

SONIC SPECTRUM IV

Thursday, May 2, 2024, at 7:30 pm Daniel and Joanna S. Rose Studio at CMS

2023-2024 SEASON

The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

70 Lincoln Center Plaza, 10th Floor New York, NY 10023 212-875-5788 ChamberMusicSociety.org

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SONIC SPECTRUM IV

THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 2, 2024, AT 7:30 > 4,435th Concert Daniel and Joanna S. Rose Studio at CMS

DAVID BYRD-MARROW, horn
MIRÓ QUARTET
DANIEL CHING, violin
WILLIAM FEDKENHEUER, violin
JOHN LARGESS, viola
JOSHUA GINDELE, cello

JÖRG WIDMANN

Air for Horn (2005)

(b. 1973)

BYRD-MARROW

DAI FUJIKURA

yurayura for horn and string quartet

(b. 1977) (2017)

BYRD-MARROW, CHING, FEDKENHEUER, LARGESS, GINDELF

GINDELE

CAROLINE SHAW

Selections from *Microfictions [Vol. 1]*

(b. 1982) (2021)

- ▶ Road signs melted, pointing to cadences
- ▶ Beneath an oak's dappled counterpoint
- ▶ Between the second and third selections
- ➤ To the tempo of an undiscovered Mendelssohn song

CHING, FEDKENHEUER, LARGESS, GINDELE

ELEANOR ALBERGA

Shining Gate of Morpheus for Horn and

String Quartet (2012)

BYRD-MARROW, CHING, FEDKENHEUER, LARGESS,

GINDELE

KEVIN PUTS

(b. 1949)

Home for String Quartet

(b. 1972) (New York Premiere) (2019)

CHING, FEDKENHEUER, LARGESS, GINDELE

PLEASE TURN OFF CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES.

You are welcome to take photos during the applause. Photography or recording of any kind are prohibited during the performance.

HOME

BY PAUL GRIFFITHS

"Home" is a slippery concept for most of us. Almost certainly, nobody in this audience will not have a home to go to when the show is over, but we may feel more at home at a friend's place, at work, or on a boat. Our home towns we may not have visited for decades. Where music is concerned, too, "home" can be hard to define. A composition may be in a home key—though that is not likely to be a simple issue these days. Music may come from a home territory—though again this is going to be complicated when we listen to Vietnamese chant or Mozambican timbila in New York.

This evening's program, with its partial focus on the horn, gives us another kind of home: the spaces within an instrument from which its sound emanates. Though these curving tunnels, in the case of the horn, cannot be seen into, they can be heard, in their effects on pitch and color. Jörg Widmann, in his Air, makes them apprehensible in how he asks the player to use different techniques to produce subtle differences in intonation and sound. The very first note, quiet, is repeated even more quietly with the horn stopped that is, with the player placing a hand in the bell, which seems to push the sound back in, make it crinkled and distant. Soon comes a radiant gesture—a rising fifth—which again is immediately repeated, this time by having it played as overtones of an indicated fundamental, so that the pitches are a little off. Playing for eight minutes or so, the piece is full of these altered echoes, and there are more: when the player has to add a sung note to the one played, or slide in response to a wavering line on the staff while remembering what just

happened. There are also echoes on other levels. The whole piece is played into an open piano, from which a more or less faint reverberation will be heard, as from an adjoining room. And the gestures will sometimes be echoes from the instrument's past. That rising fifth, for instance, goes back through the protagonist's horn call in Wagner's *Siegfried* to the signals of mail coaches and huntsmen in centuries past. An instrument has its home in its history.

A word on the title. *Air*, of course, is what escapes from the instrument, conveying vibrations from those hidden interior spaces and from the player's mouth and lips. But as the composer points out in his preface, an air is also a melody. *Air* is a wordless song of closeness and distance, of home and away.

Dai Fujikura's three-minute yurayura is also a song, and more nearly so, in its quasi-vocal phrases and regular tuning. As much as the Jörg Widmann, though, it is a song without a clear tonal home, one that could end on almost any note-and indeed, in its original form as an unaccompanied horn solo, it does have a different destination. Perhaps this uncertainty has something to do with the composer's indefinite nationality. Since the age of seventeen he has been based in England, but yurayura remembers his origin in Japan, in its melodic character and its title, which has the appropriate meaning of "Swaying."

The piece itself is partly Japanese, for Fujikura wrote it for the Japanese hornist Nobuaki Fukukawa and asked for a technique the musician had demonstrated to him, of playing with the keys only half-depressed and with

a good deal of vibrato. This results in a sound more like that of a saxophone than a horn normally played. The strings brush in supporting chords with a decreasing dose of harmonics.

From here, the strings take over for three of the six movements of Caroline Shaw's *Microfictions*. The work is, Shaw writes:

a set of six short musical stories. in the tradition of imagist poetry and surrealist painting, inspired in part by the work of Joan Miró and the short science fiction of T. R. Darling. Each movement is brief but vivid, with a distinct sonic profile that is inspired by (or, inversely, served as inspiration for) original microfiction stories that are inscribed in the score. One's interpretation of the stories and of the music can be varied—there is no one right way to connect the sounds and images or ideas. Rather, I hope that the words create an environment for curious listening, and an invitation to imagination. These short texts are:

- Under the hot sun, the road signs melted until they were the color of an unrhymed couplet, pointing to cadences left or north.
- ▶ The summer storm laughed and lilted and shouted until it found a shady spot, beneath an oak's dappled counterpoint.
- ▶ Between the second and third selections, the second violinist stood up and said hello to the audience. Everyone was grateful to know which movement they were on.
- Waking up on the early side that Tuesday, Miró noticed a bird repeating its solitary caption. The clouds nodded to the tempo of an undiscovered Mendelssohn song.

If it is the abstractness of Shaw's

writing—the agile patterns revolving at a steady pulse, the rippling tonalities—that allows these pieces to hover over their verbal paraphrases without making explicit connections. Eleanor Alberga is more decisive in her expressive gestures. Born in Jamaica, Alberga has lived in England since she was a student—like Dai Fujikura, though with a greater degree of assimilation to her new home.

Shining Gate of Morpheus is one of several of her works alluding to Classical mythology. Morpheus, in Ovid's Metamorphoses, is a shapeshifter who can take on the exact likeness of someone the dreamer knows or knew. Alberga refers also to the older story, in the Odyssey, of two gates through which dreams reach the dreamer: one of ivory, taken by misleading dreams, and one of horn, for dreams that present the truth. Animal horn is meant here, of course, but Alberga accepts the pun that would allow the French horn to be the conjuror of visions.

Itself called up by a phosphorescent haze of string tone that becomes insistent, the horn happily takes on its role of master of ceremonies, once more remembering its past as signaler. Introducing a faster tempo, it initiates a dance, which it leaves to subside, allowing solo strings to sing. It returns to start a new section, "Ancestors Speak." "Enter Puck" is marked at the moment. towards halfway through the thirteenminute composition, when the strings begin a staccato dance in springing dotted rhythm. A longish sequence goes on from here, now and then recalling the ancestors, until a dialogue between horn and strings rises and bursts into another dance, "Three Descend," whose meaning is not disclosed. Might this be another Shakespearean dream, of the goddesses who descend in The Tempest to solemnize the marriage of

Miranda and Ferdinand? A rising phrase from the horn, flutter-tonguing, powers the music up into a world of glistening arpeggios, and so to a high violin solo, with the indication "Conversation in the Vineyard." At "The Beloved," the cello assumes the solo role, after which the horn gate slowly closes.

It could be said that Alberga, after taking us into dreamland, returns us home. Kevin Puts, in the string quartet to which he gave the title *Home*, follows a similar trajectory, from a warm and simple evocation of the comforts of home through increasing dislocation to a new sense of home, changed and fortified by what happens in the middle of the seventeen-minute work. His note on the piece follows:

The refugee crisis in Europe, documented in recent media by horrific stories and photos of displaced families, led me to compose *Home*.

The work begins in what is essentially C Major, or with a tonal center of "C," which I intended as a sonic representation of "home" and one which is abandoned after the idyllic atmosphere of the work's first several minutes in search of new and

unfamiliar harmonic terrain. As is my way, I worked through the piece in a linear fashion, never certain what lay around each corner. My only hope was that I would find my way back to the musical idea heard at the opening, and that it would present itself in a way that suggested this material (or one's perception of it) had been altered in some way by the journey the work represents.

Paul Griffiths is a music critic, novelist, and librettist.

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INCLUDING INTERVIEWS WITH
COMPOSER KEVIN PUTS AND VIOLINIST
WILLIAM FEDKENHEUER, PLUS A SPECIAL
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ABOUT THE ARTISTS



DAVID BYRD-MARROW

▶ Hailed as "stunning and assured" by the New York Times, Atlanta native David Byrd-Marrow is the solo hornist of the International Contemporary Ensemble, as well as a member of The Knights. Working with a uniquely wide range of performers, he has premiered works by Matthias Pintscher, Arthur Kampela, George Lewis, Tyshawn Sorey, Anna Thorvaldsdottir, Du Yun, Marcos Balter, Anna Webber, Jörg Widmann, Miguel Zenón, and Chick Corea. He has performed at festivals including the Ojai Music Festival,

the Spoleto Music Festival, the Mostly Mozart Festival, the Tanglewood Music Center, Summerfest! at the La Jolla Music Society, and as faculty at the Festival Napa Valley. Formerly a member of Carnegie Hall's Ensemble Connect, he has also made appearances with the New York Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Atlanta, Seattle, and Tokyo symphony orchestras, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra, the Washington National Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He has recorded on many labels including Tundra, More Is More, Nonesuch, EMI, Deutsche Grammophon, and Naxos. Byrd-Marrow received his bachelor's degree from the Juilliard School and his master's from Stony Brook University. He is the Assistant Professor of Horn at the Lamont School of Music at the University of Denver.



MIRÓ QUARTET

▶ The Miró Quartet is one of America's most celebrated and dedicated string quartets, having been labeled by the New Yorker as "furiously committed" and noted by the Cleveland Plain Dealer for its "exceptional tonal focus and interpretive intensity." For over 25 years the Quartet has performed throughout the world on the most prestigious concert stages,

earning accolades from critics and audiences alike. Based in Austin, Texas, and thriving on the area's storied music scene, the Miró takes pride in finding new ways to communicate with audiences of all backgrounds while cultivating the longstanding tradition of chamber music.

In their 2023–24 season, the Miró Quartet embarks on a new performance and recording project with pianist Lara Downes. Here on Earth features musical depictions of planet earth, its evolution, and the lives of its inhabitants, with works spanning a century of cultural shift that begins with Darius Milhaud's *La Création du Monde*, performed in a new arrangement for piano and string quartet. Upcoming performances include the premiere of a new version of

Kevin Puts's *Credo* with the Naples Philharmonic, as well as performances for the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts, the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, and Premiere Performances in Hong Kong.

Formed in 1995, the Miró Quartet was awarded first prize at several national and international competitions including the Banff International String Quartet Competition and the Naumburg Chamber Music Competition. Deeply committed to music education, members of the Quartet have given master classes at universities and conservatories throughout the world, and since 2003 the Miró has served as the quartet-in-residence at the University of Texas at Austin Sarah and Ernest Butler School of Music. In 2005, the Quartet became the first ensemble ever to be awarded the coveted Avery Fisher Career Grant.

Having released many celebrated recordings, the Miró recently produced an Emmy Award-winning multimedia project titled *Transcendence*. A work with visual and audio elements available on live stream, CD, and Blu-Ray, *Transcendence* encompasses philanthropy and documentary filmmaking and is centered around a performance of Franz Schubert's Quartet in G major on rare Stradivarius instruments. The Miró records independently and makes its music available on a global scale through Apple Music, Amazon, Spotify, Pandora, and YouTube. The Miró Quartet took its name and its inspiration from the Spanish artist Joan Miró, whose Surrealist works—with subject matter drawn from the realm of memory, dreams, and imaginative fantasy—are some of the most groundbreaking, influential, and admired of the 20th century.

ABOUT THE COMPOSERS



ELEANOR ALBERGA

▶ Eleanor Alberga is a British composer with commissions from the BBC Proms and the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. Her music, ranging from solo instrumental works to full-scale symphonic works and operas, is performed all over the world. Born 1949 in Kingston, Jamaica, Alberga decided at the age of five to be a concert pianist, and five years later was composing works for piano. In 1968 she won the biennial Royal Schools of Music Scholarship for the West Indies, which she took up at the Royal Academy of Music in London. A budding career as a

solo pianist was soon augmented by composition with her arrival at the London Contemporary Dance Theatre in 1978. Under the leadership of its artistic director Robert Cohan, her company class improvisations led to works commissioned and conceived for dance by the company; she later became its musical director. In 2015 her commissioned work *Arise, Athena!* for the Last Night of the BBC Proms was seen and heard by millions. In 2020 she was elected a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music. At different times, she was a member of the African Dance Company Fontomfrom and the Jamaican Folk Singers. She was part of the duo Double Exposure with her husband, the violinist Thomas Bowes, with whom she co-founded Arcadia, a festival in the English countryside. Alberga was awarded an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours 2021 for services to British Music.



DAI FUJIKURA

▶ Born in 1977 in Osaka Japan, **Dai Fujikura** has received numerous international co-commissions from the Salzburg Festival, Lucerne Festival, BBC Proms, Bamberg Symphony, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra, and others. He has been Composer-in-Residence of Nagoya Philharmonic Orchestra since 2014 and held the same post at the Orchestre national d'Île-de-France in 2017–18. His first opera, *Solaris*, had its world premiere in Paris in 2015 and has since gained a worldwide reputation. His

works are recorded by and released mainly on his own label, Minabel Records, in collaboration with Sony Music, and his compositions are published by Ricordi Berlin. His works have been conducted and played by artists internationally such as Pierre Boulez, Peter Eötvös, Jonathan Nott, Martyn Brabbins, Gustavo Dudamel, Christian Arming, Alexander Liebreich, Kazuki Yamada, Kazushi Ono, Viktoria Mullova, Jean-Guihen Queyras, Claire Chase, Akiko Suwanai, and Yu Kosuge. Fujikura was the youngest composer ever to win the Serocki International Composers Competition in 1998. Since then, he has been awarded many other prizes including the Ivor Novello and Royal Philharmonic Society Awards, the Internationaler Wiener Composition Prize, the Paul Hindemith Prize, the 19th Akutagawa Composition Award, the Silver Lion at the Venice Biennale, and the Wired Audi Innovation Award.



KEVIN PUTS

Prize for his debut opera *Silent Night*, **Kevin Puts** has had works commissioned, performed, and recorded by leading ensembles and soloists throughout the world, including Yo-Yo Ma, Renée Fleming, Jeffrey Kahane, Dame Evelyn Glennie, the New York Philharmonic, the Tonhalle Orchester (Zurich), the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Miró Quartet, and the symphony orchestras of Baltimore, Cincinnati, Detroit, Atlanta, Colorado, Houston, Fort Worth, St. Louis, and Minnesota. His newest

orchestral work, The City, was co-commissioned by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra in honor of its 100th anniversary and by Carnegie Hall in honor of its 125th anniversary. His new vocal work *Letters From Georgia*, written for soprano Renée Fleming and orchestra and based on the personal letters of Georgia O'Keeffe, had its world premiere in New York in 2016, and his first chamber opera, an adaptation of Peter Ackroyd's gothic novel *The Trial of Elizabeth Cree*, commissioned by Opera Philadelphia, had its world premiere in September 2017, followed by performances with Chicago Opera Theater in February 2018. Kevin is currently a member of the composition department at the Peabody Institute and the Director of the Minnesota Orchestra Composer's Institute.



CAROLINE SHAW

▶ Caroline Shaw is the recipient of the 2013 Pulitzer Prize in Music, several Grammy awards, an honorary doctorate from Yale, and a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship. This year's projects include the score to Fleishman Is in Trouble (FX/Hulu), vocal work with Rosalía (MOTOMAMI), the score to Josephine Decker's The Sky Is Everywhere (A24/Apple), music for the National Theatre's production of The Crucible, Justin Peck's Partita with New York City Ballet, a new stage work "LIFE" (Gandini Juggling/Merce Cunningham Trust), the premiere of Microfictions Vol. 3 for the

New York Philharmonic and Roomful of Teeth, a live orchestral score for Wu Tsang's silent film *Moby Dick* co-composed with Andrew Yee, two albums on Nonesuch (*Evergreen* and *The Blue Hour*), the score for Helen Simoneau's dance work *Delicate Power*, tours of *Graveyards & Gardens* (co-created immersive theatrical work with Vanessa Goodman), and tours with So Percussion featuring songs from *Let the Soil Play Its Simple Part* (Nonesuch), amid occasional chamber music appearances as violist (Chamber Music Society of Minnesota, La Jolla Music Society). Shaw has written over 100 works in the last decade, for Anne Sofie von Otter, Davóne Tines, Yo Yo Ma, Renée Fleming, Dawn Upshaw, LA Phil, Philharmonia Baroque, Seattle Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, Aizuri Quartet, The Crossing, Dover Quartet, Calidore Quartet, Brooklyn Rider, Miro Quartet, I Giardini, Ars Nova Copenhagen, Ariadne Greif, Brooklyn Youth Chorus, Britt Festival, and the Vail Dance Festival.



JÖRG WIDMANN

▶ The 2023–24 season sees **Jörg Widmann** appearing in all facets of his work—as a clarinetist, conductor, and composer—including as Composer in Residence of the Berlin Philharmonic and Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, as Principal Guest Conductor of NDR Radiophilharmonie, Guest Conductor of Mozarteum Orchester Salzburg, Associate Conductor of Münchener Kammerorchester, Creative Partner of Deutsche Radio Philharmonie, Artistic Partner of Riga Sinfonietta, and Artist in Focus at Alte Oper Frankfurt. As a conductor this

season, he appears for the first time with the Berlin Philharmonic and returns to Bamberger Symphoniker, SWR Symphonieorchester, and BBC Scottish and Finnish Radio symphony orchestras, as well as Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks and Juilliard Orchestra New York. His compositions are performed regularly by orchestras such as the Vienna Philharmonic, Berlin Philharmonic, New York Philharmonic, Concertgebouw Orchestra Amsterdam, Cleveland Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, London Symphony Orchestra, and many others. This season sees the world premiere of his *Schumannliebe* for Baritone and Ensemble with Matthias Goerne, Peter Rundel, and the Remix Ensemble at Casa da Música. Currently, he is writing a Horn Concerto, commissioned by the Berlin Philharmonic, to be premiered by Stefan Dohr and the Berlin Philharmonic with Sir Simon Rattle in May 2024.

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The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center (CMS) was founded in 1969 under the leadership and patronage of Alice Tully and the artistic direction of Charles Wadsworth, beginning a new era for chamber music in the United States. Through its many performance, education, and digital activities, CMS brings the experience of great chamber music to more people than any other organization of its kind. The performing artists constitute a multi-generational and international roster of the world's finest chamber musicians, enabling CMS to present chamber music of every instrumentation, style, and historical period. The Bowers Program, our competitive three-season residency, is dedicated to developing the chamber music leaders of the future and integrates this selection of extraordinary early-career musicians into every facet of CMS activities. CMS reaches a growing global audience through a range of free digital media, including livestreams, an online archive of 1,500+ video recordings, as well as broadcasts that are distributed to millions of listeners.

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