



Thursday Evening, February 21, 2019 at 7:30
Hill Auditorium
Ann Arbor

IN PLAIN AIR
INTERNATIONAL
CONTEMPORARY
ENSEMBLE

with
James Kibbie / *Organ*
Tiffany Ng / *Carillon*
Phyllis Chen and Nathan Davis / *Composers*

RENEGHUE

34th Performance of the 140th Annual Season
56th Annual Chamber Arts Series

This evening's performance is supported by the Helmut F. and Candis J. Stern Endowment Fund and The Wallace Foundation.

Media partnership provided by WDET 101.9 FM, WGTE 91.3 FM, and *Metro Times*.

Special thanks to Matt Albert and the U-M Department of Chamber Music for their participation in events surrounding this evening's performance.

In consideration of the artists and the audience, please refrain from the use of electronic devices during the performance.

The photography, sound recording, or videotaping of this performance is prohibited.

PROGRAM

In Plain Air

Phyllis Chen

Floating Verses

For suspended music boxes

Chen

Rapunzel

For amplified music boxes

Nathan Davis

Bellarmonic

For recorded bells

Davis

Bellows

For unvoiced air

Chen

Organ Pulses

For solo horn and organ

Davis

Inside Voice

For ensemble and electronics

Davis

Pistons & Divisions

For Indian harmonium and organ

Chen

Field Gaze

For toy horn ensemble and organ

Davis

Terz, Quinte & Cymbelstern

For percussion and organ

Davis

Dulcian & Bombarde

For contrabassoon and organ

Chen

From High Windows

For music box and organ

Chen

When Breath Becomes Air

For organ whistles, bassoon, clarinet, and percussion

Davis

The Proof Notes

For ensemble and organ

Davis

Bellarmonic

For carillon and sampler; heard outside of Hill Auditorium, from the Charles Baird Carillon

IN PLAIN AIR

As Christ Church Philadelphia installed its C.B. Fisk pipe organ — the latest in a 300-year history of grand church organs within the space — it invited members of the acclaimed International Contemporary Ensemble to inaugurate the new instrument with a program of original compositions. Composers Phyllis Chen (known for her work with hand-wound music boxes and toy pianos) and Nathan Davis (a percussionist fascinated by the mechanics of instruments) immersed themselves in the sound-making possibilities of the church's organ, bells, and open spaces, as well as the history and public role of the venerable institution.

The resulting multi-movement program unites the historic bell tolls of “The Nation’s Church,” the majesty of the intricately constructed organ, and the Ensemble’s characteristic focus on place and community into a one-of-a-kind sonic experience — a worthy welcome to an instrument that will continue to ring in the ears of visitors for the next 300 years. The evolution of *In Plain Air* will encompass other communities, other organs, and the unique dynamics of every new setting where the piece is performed. The International Contemporary Ensemble looks forward to discovering the piece in the brilliant acoustics and imposing atmosphere of Hill Auditorium here at the University of Michigan, in the middle of a vibrant campus.

FLOATING VERSES

For suspended music boxes

Phyllis Chen

Phyllis Chen / *Suspended music boxes*

This piece features music box strips created in collaboration with over 150 community members during a July 2018 workshop at Philadelphia's Magic Gardens. The strips are fed into hand-cranked music boxes that are amplified from within. The resulting sounds are determined by the holes punched in the strips, but also the result of chance; the music box produces a collection of corresponding pitches that the community members could not have exactly imagined.

RAPUNZEL

For amplified music boxes

Chen

Phyllis Chen / *Music boxes*

Beginning in July 2017, ICE made regular visits to Christ Church Philadelphia to witness the different phases of their new organ being assembled until its completion. During a visit in November, we were shown a close-up view of this incredibly sophisticated mechanical instrument. I've been composing and performing with custom made hand-cranked music boxes for many years and I saw the coincidental overlap of these two mechanical instruments as a place of inspiration. On one hand, the music box is very limited in register and timbre. It is very small and makes a beautifully plucked sound. The organ, on the other hand, is a grand instrument with incredible sustain power and so many timbral possibilities.

—Phyllis Chen

BELLARMONIC

For recorded bells

Nathan Davis

Nathan Davis and Levy Lorenzo / *Diffusion*

In November 2017 I made detailed, close-mic'ed recordings and samples of the 11 bells in the Christ Church belfry with the help of my ICE colleagues, including sustained and scraped sounds that aren't dependent on the single attack of a bell clapper. With these materials I wished to give the audience the rare and extraordinary experience of hearing these historic instruments as they actually sound in the belfry, rather than at a distance. In writing this piece, I also wanted to create a virtual realization of the "Bellarmonic," an instrument which was theorized and prototyped by [Christ Church parishioner, composer, and signer of the Declaration of Independence] Francis Hopkinson, building on Benjamin Franklin's glass "armonica."

—Nathan Davis

BELLOWS

For unvoiced air

Davis

Levy Lorenzo / *Sampler*

Bellows uses the pneumatic system of the organ without the pipes, offering the performer air sounds and the thumps of changing pistons as fodder for an improvisation.

—Nathan Davis

ORGAN PULSES

For solo horn and organ

Chen

Nicolee Kuester / *Horn*

James Kibbie / *Organ*

During our first visit to Christ Church Philadelphia, the old organ had been gutted out of the sanctuary leaving a hole where the new Fisk organ was to be installed. The site was unusual as the organ is often considered the heart of a church's sanctuary. *Organ Pulses* uses only the pedal stops that include 16' and 32' pipes in order to create physical beatings in the church with the

sound of the horn. I was making regular visits to an Eastern medicine doctor that would take my pulse for nearly 10 minutes at the start of each visit. This mysterious process gave him detailed information on the well-being of my vital body organs. Only later did I learn that there are over 100 different classical classifications to describe organ pulses, such as stringy, floating, slippery, taut, lazy, etc, all revealed through subtle differences in my pulse character. This ancient practice of pulse reading became the impetus for this work.

—Phyllis Chen

INSIDE VOICE

For ensemble and electronics

Davis

Inside Voice was inspired by the Fisk organ at Christ Church Philadelphia in a transitional state of becoming. During an early visit to work with it during installation, many of the ranks were in place, but some were not. Therefore, the keys would always produce air through the system of hoses, but when certain stops were engaged (those with no pipes installed) they produced only filtered white noise. It is a wonderful sound, but one that is not playable on the finished organ. Instead, the members of ICE, using their instruments to produce air sounds, form a metaphoric human bellows that is played using virtual valves created electronically. A glimpse inside the workings of a living instrument, this was a moment that will not happen again — or at least not until 300 years from now when this organ is in an advanced state of decay.

—Nathan Davis

PISTONS & DIVISIONS

For Indian harmonium and organ

Davis

Jacob Greenberg / *Indian harmonium*

James Kibbie / *Organ*

Pistons & Divisions is a toccata that reveals the huge color range of the organ by using virtuosic counterpoint amongst the manuals and using the pistons to activate new groups of stops for each measure, all the while maintaining a slow harmonic motion. The use of the Indian harmonium as an echo inverts the organ's frequent role as an accompanying instrument.

—Nathan Davis

FIELD GAZE

For toy horn ensemble and organ

Chen

James Kibbie / *Organ*

Field Gaze is another toccata with a different accompanying instrument: the toy horn, played by the entire ensemble. This is a festive piece that shows the simpler side of the complex organ, reminding that an organ is, after all, air blown through pipes.

TERZ, QUINTE & CYMBELSTERN

For percussion and organ

Davis

Ross Karre / *Percussion*

James Kibbie / *Organ*

The *terz* and *quinte* are two organ stops that are so high (up to a full octave above the range of the piano) that they are normally heard only in combination with lower stops in order to create upper partials. This movement uses these very high frequencies alone and together with very high chimes and crotales that share them, a reference to the *cymbelstern* stop (which mechanically plays small bells as part of some organs). By isolating this extraordinary capability of the organ, we are also able to temporarily recalibrate our ears to this vertiginous realm.

—*Nathan Davis*

DULCIAN & BOMBARDE

For contrabassoon and organ

Davis

Rebekah Heller / *Contrabassoon*

James Kibbie / *Organ*

The *dulcian* and *bombarde* stops take their names from predecessors to the bassoon, making them a natural complement and competitor to the contrabassoon. Measuring in at 16' 8", the contrabassoon has a lower fundamental than all but the 32' organ pipes, making for a colorful race to the bottom.

—*Nathan Davis*

FROM HIGH WINDOWS

For music box and organ

Chen

Phyllis Chen / *Solo music box*

James Kibbie / *Organ*

From High Windows was written with the image of cranking the music box strip from one of Christ Church's iconic open windows. The clear windows have signified the open exchange between the church and the outside community. *From High Windows* musically bridges the outside world of music boxes and brings it into the sanctuary.

WHEN BREATH BECOMES AIR

For organ whistles, bassoon, clarinet, and percussion

Chen

Rebekah Heller / *Bassoon*

Joshua Rubin / *Clarinet*

Ross Karre / *Percussion*

James Kibbie / *Organ*

While touring the innards of the organ, we saw the various sizes and materials used in creating the pipe whistles. Many of the pipe whistles were small enough to make a sound by blowing in them. I decided to create a miniature mobile organ by making small pipe whistles that ICE would use to perform. I collaborated with a longtime collaborator, Ranjit Bhatnagar, to design these whistles that were later assembled with students from the Philadelphia Charter High School of Architecture and Design. 15 of these pipe whistles that were assembled during our workshop became this mobile organ. *When Breath Becomes Air* is named after Paul Kalanithi's memoir. The delicate line when air becomes proof of something living has been a preoccupation of mine throughout this project.

—Phyllis Chen

THE PROOF NOTES

For ensemble and organ

Davis

James Kibbie / *Organ*

The Proof Notes is inspired by Francis Hopkinson's preface to a 1788 collection of his songs: his process of tuning the harpsichord in perfect fifths and checking major thirds as "proof notes" — which is essentially a quick approach to meantone temperament. I expanded his sequence by fleshing out implied harmonies and articulating more partials to create a slowly modulating chorale.
—*Nathan Davis*

BELLARMONIC

For carillon and sampler

Davis

Tiffany Ng / *Carillon and Sampler*

Bellarmonic will be performed on the Charles Baird Carillon in Burton Memorial Tower outside of Hill Auditorium as audience members exit this evening's performance.

Notes by Ms. Chen and Mr. Davis are excerpted from interviews with Christopher Munden and Allyssa Kerper for the FringeArts blog, July 2, 2018 and September 19, 2018. Additional notes by Abigail Guay and Jacob Greenberg.

INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY ENSEMBLE

Performers

Joshua Rubin / *Clarinets*

Ryan Muncy / *Saxophones*

Rebekah Heller / *Bassoons*

Nicolee Kuester / *Horn*

Mike Lormand / *Trombone*

Daniel Lippel / *Guitars*

Bridget Kibbey / *Harp*

Ross Karre and Levy Lorenzo / *Percussion, Electronics*

Nathan Davis / *Hammered Dulcimer, Electronics*

Jacob Greenberg / *Indian Harmonium, Keyboard*

Phyllis Chen / *Music Boxes, Registrant*

Randy Zigler / *Double Bass*

Creative and Production Team

Maciej Lewandowski / *Assistant Production Designer and Fabricator*

Ross Karre / *Lead Production Designer*

Nathan Davis / *Composer and Production Designer*

Phyllis Chen / *Composer and Production Designer*

Levy Lorenzo / *Technical Director and Designer*

Ranjit Bhatnagar / *Whistle Fabricator and Designer*

Rob Dietz / *Birdhouse Fabricator and Designer*

Abigail Guay / *Lead Producer*

Sarah Gladwin Camp / *In Plain Air Project Manager*

The International Contemporary Ensemble gives special thanks to Nuiko Wadden, Greg Chudzik, Vasko Dukovski, Rebekah Heller, and David Byrd-Marrow.

The electronics for *Inside Voice* were developed at GMEM Marseille with the assistance of Monica Gil Giraldo, during Nathan Davis's residency at the Camargo Foundation.

In Plain Air was commissioned by Christ Church Preservation Trust for the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE) and Parker Kitterman. Original support for *In Plain Air* was provided by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, Philadelphia.



ARTISTS

Phyllis Chen (*composer*) is a pianist, toy pianist, composer, educator, and curator, whose musical interests have led in numerous directions as a soloist and collaborative artist. She is dedicated to performing and promoting new works to engage audiences in concerts and educational programs. Described as “a dazzling performer who wrings novel sounds from the humble toy piano,” (*New York Times*) and “a bold pianist with an excellent sense of color” (*Los Angeles Times*), Ms. Chen is the founder of the UnCaged Toy Piano, an annual toy piano composition competition and biennial festival in New York. As a composer, she has received commissions and grants from the Singapore International Festival of the Arts, Fromm Music Foundation, NYSCA, New Music USA, Baryshnikov Arts Center, A Far Cry, Opera Cabal, and others. Ms. Chen has released five albums, including three solo albums. Her fifth album, *Nature of Thingness* (Starkland), featuring chamber works by Ms. Chen and Nathan Davis, won the 2016 Independent Music Award for “Best Contemporary Classical Album.”

Nathan Davis (*composer*) “writes music that deals deftly and poetically with timbre and sonority” (*New York Times*). His opera/ballet *Hagoromo* premiered at the BAM Next Wave Festival produced by American Opera Projects, and Lincoln Center inaugurated its Tully Scope Festival with the premiere of *Bells*, a site-specific, electroacoustic piece for ensemble, multi-channel audio, and live broadcast to audience members’ mobile phones. Mr. Davis has received commissions from ICE and its members, Donaueschinger Musiktage,

Steven Schick, Miller Theatre, Ojai Music Festival, the Calder Quartet, Third Coast Percussion, and Yarn/Wire, with premieres at Tanglewood, Park Avenue Armory, and Carnegie Hall.

The 2018 Aaron Copland Fellow at the Bogliasco Foundation, Mr. Davis has received awards and fellowships from the Camargo Foundation, Meet The Composer, Fromm Music Foundation, Jerome Foundation, American Music Center, MATA, and ASCAP. He and Phyllis Chen won a New York Innovative Theater Award for their score to Sylvia Milo’s play *The Other Mozart*. After serving on the faculty of Dartmouth College for eight years, Mr. Davis teaches composition and electronic music at Montclair State University. An active percussionist, he performs with International Contemporary Ensemble; appeared as a concerto soloist with the Seattle Symphony, Tokyo Symphony, and Nagoya Philharmonic; and has toured Russia, Bali, Turkey, and Cuba.

The International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE) is an artist collective that is transforming the way music is created and experienced. As performer, curator, and educator, ICE explores how new music intersects with communities across the world. The ensemble’s 35 members are featured as soloists, chamber musicians, commissioners, and collaborators with the foremost musical artists of our time. Works by emerging composers have anchored ICE’s programming since its founding in 2001, and the group’s recordings and digital platforms highlight the many voices that weave music’s present.

A recipient of the American Music Center’s Trailblazer Award and the

Chamber Music America/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming, ICE was also named the 2014 Musical America “Ensemble of the Year.” The group currently serves as artists-in-residence at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts’ Mostly Mozart Festival, and previously led a five-year residency at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. ICE was featured at the Ojai Music Festival from 2015–17, and at recent festivals abroad such as gmem-CNCM-marseille and Vértice at Cultura UNAM in Mexico City. Other performance stages have included the Park Avenue Armory, The Stone, ice floes at Greenland’s Diskotek Sessions, and boats on the Amazon River.

New initiatives include OpenICE, made possible with lead funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which offers free concerts and related programming wherever ICE performs, and enables a working process with composers to unfold in public settings. DigitICE, a free online library of over 350 streaming videos, catalogues the ensemble’s performances. ICE’s First Page program is a commissioning consortium that fosters close collaborations between performers, composers, and listeners as new music is developed. ICEcommons is a crowdsourced online index of the works of emerging, established, published, and unpublished composers. EntICE, a side-by-side education program, places ICE musicians within youth orchestras as they premiere new commissioned works together; inaugural EntICE partners include Youth Orchestra Los Angeles and The People’s Music School in Chicago. ICE’s summer activities include Ensemble Evolution at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, in which young professionals perform

with ICE and attend workshops on topics from interpretation to concert production. Yamaha Artist Services New York is the exclusive piano provider for ICE. For more information, please visit iceorg.org.

James Kibbie (*organ*) is professor and chair of the organ department and university organist at the University of Michigan. He also maintains a full schedule of concert, recording, and festival engagements throughout North America and Europe, including appearances at the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, Royal Festival Hall in London, Dvořák Hall in Prague, and Lincoln Center in New York. During Mr. Kibbie’s month-long concert tour of the Soviet Union in 1991, *Pravda* hailed him as “a marvelous organist, a brilliant interpreter.” A frequent jury member of international organ competitions, he has himself been awarded the Grand Prix d’Interprétation at the prestigious International Organ Competition of Chartres, France, and is also the only American to have won the International Organ Competition of the Prague Spring Festival in Czechoslovakia. Mr. Kibbie’s performances have been broadcast on radio and television in the US, Canada, and Europe. He is internationally renowned as an authority on the organ music of Johann Sebastian Bach. He has performed the complete cycle of Bach organ works in a series of 18 recitals and is in constant demand as a Bach recitalist and clinician. Among the honors he has received, Mr. Kibbie is particularly proud of the James Kibbie Scholarship, endowed in 2004 by former students, family, and friends to support students majoring in organ performance and church music.

Tiffany Ng (*carillon*) is an assistant professor of carillon and university carillonist at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. An energetic advocate of contemporary music, she has premiered or revived two dozen pieces by emerging and established composers from Ken Ueno to Kaikhosru Sorabji; pioneered models for interactive “crowdsourced” carillon performances and environmental data-driven sound installations with Greg Niemeyer, Chris Chafe, Ed Campion, and Ken Goldberg; and through her composer collaborations significantly increased the American repertoire for carillon and electronics. Her concert career has taken her to festivals in a dozen countries in Europe, Asia, and North America, including Berkeley’s 2015 Campanile Centennial, Stanford’s 2014 CCRMA anniversary festival, the 23rd International Carillon Festival at Bok Tower Gardens, Florida, the 2014 International Carillon Festival Barcelona, and the 2008 Post-Congress Festival of the World Carillon Federation. At U-M, she is a faculty affiliate in the LSA Digital Studies program. She has performed pre-concert music for UMS performances since joining U-M as assistant professor of carillon and university carillonist in 2015.

UMS ARCHIVES

This evening's performance marks the **International Contemporary Ensemble's** second appearance under UMS auspices, following its UMS debut in a pop-up performance last fall in October 2018 at Ypsilanti Freight House. Organist **James Kibbie** makes his second UMS appearance this evening, following his UMS debut in January 2013 in Hill Auditorium with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and UMS Choral Union under the baton of Leonard Slatkin. UMS welcomes carillonneur **Tiffany Ng** as she makes her UMS debut tonight.

TONIGHT'S VICTOR FOR UMS:



Helmut F. & Candis J. Stern Endowment Fund

Supporter of this evening's performance by the International Contemporary Ensemble.

MAY WE ALSO RECOMMEND...

- 3/12–13 Philharmonia Orchestra
- 3/15–16 *Triptych: Eyes of One on Another* (world premiere)
- 4/7 Takács Quartet with Anthony McGill

Tickets available at www.ums.org.

ON THE EDUCATION HORIZON...

- 3/13 Philharmonia Orchestra Work-in-Progress Workshop:
Dreamers by Jimmy Lopez and Nilo Cruz
(Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University Avenue, 4:30 pm)
- 3/14 Penny Stamps Distinguished Speaker Series:
The Creative Team of *Triptych (Eyes of One on Another)*
(Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty Street, 5:10 pm)
- 3/15 *Triptych (Eyes of One on Another)* Pre-Show Talk:
Richard Meyer on Robert Mapplethorpe
(U-M Institute for the Humanities, 202 S. Thayer Street, 6:00 pm)
- 3/15 & 3/16 Post-Performance Q&A: *Triptych (Eyes of One on Another)*
(Power Center)
Must have a ticket to that evening's performance of Triptych (Eyes of One on Another) to attend.

Educational events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.