

Liz Pearse

Soprano

assisted by

Amanda DeBoer Bartlett, soprano

Kayleigh Butcher, mezzo-soprano

from the studio of Dr. Jane Schoonmaker Rodgers

– program –

Bone Needles (2006)

Gilda Lyons

(b.1975)

Earth Ascending (2000)

I. Earth-body, Light-body

II. Wringcliff Beach

III. Pool

Elainie Lillios

(b. 1968)

Shoshana (2015)

David Reminick

(b. 1979)

– intermission –

From the Grammar of Dreams (1988)

Kaija Saariaho

(b. 1952)

Philomel (1964)

Milton Babbitt

(1916-2011)

Chanting Atmospheres (2013)

Monte Weber

(b. 1991)

Sunday, March 19, 2017

8 p.m.

Bryan Recital Hall

Moore Musical Arts Center

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

“A collection of abstract vocal sounds, **Bone Needles** is fueled by the possibilities for direct communication between two voices even without words. Markings within the score (“summoning” “weaving” and “casting off”) guide an exchange that I imagined after watching a group of women in Nicaragua repairing nets on the beach with long needles made from fish bones.

After a thin, sharp object – which might very well have been one of their bone needles – pierced my foot on that same trip, the image of their sewing took on a richer meaning: as they continued to mend their nets, I was at work mending in a different way. In *Bone Needles*, I explore the way in which two voices might mend together, working and weaving, driven by an inward focus that manifests itself in an outward musical expression.”

-Gilda Lyons

Gilda Lyons (b. 1975), composer, vocalist, and visual artist, combines elements of renaissance, neo-baroque, spectral, folk, agitprop Music Theater, and extended vocalism to create works of uncompromising emotional honesty and melodic beauty.

The premiere of *A New Kind of Fallout*—Lyons’ mainstage opera inspired by the life and work of Rachel Carson, written with librettist Tammy Ryan, and commissioned by Opera Theater of Pittsburgh—was described as “powerfully effective” (Pittsburgh Stage Magazine), “haunting” (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette) and “spot-on at re-creating the atmosphere of the early '60s” (Pittsburgh Tribune-Review).

As composer, current recording projects include the release of Lyons’ work by Quince and entelechron in the upcoming season. Lyons’ vocal collaboration with Laura Ward will be released on Lyric Fest’s all-Hagen CD. Sing for Hope featured Lyons’ *Hold On* on their most recent release, *An AIDS Quilt Songbook*. Lindsey Goodman’s tour de force performance of Lyons’ *Chrysalis* was released on Goodman’s debut CD, *reach through the sky*. As composer and vocalist her works and performances are available on the Clarion, GPR Records, Naxos, New Dynamic Records, and Roven Records labels. (gildalyons.com)

“**Earth Ascending** is a composition in three movements scored for female voice, electroacoustic music, and video. Written in 2000, *Earth Ascending* lasts approximately 16 minutes, including time between movements. This composition was created specifically for live performance in which all three elements combine to create an sonic and visual environment. As such, no single element has greater importance than any other, with each of the three performing forces assuming a foreground role at different times throughout the duration of the work.”

-Elainie Lillios

Text:

I. Earth-body, Light-body

I have an earth body that is water and blood currents that flutter in nerve and stir,

cells that thrum with wings. I have another body as real, body of rain of wind a body of light.
It is my sun body my light body.

It moves like a water fall, over the rocks of me, running over the tumble of stones, and up the cliffs of
me, my earth body, outside me, around me, shining and streaming with light.

My light body, Tarot Ishtar inside and outside my earth body flows between us like a woven cable
an umbilical of light, from my heart center to your heart center and through eyes and our fingers
weaving its pattern in air.

II. Wringcliff Beach

Rain sheen on cobalt-blue, salt blue boulders shine of slate grey sea brink pebbles,
grinding and rounding to sand ground under tumbled monolithons piled and pitted,
slipped into rain pocked pools and stacked, fallen back rocks wet shoulders, ours
we name the nameless mothers of stone and substance, up from the under song, undertow
Long slow undertones of things.

We whom you do not see but sense in the blood tide rising we, in the wide of the bay cloud,
grey in sweeping with the sea rain, up seething in the dim brown surge of salt wave,
converge on shingle, ascending into char black blue black swart rock cliff,
drop upwards to the nesting levels of the white wing borne light gull riders of the vortical wind towers
here resting in your secret ledges we speak your fledgling name, kindling under wind weary brood
feathers the passion that will burn your char darkness purple and warm red again, warming to yourself,
your name new on your tongue feel us flooding up earth blood brown, rising in you through grit spark
sheer sand glint, heave and roll over and up onto rich cliff grass, brilliant moist moss shine green
in the mist rain then bursting, bursting into wild bracken flame orange and pale gold bush fire wide
warm
wild fire, fire we are burning in you fireself beacon.

III. Pool

I have been this way before, the path jarring across hot rocks, edges falling in a dusty scramble
high cracks hung dry with rasps of plant; the light too bright, memory of yesterday's waves engraved
in hard sand lines. I knew the midday tricks of sunlight, sparkling a glint of water out of air.
I have been this way before.

Today the hard rocks opened on a pool salt green and deep as any fantasy.

The water fits close. The weed fronds cling feathering against bare skin. The light floats silver wet as the opal silk of oyster shells.

This is the touch my skin was aching for, this is the place I never dared to dream.

Acclaimed as one of the “contemporary masters of the medium” by MIT Press’s Computer Music Journal, electroacoustic composer **Elainie Lillios** creates works that reflect her fascination with listening, sound, space, time, immersion and anecdote. Her compositions include stereo, multi channel, and Ambisonic fixed media works, instrument(s) with live interactive electronics, collaborative experimental audio/visual animations, and installations.

Her work has been recognized internationally and nationally through awards including a 2013-14 Fulbright Award, First Prize in the Concours Internationale de Bourges, Areon Flutes International Composition Competition, Electroacoustic Piano International Competition, and Medea Electronique “Saxotronics” Competition, and Second Prize in the Destellos International Electroacoustic Competition. She has also received awards from the Concurso Internacional de Música Electroacústica de São Paulo, Concurso Internazionale Russolo, Pierre Schaeffer Competition, and La Muse en Circuit. She has received grants/commissions from INA/GRM, Réseaux, International Computer Music Association, La Muse en Circuit, NAISA, ASCAP/SEAMUS, LSU’s Center for Computation and Technology, Sonic Arts Research Centre, Ohio Arts Council, and National Foundation for the Advancement of the Arts. She has been a special guest at the Groupe de Recherche Musicales, Rien à Voir, festival l’espace du son, June in Buffalo, and at other locations in the United States and abroad.

Written for singer Rachel Calloway as part of the Cortona Summer Sessions, *Shoshana* is a compact, mercurial gem, and an excellent addition to the unaccompanied-singer repertoire. Here, composer David Reminick sets two texts by his wife, poet and activist Gabriela Zapata-Alma. “Spina” uses oft-changing meter and dynamic range in subtle ways - the voice sometimes sounds as if it’s a recording played in reverse. In “Petal”, the text merrily trips along through the rhythmic punctuation of whistling (both ingressive and egressive), audible breathing, and percussive articulation. Like many of Dave’s pieces - though devilishly difficult to execute, this piece is simply delightful to perform.

I. Spina

Needle flesh, so that none may nibble
Without knowing the pain of warmth.
Desert-deserted, left looking, longing
For that wet navel that rests amongst four.
Fear and loneliness, companions mine
Sharp points borne out of a sandy eye

Sky without cloud, through fragrance swirls
Invite soft maiden fingers-plucking me home.

II. Petalo

Roza-oh! Caressing your china bone cheek
Slowly rolls a hot thing, splashing amidst love's
Sanguine lessons. Layered, folding deep
And dank-let ten and three part
As maiden blush and flowing sea
Revealing one canvas, sand skin cheek
Coyly calling, through fragrant sighs
When smelt, brings the soul to paradise

With his music described as “bracing, original, and often jaw-dropping” (New Music Box), composer **David Reminick** brings a rigorous and frequently hyper-kinetic approach to contemporary classical music – and a cogent and structurally complex approach to his post-punk endeavors. As a dedicated composer in the Chicago new music scene and the singer/guitarist for the post-punk band Paper Mice, David’s writing doesn’t so much blur the perceived boundaries between genres as augment and exchange the virtues and idiosyncrasies of each. In his relatively concise career as a new music composer, David includes such notable groups as the International Contemporary Ensemble, Ensemble Recherche, Ensemble Dal Niente, the Spektral Quartet, Quince Contemporary Vocal Ensemble, Ogni Suono, the Anubis Quartet, the H2 Quartet, Tim Munro, Marcus Weiss, Wild and Wulliman, Weston Olencki, Andy Costello, and the New York Miniaturist Ensemble in his inventory of commissions and collaborators. As the frontman for Paper Mice, which enjoys a robust underground following in Chicago and beyond, he was instrumental in the creation of the band’s 2012 album, *The Funny Papers*, which was released on the notorious San Diego label Three One G. An accomplished performer and improviser, David was the founding saxophonist for the path-carving International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE). His piece for singing string quartet, *The Ancestral Mousetrap* (2014), was released by the Spektral Quartet on the Sono Luminus label in January of 2016. The album was nominated for the Grammy award for Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance.

On *From the Grammar of Dreams*:

“The texts used in this piece come from two books by Sylvia Plath: there are excerpts of her only novel, *The Bell Jar*, and fragments of the poem "Paralytic" from the poetry collection *Ariel*. The texts are strong, dealing with life and death, escaping into madness, self-destruction and the fight against it. Nevertheless, the piece includes an evolution: the painful nightmare ends in daylight and life.

The emotional context of these texts, powerful in the extreme, led me to look for strict rules of musical organization, to contrast the emotional power.

However, these rules do not always proceed in a rational or combinatorial thinking, but rather in the manner of our dreams, where thoughts are transformed into visual images with their colours, juxtapositions, movements and directions. I have sought to operate in the same way by opening the text with two voices, and creating with

them five different soundscapes.” - Kaija Saariaho

Sylvia Plath texts

“Paralytic”

From *The Bell Jar*

It happens. Will it go on? ——

My mind a rock,

No fingers to grip, no tongue,

My god the iron lung

That loves me, pumps

“A bad dream.

My two

Dust bags in and out,

Will not

Let me relapse

While the day outside glides by like ticker tape.

The night brings violets,

Tapestries of eyes,

Lights,

The soft anonymous

Talkers: 'You all right?'

The starched, inaccessible breast.

I remembered everything.

Dead egg, I lie

I remembered the cadavers of Doreen

Whole

On a whole world I cannot touch,

and the story of the fig tree

At the white, tight

and Marco's diamond

Drum of my sleeping couch

Photographs visit me-

and the sailor on the Common

My wife, dead and flat, in 1920 furs,

Mouth full of pearls,

and Doctor Gordon's wall-eyed nurse

Two girls
As flat as she, who whisper 'We're your daughters.'
The still waters
Wrap my lips,

and the broken thermometers
and the Negro with his two kinds of beans...and
the rock that bulged between sky and sea like a
gray skull.

Eyes, nose and ears,
A clear
Cellophane I cannot crack.
On my bare back

Maybe forgetfulness, like a kind of snow, should
numb and cover them.

I smile, a buddha, all
Wants, desire
Falling from me like rings
Hugging their lights.

But they were part of me.
They were my landscape.”

The claw
Of the magnolia,
Drunk on its own scents,
Asks nothing of life.

“I thought I would swim out until I was too tired
to swim back. As I paddled on, my heartbeat
boomed like a dull motor in my ears.
I am, I am, I am.”

“I took a deep breath and listened to the old
brag of my heart.
I am, I am, I am.”

Kaija Saariaho is a prominent member of a group of Finnish composers and performers who are now, in mid-career, making a worldwide impact. Born in Helsinki in 1952, she studied at the Sibelius Academy there with the pioneering modernist Paavo Heininen and, with Magnus Lindberg and others, she founded the progressive ‘Ears Open’ group. She continued her studies in Freiburg with Brian Ferneyhough and Klaus Huber, at the Darmstadt summer courses, and, from 1982, at the IRCAM research institute in Paris – the city which has been most of the time her home ever since.

At IRCAM, Saariaho developed techniques of computer-assisted composition and acquired fluency in working on tape and with live electronics. This experience influenced her approach to writing for orchestra, with its emphasis on the shaping of dense masses of sound in slow transformations. Significantly, her first orchestral

piece, *Verblendungen* (1984), involves a gradual exchange of roles and character between orchestra and tape. And even the titles of her next, linked, pair of orchestral works, *Du Cristal* (1989) and *...à la Fumée* (1990) – the latter with solo alto flute and cello, and both with live electronics – suggest their preoccupation with colour and texture.

Before coming to work at IRCAM, Saariaho learned to know the French ‘spectralist’ composers, whose techniques are based on computer analysis of the sound-spectrum. This analytical approach inspired her to develop her own method for creating harmonic structures, as well as the detailed notation using harmonics, microtonality and detailed continuum of sound extending from pure tone to unpitched noise – all features found in one of her most frequently performed works, *Graal théâtre* for violin and orchestra or ensemble (1994/97). Later Saariaho has turned to opera, with outstanding success. *L’Amour de loin*, with a libretto by Amin Maalouf based on an early biography of the twelfth-century troubadour Jaufré Rudel, received widespread acclaim in its premiere production directed by Peter Sellars at the 2000 Salzburg Festival, and won the composer a prestigious Grawemeyer Award. Adriana Mater, on an original libretto by Maalouf, mixing gritty present-day reality and dreams, followed, again directed by Sellars, at the Opéra Bastille in Paris in March 2006. *Emilie*, an opera and monodrama for Karita Mattila had its premiere in Lyon in March 2010. (from saariaho.org)

“The story of *Philomel*, the nightingale, appears in Ovid’s metamorphoses. Philomel is the sister of Procne, whose husband, Tereus, is King of Thrace. Tereus rapes and imprisons his sister-in-law, having cut out her tongue to silence her. From her captivity Philomel sends a garment to Procne, into which she has woven images of her doleful story. As a hideous revenge on her husband, Procne kills her young son, cooks his corpse, and serves it to Tereus, informing him as he eats of what she has done. Fleeing from Tereus, Procne releases her sister, and together they are pursued through the woods by the murderously enraged Tereus. They are saved by the gods, who transform Procne into the swallow, Tereus into the hoopoe, and Philomel, torn and mute, into the nightingale. From that time the nightingale has sung all night of her tragedy, becoming allegorically the poet, who figuratively out of pain and literally out of darkness transcends suffering.

Philomel is a melodramatic representation of Philomel at the moment of her metamorphosis, when she discovers her restored voice among the threatening sounds of the forest. Gradually achieving coherence, she echoes the birds with her song, and the world responds with the final words of her questions. Finally she sings in a strophic aria of the redemption of her now fully evolved voice and celebrates her flight, as in her refrain:

Now I range
thrashing, through
the woods of Thrace.”

- Milton Babbitt

The compositional and intellectual wisdom of Milton Babbitt has influenced a wide range of contemporary musicians. A broad array of distinguished musical achievements in the dodecaphonic system and important writings on the subject have generated increased understanding and integration of serialist language into the eclectic musical styles of the late 20th century. Babbitt is also renowned for his great talent and instinct for jazz

and his astonishing command of American popular music. His All Set, for jazz ensemble, reveals an extraordinary compositional flexibility, uniquely American and vintage Babbitt.

Babbitt was born on 10 May 1916 in Philadelphia and studied composition privately with Roger Sessions. He earned degrees from New York and Princeton Universities and has been awarded honorary degrees from Middlebury College, Swarthmore College, New York University, the New England Conservatory, University of Glasgow, and Northwestern University. He taught at Princeton and The Juilliard School.

An extensive catalogue of works for multiple combinations of instruments and voice along with his pioneering achievements in synthesized sound have made Babbitt one of the most celebrated of 20th-century composers. He is a founder and member of the Committee of Direction for the Electronic Music Center of Columbia-Princeton Universities and a member of the Editorial Board of Perspectives of New Music. The recipient of numerous honors, commissions, and awards, including a MacArthur Fellowship and a Pulitzer Prize Citation for his "life's work as a distinguished and seminal American composer," Babbitt is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. (from Music Sales Classical)

Originally composed for Quince Ensemble's 2013 residency at Columbia College Chicago, *Chanting Atmosphere* requires the singer to employ the use of a looping pedal to layer, add, and subtract sounds from a constant rhythmic loop. Once described as "A subway ride to another world", *Chanting Atmosphere* uses many the same vocal effects - percussive articulation, breath, whistling - as *Shoshana* (performed earlier this evening), but the result is entirely unique.

New York based sound artist and composer **Monte Weber**'s work centers around interactive technology and computer assisted compositional processes, using these tools to explore live physical performance and sound creation in the concert hall.

Weber graduated from NYU Steinhardt under the guidance of legendary electronic artist Morton Subotnick and avant-garde vocal pioneer Joan La Barbara. In fall 2016, Weber continued his research in computer music at Ircam where he created a live composition tool called Kontrol- a physical performance instrument using an assortment of tactile controllers. While in Paris Monte studied composition with composer Marc Battier focusing on electro acoustic music. During his undergraduate studies in Chicago, Weber studied privately with Marcos Balter, and participated in master classes taught by Chaya Czernowin, Ken Ueno, and Julio Estrada. Past collaborations include: acclaimed members of International Contemporary Ensemble, Quince Contemporary Vocal Ensemble, Fonema Consort, choreographer Peter Carpenter, and New Thread Quartet.

Notable performances include NUNC 2014, Constellation's Frequency Series in Chicago, NMG 2016, Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival, as well as multiple open ICElab concerts performed by critically acclaimed International Contemporary Ensemble members both in NYC and Chicago. Upcoming projects include a new large scale works for International Contemporary Ensemble and New Thread Saxophone Quartet to be premiered in 2017.

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