

21C Music Festival 2014

After Hours #1

Friday, May 23, 2014 at 10:00 pm

Conservatory Theatre

Trichy Sankaran, mrdangam

21C Ensemble

Luri Lee, violin

Hezekiah Leung, viola

Jonathon Lo, cello

Tim Crouch, flute

Mike Dassios, clarinet

Gurpreet Chana, tabla

PROGRAM

Trichy Sankaran: *Hamsa* (world premiere commissioned by The Royal Conservatory)

Gurpreet Chana: Various new works as part of *TABLIX: Tabla, Melody & Electronics* (world premiere)

[Trichy Sankaran](#)

[Gurpreet Chana](#)

After Hours #2

Saturday, May 24, 2014 at 10:00 pm

Conservatory Theatre

Susan Hoepfner, flute

Leslie Newman, flute

Gordon Wolfe, trombone

Pacifica Quartet

Simin Ganatra, violin

Sibbi Bernhardsson, violin

Masumi Per Rostad, viola

Brandon Vamos, cello

PROGRAM

Andrew Staniland: *Flute vs Flute* (Toronto premiere)

Michael Colgrass: *Mystic with a Credit Card*

Shulamit Ran: String Quartet No. 3 – *GLITTER, DOOM, SHARDS, MEMORY*

I. That which happened

II. Menace

III. "If I must perish – do not let my paintings die," Felix Nussbaum (1904-1944)

IV. Shards, Memory

(world premiere commissioned in partnership between the Music Accord consortium, Wigmore Hall, and Suntory Hall)

Andrew Staniland

Flute vs Flute (aka. Flute vs Tape)

Flute vs Flute was originally conceived as a capricious flute duet, or perhaps even a flute contest. After the acoustic duet was composed, I created *Flute vs Tape*, an arrangement of the work for single flute, with the 2nd flute part realized as a fixed electronic "tape" track (we do not use tape anymore, but rather digital soundfiles, but the name persists). The acoustic version is written to be virtuosic, light, capricious, competitive, and fun, meant to stand in contrast with the reams upon reams of contemporary art music is perhaps too often devoid of these traits. The fixed electronics embrace this same approach and perhaps even maximize it. I use many vivacious tools in the composition of the tape, including sampling of extended techniques, gritty hip hop drum beats, electric guitar (my own instrument), and bodhran drum, an instrument nearly synonymous with the place of my current residence, Newfoundland. *Flute vs Tape* was commissioned by and dedicated to Marie-Helene Brault.

- Andrew Staniland

Michael Colgrass

Mystic with a Credit Card

Mystic with a Credit Card is an excerpt from my brass quintet, *Flashbacks*, commissioned by the Canadian Brass in 1978 and premiered by them at Tully Hall in New York on February 6, 1979.

In *Flashbacks* I attempt to feature each of the quintet members in a way that fits the nature of their instrument. This excerpt for trombone features the instrument's broad emotional scope, which spans from gently expressive to barbaric. *Mystic with a Credit Card* gives the soloist a chance to demonstrate this range of qualities in a theatrical context. As well as playing, the trombone player speaks to the audience in an almost confessional way about feeling lost in a fast-changing multi-cultural society. I express this idea musically by showing the close stylistic relationship between East Indian music and Western blues, where the

two styles can at times sound so similar that the stylistic identity of each becomes blurred. This mosaic of styles represents the blend of the divergent cultures in the soloist, whose feelings are never quite resolved. - Michael Colgrass

Shulamit Ran

String Quartet No. 3 – GLITTER, DOOM, SHARDS, MEMORY

My third string quartet was composed at the invitation of the Pacifica Quartet, whose music-making I have come to know closely and admire hugely as resident artists at the University of Chicago. Already in our early conversations, Pacifica proposed that this quartet might, in some manner, refer to the visual arts as a point of germination. Probing further, I found out that the quartet members had special interest in art created during the earlier part of the 20th century, perhaps between the two world wars.

It was my good fortune to have met, a short while later, while in residence at the American Academy in Rome in the fall of 2011, art conservationist Albert Albano who steered me to the work of Felix Nussbaum (1904-1944), a German-Jewish painter who, like so many others, perished in the Holocaust at a young age, and who left some powerful, deeply moving art that spoke to the life that was unraveling around him.

The title of my string quartet takes its inspiration from a major exhibit devoted to art by German artists of the period of the Weimar Republic (1919-1933) titled “Glitter and Doom: German Portraits from the 1920s,” first shown at New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2006-07. Nussbaum would have been a bit too young to be included in this exhibit. His most noteworthy art was created in the last very few years of his short life. The exhibit’s evocative title, however, suggested to me the idea of “Glitter, Doom, Shards, Memory” as a way of framing a possible musical composition that would be an homage to his life and art, and to that of so many others like him during that era. Knowing that their days were numbered, yet intent on leaving a mark, a legacy, a memory, their art is triumph of the human spirit over annihilation.

Parallel to my wish to compose a string quartet that, typically for this genre, would exist as “pure music,” independent of a narrative, was my desire to effect an awareness in my listener of matters which are, to me, of great human concern. To my mind, there is no contradiction between the two goals. As in several other works composed since 1969, this is my way of saying ‘do not forget,’ something that, I believe, can be done through music with special power and poignancy.

The individual titles of the quartet’s four movements give an indication of some of the emotional strands this work explores.

1) “That which happened” (*das was geschah*) – is how the poet Paul Celan referred to the Shoah – the Holocaust. These simple words served for me, in the first movement, as a metaphor for the way in which an “ordinary” life, with its daily flow and its sense of sweet normalcy, was shockingly, inhumanely, inexplicably shattered.

2) “Menace” is a shorter movement, mimicking a Scherzo. It is also machine-like, incessant, with an occasional, recurring, waltz-like little tune – perhaps the chilling grimace we recognize from the executioner’s guillotine mask. Like the death machine it alludes to, it gathers momentum as it goes, and is unstoppable.

3) “If I perish - do not let my paintings die”; these words are by Felix Nussbaum who, knowing what was ahead, nonetheless continued painting till his death in Auschwitz in 1944. If the heart of the first movement is the shuddering interruption of life as we know it, the third movement tries to capture something of what I can only imagine to be the conflicting states of mind that would have made it possible, and essential, to continue to live and practice one’s art – bearing witness to the events. Creating must have been, for Nussbaum and for so many others, a way of maintaining sanity, both a struggle and a catharsis – an act of defiance and salvation all at the same time.

4) “Shards, Memory” is a direct reference to my quartet’s title. Only shards are left. And memory. The memory is of things large and small, of unspeakable tragedy, but also of the song and the dance, the smile, the hopes. All things human. As we remember, in the face of death’s silence, we restore dignity to those who are gone. - Shulamit Ran

Susan Hoepfner

Leslie Newman

Pacifica Quartet

Gordon Wolfe