



Chamber
Music Society
of Lincoln Center

NEW MILESTONES AMERICAN TRAILBLAZERS

THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 7, 2019 AT 7:30

Daniel and Joanna S. Rose Studio

2019-2020
50TH
ANNIVERSARY
SEASON



The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

70 Lincoln Center Plaza, 10th Floor

New York, NY 10023

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www.ChamberMusicSociety.org

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NEW MILESTONES

THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 7, 2019 AT 7:30

4,007TH CONCERT

Daniel and Joanna S. Rose Studio

GILLES VONSATTEL, piano/harpsichord

MIHAI MARICA, cello

TARA HELEN O'CONNOR, flute

JAMES AUSTIN SMITH, oboe

AMERICAN TRAILBLAZERS

RUTH CRAWFORD

(1901-1953)

Diaphonic Suite No. 4 for Oboe and Cello
(1930)

- ▶ Moderato
- ▶ Andante cantando
- ▶ Scherzando ritmico

SMITH, MARICA

JOHN CORIGLIANO

(b. 1938)

The Food of Love for Oboe and Cello
(2018) (World Premiere)

SMITH, MARICA

JOHN CAGE

(1912-1992)

Selected Sonatas and Interludes for Prepared Piano (1946-48)

- ▶ Sonata I
- ▶ Sonata II
- ▶ Sonata V
- ▶ Third Interlude
- ▶ Sonatas XIV and XV, "Gemini"
- ▶ Sonata XVI

VONSATTEL

ELLIOTT CARTER

(1908-2012)

Sonata for Flute, Oboe, Cello, and Harpsichord (1952)

- ▶ Risoluto
- ▶ Lento
- ▶ Allegro

O'CONNOR, SMITH, MARICA, VONSATTEL

PLEASE TURN OFF CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES.

This evening's concert is being streamed live at ChamberMusicSociety.org/WatchLive

Photographing, sound recording, or videotaping this event is prohibited.

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

In the 1920s a tight-knit group of young composers stood at the vanguard of American art music. Known as the “ultramodernists,” they carefully studied their better-established European counterparts—most visibly, Schoenberg and Stravinsky—while striving to cultivate a uniquely American sound. Organized around the leadership of Henry Cowell, this community of innovators like Carl Ruggles, Leo Ornstein, and Ruth Crawford paved the way for consequent generations to draw freely upon a novel and ambitious toolbox of techniques. The toolbox, which Cowell outlined in his breathless treatise of 1930, *New Musical Resources*, comprised progressive approaches to dissonance in melody, counterpoint, rhythm, and timbre. The ultramodernists’ aesthetic would also encourage investigation and integration of a variety of non-Western musical traditions—Cowell studied comparative musicology (ethnomusicology’s precursor) overseas and taught a course at the New School called “Music of the World’s Peoples.”

John Cage would look back on Henry Cowell’s prolific composing, theorizing, and relationship building as “the open sesame for new music in America.” Though Cowell’s musical output transparently inspired Cage, Ruth Crawford, and Elliott Carter, it was arguably the butterfly effect of his tireless networking that set each of their careers in motion. Without his influence, Ruth Crawford would not have studied with (or later married) Charles Seeger. It may be thanks to Cowell’s early promotion and encouragement of Charles Ives that Ives continued to compose, allowing him to mentor and challenge Elliott Carter. Cowell taught a young John Cage and later introduced him to fellow percussion maven Lou Harrison, which may have induced Cage’s development of the prepared piano. Cowell’s generous advocacy and influence wielded through his periodical, *New Music Quarterly*, aided in vaulting many adventurous composers of the mid-20th century—including Paul Creston and Otto Luening, two of John Corigliano’s teachers—to prominence and professorships, igniting the bright and still-burning flame of new music in America.

Diaphonic Suite No. 4 for Oboe and Cello

RUTH CRAWFORD

- ▶ Born July 3, 1901 in East Liverpool, Ohio.
- ▶ Died November 18, 1953 in Chevy Chase, Maryland.

Composed in 1930.

- ▶ Tonight is the first CMS performance of this piece.
- ▶ Duration: 7 minutes

Following the completion in 1929 of her master's degree in composition at the American Conservatory in Chicago and an idyllic summer in residence at the MacDowell Colony in New Hampshire, a 28-year-old Ruth P. Crawford moved to New York City. This leap of faith was thanks entirely to the encouragement of established experimentalist Henry Cowell, to whom her professor introduced her at a salon concert shortly before her graduation. Impressed with her initial forays into modernist vocabulary—like the Five Preludes for Piano (1924-28), which built upon the quasi-tonal language of Scriabin—Cowell connected Crawford with Blanche Walton, a devoted patron of new music who offered up a guest room in her apartment at 1 West 68th Street in support of Crawford's indoctrination into Manhattan musical life. It was there, where portraits of Bartók, Schoenberg, Varèse, and Carl Ruggles stood enshrined on the mantel, that Cowell engineered Crawford's first meeting with his own teacher, the composer-musicologist Charles Seeger.

Moments into their first lesson, it was clear to Seeger that Crawford

shared his own sensibility toward structural applications of musical dissonance. Seeger's curriculum centered on his concept of "dissonant counterpoint," which inverts the traditional principles of harmony and encourages a "sounding apart" as opposed to a "sounding together" of musical voices, promoting "diaphony rather than symphony." Though fundamentally inspired by the 12-tone works of Schoenberg (which he instructed Crawford to study), Seeger's system prioritized the off-kilter aesthetic he desired rather than the rigorous serial architecture promoted by the Second Viennese School. Crawford soaked up both approaches during her productive winter of 1929, insulated by Walton's patronage from the onset of the Depression, and it was in response to Seeger's assignment to apply various species of dissonant counterpoint that she completed three of the four *Diaphonic Suites* for solo and duo instruments. The fourth was already in progress when she set out for Berlin on a Guggenheim Fellowship in August of 1930, the first woman to win that award for music composition.

The first movement of the *Diaphonic Suite No. 4* is frequently singled out for its original take on the traditional "follow-the-leader" imitative canon form. Crawford reuses a seven-note theme in 12 progressively altered segments. Each instrument runs through this same ordered sequence of 84 notes but uses entirely dissimilar rhythmic schemes, which renders the "much-disguised canon," as Crawford put

it, very difficult to follow by ear. Reaching the conclusion of the sequence, the pattern plays once more in reverse. This technique of

retrograde symmetry also features prominently in the fourth movement of Crawford's best-recognized work, the String Quartet of 1931. ♦

The Food of Love for Oboe and Cello

JOHN CORIGLIANO

▶ Born February 16, 1938 in New York City.

Composed in 2018.

▶ Tonight is the world premiere of this piece.

▶ Duration: 6 minutes

Springing out of his 80th birthday celebration last year, John Corigliano shows no signs of creative fatigue: he is hard at work on his second opera and a saxophone concerto to boot. Given these preoccupations, it was only a special event that could have precipitated the interlude from his operatic and orchestral writing that has resulted in this delightful miniature.

Corigliano was exposed to a variety of the aesthetic reactions to ultramodernism that permeated musical academia in the 1950s. Paul Creston, his professor at Juilliard,

▼
IN THIS CHARMING, PROGRAMMATIC WORK, CORIGLIANO DRAWS UPON AN INVERSION OF TRADITIONAL HARMONY AND EXPLORES TWO DISTINCT KEY AREAS, OFTEN SIMULTANEOUSLY, IN ORDER TO EVOKE CONFLICT.

dipped into modernist idioms but generally held total dissonance at bay—an inclination that is particularly evident in his well-known writing for wind band. Much of Corigliano's oeuvre, from the beloved Oboe Concerto (1975) and Clarinet Concerto (1977) to the Symphony No. 1 (1988) and the String Quartet (1995), explores this push and pull between harmony and discord.

In this charming, programmatic work, Corigliano draws upon an inversion of traditional harmony and explores two distinct key areas, often simultaneously, in order to evoke conflict.

The composer writes: "*The Food of Love* was written to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of my dear friends Michèle and Larry Corash. This amazing couple celebrate their birthdays and anniversaries by commissioning new works of music from contemporary American composers. I met the Corashes through the distinguished composer (and former student of mine) Mason Bates. They have funded several works by Mason and have thus enriched our orchestral repertoire.

The 'food of love' is, of course, music, and this little tribute is written for oboe and cello—two of Michèle's favorite instruments. I have taken the liberty of assigning the oboe to portray Michèle, and the deeper

cello to represent Larry.

Since a long, constantly loving duo might thwart the homage I intended, I wrote a work that begins and ends with a consonant and beautiful melody, but is often interrupted by either partner resulting in discord

which finally resolves into peaceful harmony. In truth, I have never seen the slightest disagreement between the living Michèle and Larry, but as a composer, I needed the drama, and therefore invented it. I hope they forgive me." ♦

JOHN CAGE'S SONATAS AND INTERLUDES BY KYLE GANN

Of all the many controversial aspects and events of John Cage's tumultuous career, the *least* controversial is his *Sonatas and Interludes* (1946-48). Even critics who disdain the "noodling" of Cage's proto-minimalist piano pieces of the 1940s, who were outraged by the audacity of his "silent" piece *4'33"*, and who can't be bothered to take his late chance pieces seriously have admitted that *Sonatas and Interludes* is a grand, expressive, and well-balanced musical structure....

Those who have an image of Cage as a kind of wild-man composer for whom "anything goes" are often surprised by the Zen-like calm of most of his prepared piano music. *Sonatas and Interludes* is generally restful and meditative, though it can admittedly be an odd piece to listen to and watch. Some single notes sound like chords; some chords sound like a unified thump. High notes can sound lower than low notes. A trill often buzzes between two very distinct timbres. Damped by screws and erasers, many of the notes die away quickly, but the sustain pedal is often held down to create a halo of resonance through the whole piano....

Read all of composer and American music scholar Kyle Gann's essay about Cage's groundbreaking work on CMS's dedicated New Milestones website, which features text, photos, and videos about the works on this program and more.

WWW.CHAMBERMUSICSOCIETY.ORG/CAGE

Selected *Sonatas and Interludes* for Prepared Piano

JOHN CAGE

- ▶ Born September 5, 1912 in Los Angeles.
- ▶ Died August 12, 1992 in New York City.

Composed in 1946-48.

- ▶ Tonight is the first CMS performance of this piece.
- ▶ Duration: 17 minutes

Before his radical activities of the early 1950s—among them, his application of silence in *4'33"* (1952) and his pioneering use of chance procedures in *Music of Changes* (1951)—Cage's first significant musical innovation was born of pragmatic necessity (and controversial only to piano technicians). Faced in 1940 with the need to infuse a score for a new dance piece with a dose of groove, the composer's first impulse, to write for percussion ensemble—which he had recently used in two of the brash *Constructions* (1939-40)—was stymied by the tiny proscenium stage at Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle. Spatially constrained to an ensemble of one and uninspired by the uniform timbre of the piano, Cage thought of Henry Cowell's *Aeolian Harp* (1923) and *The Banshee* (1925), both works that direct the performer to reach into the piano and manipulate the strings by hand. Cage realized that he could approximate the percussive textures he sought by modifying the vibrations of piano strings with household objects. He stuck pieces of weather stripping and screws

between the strings of 12 notes and completed *Bacchanale*, his first piece for prepared piano, in a matter of hours.

By the time he began work on *Sonatas and Interludes* in 1946, Cage had broadened the range of objects used as preparations and fine-tuned the acoustic effects of their placement, thus expanding the instrument's emotional range. Cage always intended the work to be of significant magnitude, employing 45 prepared notes as well as an intricate series of nested proportions, whereby a series of natural numbers or fractions determines both the rhythmic content of each measure and the overall length of each phrase. His writing was also informed by a burgeoning interest in Hindu philosophy and in the Carnatic musical tradition of southern India. *Sonatas and Interludes* displays hybridity by designating tonal, bell-like timbres to represent the European tradition, in contrast to more percussive sounds—such as those emphasized in *Sonata V*—that he meant to symbolize, broadly, the East.

Though the interludes vary in structure, each sonata movement takes a binary form, containing two sections that are each played through twice. *Sonatas XIV* and *XV* are paired and jointly titled "Gemini—After the work by Richard Lippold," a sculptor whose signature medium was intricate geometric constructions of wire. Cage wrote

that the final movement (Sonata XVI), with its cloudily Baroque ornamentation and detectable harmonic motion, is a blatant nod

to the European tradition to which the piano—no matter how many clothespins are attached—remains inextricably linked. ♦

Sonata for Flute, Oboe, Cello, and Harpsichord

ELLIOTT CARTER

- ▶ Born December 11, 1908 in New York City.
- ▶ Died there on November 5, 2012.

Composed in 1952.

- ▶ First CMS performance on April 30, 1978 by flutist Paula Robison, oboist Leonard Arner, cellist Leslie Parnas, and harpsichordist Ursula Oppens.
- ▶ Duration: 16 minutes

*...out of what one sees and hears and out
Of what one feels, who could have thought to make
So many selves, so many sensuous worlds—
As if the air, the mid-day air, was swarming
With the metaphysical changes that occur
Merely in living as and where we live.*

-Wallace Stevens

Armed with 17 years of perspective on the work, Elliott Carter prefaced his liner notes to the 1969 Nonesuch recording of the Sonata for Flute, Oboe, Cello, and Harpsichord with the excerpt above from Wallace Stevens's "Esthétique du Mal," published in the 1940s. The composer draws explicit connections between Stevens's "many selves" and "sensuous worlds" and his own rich palette of musical characters that came into maturity with the turn of the 1950s. Carter describes his preoccupation during this fertile creative period with the "very limited routine" of rhythmic devices in "most contemporary and older Western music." Seeking to effect "metaphysical changes" in that realm, the composer embarked upon

a broad survey of rhythms found in non-Western art music—citing the Carnatic, Arabic, Balinese, and Watusi traditions—while redoubling his studies of American composers whose rhythmic ideas he respected, such as Ruth Crawford and Charles Ives (Carter's close friend and mentor from childhood). The rhythm chapter of Henry Cowell's *New Musical Resources* would prove particularly influential as Carter conceived the metrical kaleidoscope that he first employed in the Cello Sonata (1948) and that would make his String Quartet No. 1 of 1951 a breakout success.

Though the Sonata for Flute, Oboe, Cello, and Harpsichord employs a scaled-back collection of the radical principles of rhythmic

organization found in the First Quartet, it forges ahead in its use of timbre as an organizing principle. In what Carter calls the “splashing dramatic gesture” that provides the motor for the first movement, the ensemble creates a slow-motion sustained effect by emphasizing the higher overtones of the harpsichord, augmenting the short decay of sound that is the instrument’s hallmark. He notes that subtle shifts of timbre inform “all the details of shape,

phrasing, rhythm, [and] texture, as well as the large form” of the second movement, which juxtaposes a segmented stream in the ensemble against sudden register changes in the harpsichord, before the whole quartet bursts into a bout of fast music. The last movement references the lively *furlana*, a Northeastern Italian folk dance, before decomposing into a collage of overlapping, dance-like gestures that Carter has “cross-cut like a movie.” ♦

Josh Davidoff is a New York-based composer and arts administrator.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

MIHAI MARICA

▶ Romanian-born cellist Mihai Marica is a first prize winner of the Dr. Luis Sigall International Competition in Viña del Mar, Chile and the Irving M. Klein International Competition, and is a recipient of Charlotte White’s Salon de Virtuosi Fellowship Grant. He has performed with orchestras such as the Symphony Orchestra of Chile, Xalapa Symphony in Mexico, the Hermitage State Orchestra of St. Petersburg in Russia, the Jardins Musicaux Festival Orchestra in Switzerland, the Louisville Orchestra, and the Santa Cruz Symphony in the US. He has also appeared in recital performances in Austria, Hungary, Germany, Spain, Holland, South Korea, Japan, Chile, the United States, and Canada. A dedicated chamber musician, he has performed at the Chamber Music Northwest, Norfolk, and Aspen music festivals where he has collaborated with such artists as Ani Kavafian, Ida Kavafian, David Shifrin, André Watts, and Edgar Meyer. He is a founding member of the award-winning Amphion String Quartet. A recent collaboration with dancer Lil Buck brought forth new pieces for solo cello written by Yevgeniy Sharlat and Patrick Castillo. Last season, he joined the acclaimed Apollo Trio. Mr. Marica studied with Gabriela Todor in his native Romania and with Aldo Parisot at the Yale School of Music where he was awarded master’s and artist diploma degrees. He is an alum of CMS’s Bowers Program.

TARA HELEN O'CONNOR

▶ Tara Helen O'Connor is a charismatic performer noted for her artistic depth, brilliant technique, and colorful tone spanning every musical era. Winner of an Avery Fisher Career Grant and a two-time Grammy nominee, she was the first wind player to participate in CMS's Bowers Program. A Wm. S. Haynes flute artist, she regularly appears at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Music@Menlo, the Chamber Music Festival of the Bluegrass, Spoleto USA, Chamber Music Northwest, Mainly Mozart Festival, Music from Angel Fire, the Banff Centre, the Great Mountains Music Festival, Chesapeake Music Festival, Rockport Chamber Music Festival in Massachusetts, Bay Chamber Concerts, and the Bravo! Vail Music Festival. She is a newly appointed co-artistic director of the Music From Angel Fire Festival in New Mexico. A much sought after chamber musician and soloist, she is a founding member of the Naumburg Award-winning New Millennium Ensemble and a member of the woodwind quintet Windscape. She has premiered hundreds of new works and has collaborated with the Orion String Quartet, St. Lawrence Quartet, and Emerson Quartet. She has appeared on A&E's *Breakfast with the Arts, Live from Lincoln Center*, and has recorded for Deutsche Grammophon, EMI Classics, Koch International, CMS Studio Recordings with the Chamber Music Society, and Bridge Records. She is associate professor of flute and coordinator of classical music studies at Purchase College. She is also on the faculty of Bard College and Manhattan School of Music and is a visiting artist at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto.

JAMES AUSTIN SMITH

▶ Praised for his "virtuosic," "dazzling," and "brilliant" performances (*New York Times*) and his "bold, keen sound" (*New Yorker*), oboist James Austin Smith performs new and old music across the United States and around the world. He is an artist of the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), Decoda (Affiliate Ensemble of Carnegie Hall), and Cygnus, co-principal oboist of the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and Artistic and Executive Director of Tertulia, a chamber music series that takes place in restaurants in New York and San Francisco. A devoted educator, he serves on the oboe and chamber music faculties of Stony Brook University and the Manhattan School of Music. His festival appearances include Music@Menlo, Marlboro, Lucerne, Bowdoin, Orlando, Stift, Norfolk, Bridgehampton, Bay Chamber Concerts, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, and Spoleto USA. He has performed with the St. Lawrence, Orion, Rolston, and Parker string quartets and recorded for the Nonesuch, Bridge, Mode, and Kairos labels. An alum of CMS's Bowers Program, he holds a master's degree from the Yale School of Music as well as Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Bachelor of Music degrees from Northwestern University. He spent a year as a Fulbright Scholar at the Mendelssohn Conservatory in Leipzig, Germany and is an alumnus of Carnegie Hall's Ensemble Connect. Mr. Smith's principal teachers are Stephen Taylor, Christian Wetzel, Humbert Lucarelli, and Ray Still.

GILLES VONSATTEL

► Swiss-born American pianist Gilles Vonsattel is an artist of extraordinary versatility and originality. He is the recipient of an Avery Fisher Career Grant, winner of the Naumburg and Geneva competitions, and was selected for the 2016 Andrew Wolf Chamber Music Award. In recent years, he has made his debut with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, and San Francisco Symphony while performing recitals and chamber music at Ravinia, Tokyo's Musashino Hall, Wigmore Hall, Bravo! Vail, Chamber Music Northwest, and Music@Menlo. Deeply committed to the performance of contemporary music, he has premiered numerous works both in the United States and Europe and has worked closely with notable composers including Jörg Widmann, Heinz Holliger, and George Benjamin. Recent and upcoming projects include appearances with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (Bernstein's *Age of Anxiety*), Philharmonisches Staatsorchester Hamburg (Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*), Beethoven concertos with the Santa Barbara Symphony and Florida Orchestra, as well as multiple appearances with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. An alum of CMS's Bowers Program, Mr. Vonsattel received his bachelor's degree in political science and economics from Columbia University and his master's degree from The Juilliard School. He currently makes his home in New York City and serves as a faculty member at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT CMS

1926: BERG'S LYRIC SUITE

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 7:30 PM ► ALICE TULLY HALL

The Schumann Quartet and soprano Tony Arnold perform works by Mozart, Berg, and Grieg.

INSIDE CHAMBER MUSIC

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 6:30 PM ► DANIEL & JOANNA S. ROSE STUDIO

Lecture on Brahms's Clarinet Quintet in B minor, Op. 115.

This event will be streamed live at www.ChamberMusicSociety.org/WatchLive

ROSE STUDIO & LATE NIGHT ROSE

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 6:30 PM ► DANIEL & JOANNA S. ROSE STUDIO

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 9:00 PM ► DANIEL & JOANNA S. ROSE STUDIO

The Calidore String Quartet and bassist Xavier Foley perform works by Bartók and Dvořák.

The 9:00 PM event will be streamed live at www.ChamberMusicSociety.org/WatchLive