



**University
of Victoria**

School of
Music

SONIC LAB

March 17, 2017, 8pm

Phillip T. Young Recital Hall, MacLaurin Building
Admission by donation

*This concert is presented on the traditional territories of the
WS'ANEC' (Saanich), Lkwungen (Songhees), and Wyomilth
(Esquimalt) peoples of the Coast Salish Nation*

PROGRAM

* * Intermission * *

Advaya	Jonathan Harvey (1939–2012)	Mishaptim, Part 1	Dániel Péter Biró (b. 1969)
<i>Alex Klassen, Cello</i> <i>Alex C, Sampler</i> <i>Colin Malloy, Jordie Shier,</i> <i>Robert Pond, Electronics</i>		<i>Adam Jasieniuk, Ethan Hill, Voices</i> <i>Alanna Kazdan, Flute</i> <i>Alina Liang, Clarinet</i> <i>Thomas Nicholson, Piano</i> <i>Natalie Dzubik, Violin</i> <i>Alex Klassen, Cello</i> <i>Keenan Mittag-Degala, Spoken Percussion</i> <i>Dániel Péter Biró, Conductor</i>	
Time is a Cage	Suzanne Farrin (b. 1976)		
<i>Emily MacCallum, Violin</i>			
Density 21.5	Edgard Varèse (1883–1965)	Toccata	Helmut Lachenmann (b. 1935)
<i>Jillian Broughton, Flute</i>		<i>Emily MacCallum, Violin</i>	
Les mots sont allés ...	Lucian Berio (1925–2003)	While Liquid Amber	Chaya Czernowin (b. 1957)
		<i>Alanna Kazdan, Jillian Broughton,</i> <i>Bailey Finley, Piccolo Flutes</i>	
Bombarde	Ethan Hill (b. 1997)	6 Melodies	John Cage (1912–1992)
<i>Ethan Hill, Piano</i> <i>Alex Klassen, Cello</i>		<i>Natalie Dzubik, Violin</i> <i>Kimberley Manerikar, Piano</i>	
Philadelphia	Christopher Butterfield (b. 1952)	O King	Luciano Berio (1925–2003)
<i>Dániel Péter Biró, Guitar</i> <i>Thomas Nicholson, Harmonium</i>		<i>Jessica Wagner, Soprano</i> <i>Jillian Broughton, Flute</i> <i>Alina Liang, Clarinet</i> <i>Ethan Hill, Piano</i> <i>Emily MacCallum, Violin</i> <i>Alex Klassen, Cello</i> <i>Dániel Péter Biró, Conductor</i>	
<i>from József Attila Fragments</i>	György Kurtág (b. 1926)		
<i>Jessica Wagner, Soprano</i> <i>Julio Lopezhiler, Reciter</i>			

Jonathan Harvey: *Advaya* (1994)

“About the first century (AC) Buddhist teaching coined the word ‘advaya’. It means ‘not two’, and it points at transcending duality. We may be under the spell of a certain illusion, but we realise that our illusion and its objects come from the same root. In other words we transcend the duality of the division into subject and object in the sense that we intuitively sense and realise that both emerge from the same cosmic ground”. (Lama Govinda) All sounds used in this piece derive from the cello; some are processed live, others were recorded and then processed in depth in order to be played back on compact disks or by a sampler keyboard. Many of the sounds were made by analysing passages of music played by the cello and then resynthesising the music from this analysis, altering the inner structure of the sound (the spectrum) in the process. A hierarchy of “compressed spectra” from consonant (the natural harmonic series) to unstable was built up: the consonant centre is A (220hz), the first string of the cello. Cello and electronics are usually concerned with the same musical material at any one time, though sometimes at different speeds. One cello motif, for instance, which lasts 4 seconds, is stretched by a technique, which cuts the motif into tiny granules and then scatters them in large quantities to a duration of two and a half minutes.

Suzanne Farrin: *Time is a Cage* (2008)

The work of the New York based composer Suzanne Farrin is a meditation and gradual exploration of gestures and timbres on each of the four strings of the violin and deals with the unsteady perception of time passing.

Edgard Varèse; *Density 21.5* (1936)

System was anathema to Varèse. He was suspicious of tonality as he was of serialism, considering them a composer's abdication of his responsibility to create something new. He viewed music as an organized sound. Sound's properties of pitch, timbre and intensity were elements to be used in constructing a piece. Pitches existed for him independent of their polyphonic or harmonic possibilities. This is evident in *Density 21.5* in various ways. Many of them melodies consist of pitches whose lengths are determined by a specific ratio. The piece as a whole seems to explore the gradual expansion of the opening three-note pattern to include an increasing part of the flute's range. Varèse wrote *Density 21.5* for the inauguration of Georges Barrère's platinum flute. 21.5 is the density of platinum.

Luciano Berio: *Les mots sont allés ...* (1978)

The small solo cello work *Les mots sont allés* provides an eloquent musical epigraph for this side of Berio's temperament. Its title literally means "The words are gone...", and with his tongue perhaps tucked in his cheek, Berio instructs the performer to make up for this mysteriously missing text by playing "as if speaking." That absent verse might be tied up with the work's dedication: it was one of a number of solo cello pieces written in 1979 for new music conductor and patron, Paul Sacher, and like many other works from the set, actually takes the letters of Sacher's name and maps them to the pitches they denote in German (E flat, A, C, B, E natural). Interestingly, this technique reached its height before the twentieth century in the works of Robert Schumann a kindred spirit of Berio's in his indefatigable effort to make instruments speak.

Christopher Butterfield: *Philadelphia* (1996)

Philadelphia is one of three pieces with the same title, all written shortly after a visit to the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1996. Among other things, the Museum houses the major collection of the work of artist Marcel Duchamp, including his last piece, *Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau / 2° le gaz d'éclairage*.

György Kurtág: *From József Attila Töredékek (Fragments)* (1981)

The Hungarian composer György Kurtág finds a form of musical expression in miniature and a way to synthesize traditional European art music with new forms and techniques of composing such as the serial technique. The musical fragments on the poetry of the Hungarian poet Attila József stands in the tradition of song cycles giving a fragmented impression of Weberian brevity, melodic forms formed of huge intervals or tightly bound phrases and heightened expressivity.

1.

The water thickens, swelling into ice,
and my sins gather into death.

2.

Many came and pressed around me
in my dreams they laughed and mocked me:
"Ha-ha-ha, he-he-he,
so he is the one
with the treasure
that's none!"

3.

For seven - I ask myself -
will you give six, pray?
I'm playing. The merit is
his who was able to play.

4.

Time
sprouts on the run, like beans.

5.

The poet's love is blazing straw,
hence its greed and devouring speed.

6.

Amazed am I
that I shall die.

7.

Tell me, what should I do to make you love me,
if I should weep, don't laugh or mock me.
Like a car with engine racing
but there' no road, no way of starting,
- that's me, and were I bolder
my words would lack all sense or order...

8.

The sweet breeze purls along
among the poplars, silver -foamed,
and the gigantic summer
just bathes in it, golden-limbed.

9.

Girls' knees stalk our predatory eyes
and in my fury I could kill a fairy,
though for this leaky, foundling life
it isn't - I admit- worth killing.

10.

For fifteen years I've been writing verse
and now, when I might at last become a poet,
I just stand here by the ironworks,
and have no words for the moonlit sky.

Dániel Péter Biró: *Mishpatim Part I* (2003)

In 2001, Dániel Péter Biró began to employ Hebrew number symbolism (gematria) for compositional means. As each letter in the Hebrew alphabet possesses a numerical value, gematria is the calculation of the numerical equivalence of letters, words, or phrases and, on that basis, the exploration of the interrelationship between words, ideas and, in this case, musical sounds. In this composition cycle he employed the Hebrew Bible text Mishpatim (or "Laws") Exodus Chapter 23, a set of laws that do not seem to be organized in any logical pattern. Writing first a piece for percussion, BeMitzraim (In Egypt), he created a system in which all of the sounds, rhythms, spoken words and numbers are determined by the Hebrew text and accompanying cantillation signs of the corresponding Hebrew Bible text. Out of this composition grew a larger work for solo percussion, voices and ensemble, the first movement of Mishpatim (Laws) Part 1. While the percussionist repeats the phrase "Do not oppress the Stranger: for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" the rest of the ensemble iterates the laws of the Biblical portion.

Text: *Mishpatim Part 1* from Book of Exodus 23:1 - 9:

Do not accept a false report. Do not join hands with the wicked to be a false witness.

Do not follow the majority to do evil. Do not respond with your opinion in a dispute and to lean toward one side. It must be decided by the majority.

Do not show favor to the poor in his dispute.

If you come across your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, bring it back to him.

If you see the donkey of your enemy lying under its burden, and you might not want to help him, but you should make every effort to help him.

Do not bend justice for the needy in his dispute.

Keep far away from anything false. Do not kill an innocent righteous man, for I will not acquit a wicked person.

Do not accept bribery, for bribery blinds the clear-sighted, and perverts the words of justice.

Do not oppress the stranger. You know the soul of the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Helmut Lachenmann: *Toccatina* (1986)

The diminutive title suits the scale of this piece, which plays for under five minutes, and also its sound, which is generally at a low level, drawing us into its fineness. A toccata is, etymologically, music of touch, and Lachenmann, ever the traditionalist, alludes to the term appropriately, while redefining how this touch takes place. Most of the sounds, high and featherlight, are produced by tapping on the strings with the screw at one end of the bow. To begin with, the left hand stays in one position, holding a chord whose notes subtly resonate after each tap; there are also occasional pizzicatos. Then the extremely delicate background harmony starts to change. Later still, the musician moves on to explore other parts of the instrument: the strings at the bridge and beyond, one of the tuning pegs, and the scroll. The end, however, makes a gentle return. Composed in 1986, *Toccatina* comes from a time when Lachenmann had moved on from the revolution of *temA* and *Pression* to retrieve aspects of older music, within the perspective he had gained, while the cherishing of small sounds, highly defined, can be found in his work from any period.

Chaya Czernowin: *While Liquid Amber* (2000)

In *While Liquid Amber* the flute is treated as an air pipe, capable of producing very raw and uncultured sounds: not lovely and divine sounding lines, but rather the breath as a direct forceful and primitive impulse leading to the utterance of sound.

This piece is structured as a set of six sections, each contains a subsection of longer breathing and a subsection of shorter breathing (beside the last section where there is only shorter breathing). As the piece progresses each section suggests a different avenue in the search from the pure breathing towards sound and further towards musical expression.

The musical expression that comes to being through this search, however, is still a direct manifest of the power of the breath itself in its rawness. The mechanics of the sound production of the flute are in this way not only a necessary part of the mechanics of music-making, but become the major force in motivating and inspiring the music.

John Cage: *Six Melodies* (1950)

Six Melodies is a collection of six pieces for violin and keyboard instrument. The work uses the gamut technique and the nested rhythmic proportions. First, a fixed number of sonorities (single tones, intervals and aggregates) is prepared, each created independently of the other. These sonorities are called gamuts. Sequences of gamuts are then used to create melodies with harmonic backgrounds that are in no way connected to functional harmony, which Cage sought to avoid. The music is very simple and its atmosphere similar to that of Cage's String Quartet in four parts. The structure of each piece, and that of each phrase, is defined by the same rhythmic pattern: 3 1/2, 3 1/2, 4, 4, 3, 4. The violinist is instructed in the score to play without vibrato and with minimum weight on the bow.

Luciano Berio: *O King* (1968)

Martin Luther King, the American pastor and civil-rights activist, was murdered in 1968. His death moved **Berio** the same year to write a short piece *in memorium*, its text consisting of the name King only. (That same year, *O King* became a movement of [Berio's] *Sinfonia*). The voice is treated as part of the ensemble (flute, B-flat clarinet, violin, cello, piano) until the very end. It floats above the sound which is only as it were "punctured" by piano *sforzati* until, at the close, the mezzo-soprano emerges from the ensemble with a brief lament.