his compositions. In later years, Cage referred to the *I Ching*, an ancient Chinese text used for divination, in order to create the forms, rhythms, and sonorities of many of his compositions. For the Concert for Prepared Piano, Cage utilized an earlier technique he had developed called *gamut* technique, wherein he created a series (or in this case a matrix) of sonic possibilities and then ordered them in some way, in this case drawing geometric patterns over a chart of possible sonic events.

The concerto is in 3 parts - in the first, only the orchestra is held bound by the sounds produced by this *gamut* technique; the piano is freely composed. In the second part, the piano part is dictated by a parallel chart of sonorities, but in the final part both the piano and the orchestra are governed by the same original chart. Thus, over the course of the concerto, the piano soloist slowly relinquishes its independence, its individual artistic ideas. *Purpose* is thus removed.

But all this formal analysis is to say nothing of the fact that this is a concerto for a most curious instrument, the *prepared piano*. Created out of necessity as much as ingenuity by Cage, the act of putting various objects into the strings of the piano allows the instrument to create a veritable universe of new sounds. By inserting bolts, paper clips, and pieces of rubber between the strings at specific locations, the sounds they create when struck can become complex, sounding more like a percussion orchestra than a standard melodic instrument.

Cage also uses a moveable plastic bridge to attain microtonal effects on the piano, as well as asking the members of the chamber orchestra to execute various “extended techniques” on their instruments. The work is scored for flute/piccolo, oboe, english horn, 2 clarinets, bassoon, trumpet, horn, 2 trombones, tuba, 4 percussionists, piano, harp, celeste, and a quintet of solo strings; the strikingly “soloistic” ensemble allows all the sonic nuances Cage carefully wrote into the piece to be clearly executed and heard by the audience.

Cage did not mandate or even hope that audiences would enjoy or listen carefully to his music; he had removed himself too far from the artistic act of volition to demand such a reaction. But he would agree that the greatest impact comes to the most open ears, the most discerning mind and the most attuned sensitivity. In his own words, Cage's musings on music and sound seem an appropriate primer for a work such as this concerto:

"When I hear what we call music, it seems to me that someone is talking. And talking about his feelings, or about his ideas of relationships. But when I hear traffic, the sound of traffic—here on Sixth Avenue, for instance—I don't have the feeling that anyone is talking. I have the feeling that sound is acting. And I love the activity of sound [...] I don't need sound to talk to me."

Symphony No. 38 in D Major, "Prague"

The late symphonies of Mozart (written in the decade from 1778 to 1788) stand not only as the best examples of his ingenuity in the genre, but also as some of the greatest examples of the form of the classical symphony itself. The named symphonies (Nos. 31 "Paris", 35 "Haffner", 36 "Linz", 38 "Prague" and 41 "Jupiter") form a particular arch of symphonic sophistication, melodic invention, and harmonic daring (although the sublime No. 40 can be included in this good company).

Mozart completed what would become known as the "Prague" Symphony in December 1786, and it was premiered around a month later on January 19, 1787 in the city of its dedication. Mozart was highly esteemed in Bohemia, and the audience there received their symphony warmly.

It is scored for pairs of flutes, oboes, bassoons, horns, and trumpets, timpani and strings, and is noted for its three movement form (omitting the fairly standard minuet). The first movement, like many of his later symphonies, starts with a slow introduction displaying a variety of musical characters in the feel of an opera overture. Explosions of sound from the full ensemble alternate with delicate ascending scales and arpeggios; lyrical airs often turn dark with rapidly shifting harmonies. Above all, the rhythmic complexity and sophisticated counterpoint that will be characteristic of the entire symphony are prominently featured.

Following the introduction is a spritely allegro, whose main theme presages the theme to the overture to *Die Zauberflöte*. The writing is masterful, weaving complex rhythmic structures and rapidly changing harmonic worlds with gentle ease. From the unique voicing of the

chords of the main theme (to become more daring with each reiteration) to the major-minor slides of the second theme, the movement unfolds with the elegant assurance of a master's hand. The development section turns elements of the melody into a canonic subject, adding to the complexity. Mozart makes frequent and meaningful use of the woodwinds, brass, and timpani, thus creating an ensemble sound that seems like the result of a much larger orchestra. The final exultant recapitulation brings the violins soaring to incredible heights as the whole company takes part in an exuberant close.

The second movement is in a lilting 6/8 meter, and Mozart's further exploration of harmonic nuance is evident from the first phrases, where what could be a pedestrian tune is opened to show its possible development into more sophisticated music. Trumpets and drums are heard, an innovation he first employed in the Linz Symphony three years earlier. The movement is marked not only by the effortless way the form unfolds but some sublime ensemble parts in the strings, and again the interplay of the wind band with the rest of the orchestra.

The finale explodes with a frantic theme, almost Beethovenian in its contour and character. The presto 2/4 movement seems to fly past the ears, all the while navigating through multiple keys in a dashing sonata allegro form. The rhythmic vitality of the previous movements is employed to the utmost here as well, as the contrapuntal themes run for the finish line from the first bar, with not a moment to catch a breath.

- program notes by Patrick Valentino

Personnel

Ithaca College Chamber Orchestra

Violin I

Sadie Kenny, *concertmaster*
Samantha Spina
Haehyun Park
Jason Kim
Emily Frederick
Marcus Hogan

Violin II

Laura Scivolino, *principal*
Joohyun Lee
Jessica Chen
Elizabeth Benz
Brian Schmidt
Colleen Mahoney

Viola

Maxwell Aleman, *principal*
Kelly Ralston
Kate Inie-Richards
Carly Rockenhauser

Cello

Erin Snedecor, *principal*
Peter Volpert
Pan Yan
Rachele Prawdzik

Bass

Samuel Shuhan, *principal*
Samuel Verneuille

Flute

Maya Holmes, *principal*
Sandra O'Hare

Oboe

Elizabeth Schmitt, *principal*
Chloe Washington

Clarinet

Christopher Peña, *principal*
Michelle McGuire

Bassoon

Sean Harkin, *principal*
Ross Triner

Horn

Colin Spiers, *principal*
Emma Staudacher

Trumpet

Keli Price, *principal*
Ryanne Flynn

Trombone

Joshua Zimmer, *principal*
Justin Oswald, *bass*

Tuba

Erik Hoang, *principal*

Percussion

Jessica Linden
Jonathan Pereira
Keegan Sheehy

Timpani/Percussion

Daniel Pessalano, *principal*

Keyboards

Jessica Mackey, *principal*

Harp

Myra Kovary, *principal*

Assistant Conductors

Tiffany Lu
Patrick Valentino

Upcoming Events

September

30 - Hockett - 7:00pm - Wendy Herbener Mehne, flute

October

2 - Ford - 8:15pm - Percussion Ensemble (CA)

3 - Nabhauer - 8:15pm - Electroacoustic Music

4 - Hockett - 8:15pm - Aaron Tindall, tuba/euphonium

5 - Ford - 7:30pm - Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra

6 - Ford - 10:00am - Jazz Ensemble Children's Concert

7 - Ford - 3:00pm - Choral Collage (*Webcasted at www.ithaca.edu/music/live/*)

8 - Hockett - 7:00pm - Emily Newton, soprano; Dawn Pierce, mezzo-soprano

9 - Ford - 8:15pm - Jazz Ensemble (*Webcasted at www.ithaca.edu/music/live/*)

10 - Ford - 8:15pm - Concert Band (*Webcasted at www.ithaca.edu/music/live/*)

11 - Hockett - 8:00pm - Enduring Masters: Dick DeBenedictis

11 - Ford - 8:15pm - Symphonic Band (*Webcasted at www.ithaca.edu/music/live/*)

12 - Hockett - 3:00pm - Roberta Peters Masterclass: Nedda Casei

13 - Ford - 8:30pm - Choral Reunion (*Webcasted at www.ithaca.edu/music/live/*)

14 - Ford - 4:00pm - Symphony Orchestra (*Webcasted at www.ithaca.edu/music/live/*)

15 - Ford - 8:15pm - African Drumming and Dance Ensemble

16 - Ford - 8:15pm - Wind Ensemble (*Webcasted at www.ithaca.edu/music/live/*)

22 - Hockett - 7:00pm - Composition Premieres

23 - Hockett - 7:00pm - Brad Hougham, baritone

25 - Ford - 8:15pm - Percussion Ensemble (GS)

30 - Hockett - 7:00pm - Ithaca Brass

31 - JJWCM - 6:00pm - Healthy Living For Musicians

31 - Hockett - 8:15pm - Tuba Ensemble