

PALIMPSEST

presents

Concertos! for Clarinets, Harp, and Piano

Aleck Karis, conductor

Harp Concerto (2009)*

Lei Liang

Alison Bjorkedal, solo harp
Ine Vanoeveren, flute
Glencora Davies, oboe
Curt Miller, clarinet
David Savage, bassoon
Nicolee Kuester, horn
Stephanie Richards, trumpet
Eric Starr, trombone
Kathryn Hatmaker, Batya MacAdam-Somer, violins
Angela Choong, viola
Tyler J. Borden, cello
Kyle Motl, bass
Todd Moellenberg, piano
Christopher Clarino, Fiona Digney, percussion

Glass Swan (2000)[§]

Akira Kobayashi

Todd Moellenberg, piano

Contour-ism mini (2012)[§]

Hiroyuki Yamamoto

Batya MacAdam-Somer, violin
Kyle Adam Blair, piano

Dreams of a Young Piano (2014)[†]

Yiheng Yvonne Wu

Kyle Adam Blair, solo piano
Michael Matsuno, Ine Vanoeveren, flutes
Michiko Ogawa, Samuel Dunscombe, clarinets
Nicolee Kuester, horn
Stephanie Richards, trumpet
Batya MacAdam-Somer, violin
Judith Hamann, cello
Matthew Kline, bass
Ryan Nestor, Jonathan Hepfer, percussion

Intermission

Colors in the Forest (2012)[§]

Naoyuki Terai

Michael Matsuno, flute
Judith Hamann, cello
Matthew Kline, bass
Christopher Clarinio, percussion

Un Luogo sulla Terra (2004)[§]

Tomoyuki Hisatome

Michael Matsuno, flute
Batya MacAdam-Somer, violin
Pablo Gómez, guitar

Triple Concerto (1977)

Donald Martino

Michiko Ogawa, solo clarinet
Samuel Dunscombe, solo bass clarinet
Curt Miller, solo contrabass clarinet
Michael Matsuno, flute
Glencora Davies, oboe/English horn
David Savage, Galina Kiep, bassoons
Nicolee Kuester, horn
Stephanie Richards, flugelhorn
Eric Starr, Logan Chopyk, trombones
Kathryn Hatmaker, Batya MacAdam-Somer, violin
Angela Choong, viola
Judith Hamann, cello
Matthew Kline, bass
Todd Moellenberg, piano
Jonathan Hepfer, Ryan Nestor, Christopher Clarinio, percussion

* West Coast premiere

§ U.S. premiere

† World premiere

NOTES

Harp Concerto, Lei Liang

The kinesthetic characteristics of the harpist demarcate the various sections of the *Harp Concerto*. Each physical action – be it plucking with or without nail, pinching, sliding, stopping, glissando with one or multiple fingers, etc. – combined with pitch and timbre forms the basic sonic component or thematic material. The interaction between these elements creates a dialogue between attack and resonance that is in turn amplified by the ensemble.

Three core pitches E, A and G, with or without inflections, provide an underlying continuity. They are modified through timbral, harmonic, kinesthetic, and rhythmic processes, which contribute to self-generating transformations.

Harp Concerto was commissioned by the Manhattan Sinfonietta and is dedicated to harpist June Han and conductor Jeffrey Milarsky who gave its premiere on February 18, 2009 at Merkin Concert Hall in New York City. The concert was repeated on February 21, 2009 at Paine Hall, Cambridge, MA in the Harvard Fromm Series as part of the Sinfonietta's Winter 2009 Festival, *The New Soloist: Individual and Ensemble Virtuosity En Masse*.

Lei Liang (b.1972)'s music has been described as “hauntingly beautiful” by the *New York Times*, and “far, far out of the ordinary, brilliantly original and inarguably gorgeous” by the *Washington Post*. Winner of the 2011 Rome Prize, he is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship. He was commissioned by the New York Philharmonic and Alan Gilbert for the inaugural concert of the *CONTACT!* new music series. Lei Liang received his degrees from the New England Conservatory of Music (BM and MM) and Harvard University (PhD), studying with Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Robert Cogan, Chaya Czernowin, and Mario Davidovsky. A Young Global Leader of the World Economic Forum, he held a fellowship from the Harvard Society of Fellows. Lei Liang currently serves as Associate Professor of Music and Chair of the Composition Area at the University of California, San Diego. His music is published exclusively by Schott Music Corporation (New York).

Glass Swan, Akira Kobayashi

Glass Swan was completed in May 2000. In the '80s and '90s, I composed a series of piano pieces. Each one of these pieces has been integrated into *Glass Swan* over a period of time. The thematic idea of C-B-D-C#-E at the beginning is the main motif which unites the entire work. Some years ago in Europe, a beautiful glass swan displayed in a shop window caught my eye. It was such a beautiful piece of art that it inspired me to write some music.

The work was premiered on August 23, 2000 in Maebashi. Since then, it has been performed in Tokyo, Nagoya, Toyota, Isesaki and Orléans. It was published by the Japan Federation of Composers in February 2007.

Akira Kobayashi (b.1960, Japan) graduated from Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music and holds a master's degree in arts. He is currently Professor of Composition at Aichi University of the Arts. Kobayashi has received numerous prizes in international competitions: First Prize at the 1st International Carlos Chavez Competition, First Prize in Japan Symphony Foundation's 10th Composition Competition, finalist for the 3rd Music Today Composition Prize, finalist in the 1st Nuove Sincronie International Composition Competition, and Honorary Plaque at the 9th International Gino Contilli Composition Competition. His music was performed at the Asia Music Week 2000 in Yokohama and Federation Music Week, Contemporary Music of Australia and Asia Pacific in 2001.

He has studied at the Sibelius Academy with Paavo Heininen as a research fellow with a grant from the Japanese government and has been composer-in-residence at Butler University in Indianapolis.

Kobayashi's music is performed regularly around the world. Recent performances include: Harp concerto No. 2 in Finland, *Astraea* for orchestra in the US, *Reimei* for flute and harp in Italy, *Mythology of Constellations* for chamber orchestra in Finland, and Harp Concerto No. 3 in Japan.

Contour-ism mini (2012), Hiroyuki Yamamoto

In this piece, the piano, with its fixed pitches and tuning, sounds distorted and unstable compared to the violin's quartertone tuning. *Contour-ism* is one of the series of my recent works for keyboard and other instruments, which is an expression of my musical idea that sounds always contain ambiguous elements. This short piece was written for the "Hibari Project," an aid project for northeastern Japan.

Born in 1967, **Hiroyuki Yamamoto** completed his master's degree in composition at Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music in 1992 and is the winner of several competitions, including the prize of the 13th Competition of Japanese Society for Contemporary Music, the Toru Takemitsu Composition Award 2002, and the prize of the 13th Competition of Akutagawa Award for Music Composition. His pieces are performed in Japan, Europe and North America, and they have been performed by Le Nouvel Ensemble Moderne, Ensemble Contemporain de Montréal, Trio Fibonacci (three ensembles based in Montréal), Nieuw Ensemble (Amsterdam), NZ Trio (Auckland), Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks (Munich), Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg, The Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, New Japan Philharmonic, Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, and other performers and performing groups, with some broadcast by radio around the world. Hiroyuki Yamamoto joined the Faculty of Composition at Aichi University of the Arts in April, 2009. He now lives in Nagoya, Japan. Some of his music is published by Musicisti Associati Produzioni, M.A.P. Edition (Milan).

Dreams of a Young Piano, Yiheng Yvonne Wu

If a piano had youthful ambition, it might be to harness the capabilities of an orchestra—the lyricism of strings and winds, the bright warmth of brass, the ability to dynamically and timbrally alter a sustained note. Actually, the piano *can* achieve all these things. Pianists strive to evoke a rich palette of colors and to turn a hammered instrument into a singing voice. Still, despite its beautiful versatility, I often find

that a piano playing alongside other instruments sounds percussive in comparison.

This piece is a playful exploration: what if the piano could just “become” these other instruments? In the beginning, the piano and two percussionists are a trio, exchanging pointed attacks across the stage, while the nine-piece ensemble (itself grouped into three trios) appears intermittently from a different world. The main trio gradually elongates its sounds and enlists the ensemble to join it. Ultimately, the whole ensemble becomes an extension of the piano, its body spanning the breadth of the stage. The ensemble’s groupings create pockets of unique timbres, harmonies, and rhythmic activity even as everything resonates together.

Yiheng Yvonne Wu’s compositions have been performed in the U.S., Canada, Taiwan, and Germany and have been premiered by The Timothy Dwight Chamber Players, Arraymusic, Carla Rees, and Ensemble SurPlus, among others. She received the 2012-2013 Thomas Nee Commission from the La Jolla Symphony and was a prize-winner in the 2004 Formosa Composition Competition. Her string quartet *Utterance*, was released by Carrier Records in 2009. Wu received a B.A. in Music (2003) from Yale University, where she was awarded the Abraham Beekman Cox Prize. She is currently a Ph.D. candidate in composition at the University of California, San Diego. Primary composition teachers have included Katharina Rosenberger, Kathryn Alexander, John Halle, Sophia Serghi, and Steven Takasugi.

Colors in the Forest, Naoyuki Terai

Being surrounded by nature helps me refresh my soul and makes me feel creative. Since last autumn, I have enjoyed taking walks in Kaisho no Mori, a beautiful forest near our university. One can see the colorful foliage and hear the comfortable sounds of nature there. I composed this piece, *Colors in the Forest*, imagining Kaisho no Mori, my favorite place, where woodpeckers peck the trees and winds shake the leaves.

Naoyuki Terai studied music and music technology. Since the 1970s, he has composed many experimental works using computer, live electronics and the like. His representative works include *Music for the opening ceremony* for the International Exposition (1985, Tsukuba); Computer music for performance, CG, picture, laser and etc. at the planetarium (1986-1998, Nagoya); *Frequency* for bassoon and tape (1987, Las Vegas & Philippines); Music for the National Athletic Meet (1992, Yamagata/1994, Aichi); *Stream* for computer & video (2004, Vienna); and *Toki is Dancing in the Sora* for wind orchestra and computer (2007, Tokyo).

Naoyuki Terai is currently professor of composition and music at Aichi University of the Arts. He also serves as chief director of Arts Promotion Center at the University, dealing with cultural exchange and planning artistic events worldwide.

Un Luogo sulla Terra, Tomoyuki Hisatome

The title of this piece *Un Luogo sulla Terra (A Place on Earth)* originates from the artist Lei Naito’s

installation with the same title which was exhibited in the Venice Biennale. By using feathery materials like fine bamboo, thread, wire and glass, this work represents a kind of momentary tremble, which would be generated when invisible beings come to the earth. When I wrote this piece, I turned my thought toward a dramatic moment when all animate beings appear to the earth, and I contemplated the importance of the existence of life at this moment. At this moment in the early 21st century, we as human beings have not been able to stop killing each other.

This piece consists of three parts.

1) “Un Luogo sulla Terra.” Drama in stationary time and space.

2) “Blessed Villancico.” Villancico is a rural music in medieval times.

3) “Benedictus Spirited” is a hymn, a lively song of praise.

Dedicated to my parents for their golden wedding anniversary. Commissioned by the 22nd Club in Kyoto.

Borrowing from the idea of baroque rhetoric and animism, **Tomoyuki Hisatome** dreams to make space and time breathe organically. He has studied various theories of ethnic music.

He won 1st prize in the 14th Percussive Arts Society Composition Competition in the US, 2nd prize in 35th Premio Musicale Città di Trieste in Italy, 1st prize in the Theatrical Arts Competition of the Japanese Ministry of Education, and more. He has been commissioned by NHK, the 22nd Century Club in Kyoto, Zen-On Music, and others. Born in 1955 in Tokyo, he holds degrees from Meiji University (where he studied political science) and the Graduate School of Tokyo University of Fine Arts and Music. With a scholarship from the Italian government, he studied composition and conducting at the Conservatory of Verdi in Milan, and graduated from Academy of Santa Cecilia in Rome (studying with Donatoni).

After being Associate Professor of Hiroshima University, he is currently Professor at Aichi University of the Arts. He is Artistic Adviser of Ensemble H[ákka]. Several works are published by ZEN-ON Music Company Limited, Mieroprint, JFC, Mother Earth Pub. Inc., and Fontec.

Triple Concerto, Donald Martino

Triple Concerto was composed to a commission from the Group for Contemporary Music and dedicated to Milton Babbitt on the occasion of his 60th birthday. It was given its premiere performance December 18, 1978, conducted by Harvey Sollberger, at Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, New York.

Since the summer of 1973 I had been toying with the idea of presenting a clarinet concerto to Milton Babbitt on his forthcoming 60th birthday. When, the following year, Charles Wuorinen and Harvey Sollberger, co-directors of the Group for Contemporary Music, asked me to write a piece for the Group, my eager acceptance included a promise to compose such a concerto. I was only able to begin the project late in the spring of 1976. After some months of unproductive effort and frustration, I realized that I was being hindered by a conception of the work which prescribed, if not a full orchestra,

at least a substantial string section. Since it was impractical to enlarge the ensemble, I decided to enlarge the soloists. Only then did the drama of the work reveal itself to me and its execution become clear. My plan was to transform the three separate clarinets into “Superclarinet,” a six-octave gargantuan who would use the concerto as a world in which to romp and play with the “Superfriends.” I thought to effect this transformation not by altering the innate personalities of the elegant Soprano, the poetic Bass, or the obstreperous Contrabass instruments, but by sequentially bringing them together, even within the smallest phrase particle, in such fashion that the naturalness of their interaction would melt their differences.

The moods of *Triple Concerto* are manifold, as are the interpretations of its structure. The three movements, connected by paraphrastic cadenzas and enclosed by a formal Introduction and Coda, proceed without pause. In tempo, the seven sections are seen to be roughly symmetric: slow becoming fast; moderately fast; mixed; slow; mixed; very fast; moderately fast becoming slow. Except for the deep pitch-structure design, most of the other components such as form, duration, mood, etc., when taken as a unit, are anti-symmetric.

One by one, the Introduction presents each of the instruments as individual actors, with the soloists as protagonists, in the musical drama to follow. Each soloist is figuratively provoked by the opening explosive orchestral gesture to react in a uniquely personal way. Of the many descriptive words that may be found on the pages of the first movement, perhaps the most pervasive would be *ansioso* and *cantabile*. And the most obviously unusual aspect of this sonata-allegro movement is the exclusion of a recapitulation: Exposition (A, B); Development; Coda. The second movement begins with an idea that is sustained, suspended in time, evocative, and lyric. By way of contrast, its consequent phrase is rhythmic, iterative, and *espressivo*. The two phrases conjoin to form the theme for variation. The final movement is a Rondo; here the mood is lighter, less intense than before, the drama having climaxed with the preceding cadenza. The Coda, the conceptual retrograde of the Introduction, divorces the musical components, thereby permitting them to exist as they arrived—separately.

Donald Martino (1931-2005). Born in Plainfield, NJ, he began music lessons at nine (learning clarinet, saxophone, and oboe) and started composing at fifteen. He held degrees from Syracuse and Princeton Universities. Awards included two Fulbright scholarships; three Guggenheim awards; grants from the Massachusetts Arts Council, the National Institute of Arts and Letters, and the NEA; the Brandeis Creative Arts Citation in Music; the 1974 Pulitzer Prize for his chamber work *Notturmo*, First Prize in the 1985 Kennedy Center Friedheim Competition for his String Quartet (1983), and the Boston Symphony’s Mark M. Horblit Award. Martino taught at The Third Street Music School Settlement in New York, Princeton, Yale, The New England Conservatory of Music, Brandeis, and Harvard. Commissions for new works came from the Paderewski Fund; the Fromm, Naumburg, Koussevitzky, and Coolidge Foundations; the Chicago, Boston, and San Francisco Symphonies; among others. According to the New Grove, “Martino’s music has been characterized as expansive, dense, lucid, dramatic, romantic, all of which are applicable. But it is his ability...to conjure up for the listener a world of palpable presences and conceptions...that seems most remarkable.”

MUSICIANS

Alison Bjorkedal, harp, is a freelance musician who teaches and performs in the Los Angeles area. She is a member of Southwest Chamber Music, Golden State Pops Orchestra and MUSE/IQUE. She has performed with the San Diego Symphony, Pasadena Symphony/Pops Orchestra, Long Beach Symphony, and Long Beach Opera.

Named “excellent player” and “enterprising young harpist” by the *Los Angeles Times*, Alison’s notable chamber music performances include the world premieres of William Kraft’s *Encounters XII* for harp and percussion; Anne LeBaron’s *HSING* for solo harp, and Wadada Leo Smith’s *Ten Freedom Summers*, a 2013 Pulitzer Prize finalist.

Alison earned her Masters and Doctorate of Musical Arts degrees in harp performance from the USC Thornton School of Music and her Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Oregon.

Alison also plays the Kithara (an instrument created for the music of Harry Partch) with LA-based, Grammy-nominated ensemble Partch.

Kyle Adam Blair is an active solo and collaborative pianist in the San Diego area, specializing in the performance of American contemporary music. His focuses include the performance of new works in collaboration with composers and the performance of works from the middle-to-late 20th century.

His collaborations have included two concerts with Bang-On-A-Can All-Stars at Walt Disney Concert Hall and the Conrad Prebys Music Center, numerous appearances with the La Jolla Symphony under the direction of Steven Schick, and premieres of solo and chamber works of San Diego composers Xavier Beteta, Hunjoo Jung, and Jon Forshee. He has also collaborated with noted American composers Steve Reich, Christian Wolff, and Stuart Saunders Smith. He commissioned and premiered Smith’s longest piano work to date, the four-movement *Palm Sunday* in January 2014.

Blair is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts in Contemporary Music Performance at UC San Diego under the mentorship of Aleck Karis.

Samuel Dumscombe is a musician and sound artist specializing in the use of clarinets, computers, and microphones. As a clarinetist, he has worked with composers including Ana Maria Avram, Anthony Pateras, Iancu Dumitrescu, Chikako Morishita, and Pierluigi Billone, and performed alongside improvisers including Satoko Fuji, Richard Barrett, Milana Zaric, and Christophe Charles. He has studied clarinet with Anthony Burr, Ernesto Molinari, and Robert Schubert.

Samuel’s most recent activities include preparing an album of the collected works for clarinet by Ana Maria Avram and Iancu Dumitrescu, performing Pierluigi Billone’s 80-minute bass clarinet duo

$1+1=1$, and exhibiting a large scale sound-art project mapping the layers of human engagement that intersect within San Clemente Canyon (San Diego). Samuel is a founding member of the ensembles Golden Fur (Australia/Southern California) and YossaYossa (Japan/Australia/USA), alongside being an avid performer of chamber music with several other chamber ensembles worldwide.

Samuel is currently a candidate for Doctor of Music Performance (DMA) at the University of California, San Diego, where he combines his passions for field recording, extended clarinet technique, and computer audio. In 2015 he will undertake a visiting fellowship at the College of the Arts in Bern, where he will work further with Ernesto Molinari.

Aleck Karis has performed recitals, chamber music, and concertos across the Americas, Europe and in China. As the pianist of the new music ensemble Speculum Musicae, he has participated in over a hundred premieres and performed at major American and European festivals. His appearances with orchestra have ranged from concertos by Mozart, Beethoven and Chopin to those of Stravinsky, Messiaen and Carter. His five solo discs on Bridge Records include music by Chopin, Carter and Schumann, Mozart, Stravinsky, Cage and Feldman, Webern and Wolpe. His two discs on Roméo Records are Music of Philip Glass and Late Chopin. He has studied with William Daghlian, Artur Balsam and Beveridge Webster. He is currently a distinguished professor of music at the University of California, San Diego and Associate Dean of the Division of Arts and Humanities.

San Diego-based clarinetist **Curt Dallace Miller** specializes in the performance of contemporary chamber music. A frequent collaborator with composers, Curt has performed in dozens of premieres and worked with established composers such as Helmut Lachenmann, Chaya Czernowin, Rebecca Saunders, Roger Reynolds, and Lewis Nielson on performances of their solo and chamber ensemble works. He has performed internationally in ensembles and as soloist at venues such as the Lucerne Festival, Harvard's Fromm Players series, Monday Evening Concerts, and wasteLAnd. As a member of the trio Ensemble et cetera he has begun to expand the repertoire for clarinet, double bass, and percussion through commissions and realizations of works for open instrumentation. Through his more recent interest in electronics and sound installation, Curt works with visual artist Nichole Speciale on installations which reference and extend drawing and painting through sound and video.

Born and raised in Tokyo, **Michiko Ogawa's** formal training began at the Toho Gakuen School of Music. After being awarded her bachelors degree, she moved to Germany to pursue her masters studies at the Hochschule für Musik Freiburg, under Jorg Widmann. Since graduating from the Hochschule für Musik Freiburg, Michiko has worked as a soloist and chamber musician as a member of the Tokyo Music Arts organisation. She has played as a guest with the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, working with Helmut Lachenmann to realize several of his orchestral works. She has worked with composers including Toshi Ichianagi, Helmut Lachenmann, Arash Yazdani, and Chikako Morishita and studied musicology with Jo Kondo at Ochanomizu University (2012-2013).

Michiko was awarded second place in the Carl-Seemann Preis in 2007 and performed as a representative of the Hochschule für Musik Freiburg at the 55th German Music University Competition in the same year. In 2014, Michiko began doctoral studies at the University of California (San Diego).

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