



CURTIS
INSTITUTE OF MUSIC

ENSEMBLE 20/21



MUSIC OF
THE EARTH

2023-24 SEASON
TIME TO DISCOVER

CURTIS INSTITUTE OF MUSIC
2023-24 SEASON
Time to Discover

x

Ensemble 20/21

Nick DiBerardino, director

Music of the Earth

Saturday, November 18, 2023, at 7:30 p.m.

Gould Rehearsal Hall

x

PROGRAM

Three High Places

Above Sunset Pass

The Wind at Maclaren Summit

Looking Toward Hope

JOHN LUTHER ADAMS

(b. 1953)

Leah Amory, violin

The Journey of the Horizontal People

RAVEN CHACON

(b. 1977)

Erinys Quartet:

Elizabeth Stewart, violin

Joosep Reimaa, violin

Marija Räisänen, viola

Stergios Theodoridis, cello

Homeland

ALLISON LOGGINS-HULL

(b. 1982)

Anastasia Samsel, flute

Anthozoa

GABRIELLA SMITH ('13)

(b. 1991)

Maya Anjali Buchanan, violin

Matthew Christakos, cello

Tae McLoughlin, percussion

Delvan Lin, piano

INTERMISSION

Landslög

GULLI BJÖRNSSON

dökkar sandþúfur með smá mosa (dark sand dunes with some moss) (b. 1991)
birkikjarr í fjallshlíð (birch shrubs in a mountain slope)
ólga við ós (turbulence where a stream meets a lake)
viðfeðmur akur hulinn af lúpínu (vast lupine covered field)
veðruð ísilögð strandlengja (eroded icy shoreline)
klaki og snjór hylur tún (ice and snow covers a field)

Muxin Li, guitar

Folk Songs

LUCIANO BERIO

(1925-2003)

Black is the Color
I Wonder as I Wander
Loosin yelav
Rossignolet du bois
A la femminisca
La donna ideale
Ballo
Motettu de tristura
Malurous qu'ò uno fenno
Lo fiolairé
Azerbaijan Love Song

Dillon Scott, viola
TaeYeon Rachel Kim, cello
Julin Cheung, flute/piccolo
Hwaseop Jeong, clarinet

Tae McLoughlin, percussion
Maxence Dauriat, percussion
Claire Thai, harp

Micah Gleason, conductor and mezzo-soprano

Lighting design by Tydell Williams

x

PROGRAM NOTES

Three High Places

John Luther Adams

Praised by the *New Yorker* as “one of the most original musical thinkers of the new century,” Pulitzer Prize-winning “eco-composer” and environmental activist John Luther Adams’s *Three High Places* evokes the Alaskan wilderness’s vast, untamed beauty and rugged terrain. In describing the inspiration for the piece,

Adams wrote:

“Gordon Wright was the friend of a lifetime. For thirty years, Gordon and I shared our two greatest passions: music and Alaska. Gordon was my musical collaborator, my next-door neighbor, my fellow environmentalist, and my camping buddy. Like Alaska, Gordon was larger than life. He always lived his own way. And he died just as he would have

wanted. We found him lying on the deck of his cabin in the Chugach Mountains, curled up against his favorite birch tree, looking across the waters of Turnagain Arm toward the Resurrection Valley and the tiny settlement of Hope.”

Stark and intensely personal, this introspective solo work for violin or cello sketches out three moments and places visited during Adams and Wright’s decades-long camaraderie. With clear, resonant sounds produced as either natural harmonics or on open strings, *Three High Places* transports the listener to a quiet pass in the Sadelerochit Mountains near the Arctic Ocean, climbs high above the expansive vista to the top of a windswept summit, and lays down alongside his friend’s final resting place, capturing the last breathtaking view that Wright witnessed before he passed away.

—Ryan Scott Lathan

The Journey of the Horizontal People Ravon Chacon

The Journey of the Horizontal People is a future creation story telling of a group of people traveling from west to east across the written page, contrary to the movement of the sun but involuntarily and unconsciously allegiant to the trappings of time. With their bows, these wanderers sought out others like them, knowing that they could survive by finding these other clans who resided in the east, others who shared their linear cosmologies. It is told that throughout the journey, in their own passage of time, this group became the very people they were seeking.

—Raven Chacon

Homeland Allison Loggins-Hull

Homeland was written shortly after Hurricane Maria stormed through Puerto Rico in 2017. Maria represented the increasing strength of natural disasters and the intense, sometimes deadly, repercussions of climate change. While this was going on, there was also a rise of political and social turmoil in the United States and global unrest throughout the world, including the Civil War crisis in Syria. For weeks, the news was flooded with these stories. With so many people throughout the world dealing with tragic domestic issues, I began to think about the meaning of home during a crisis. What does home mean when the land has been destroyed? What does it mean when there’s been a political disaster or a human disaster? How does a person feel patriotic when they feel unwelcome at the same time?

Homeland is a musical interpretation and exploration of those questions. The flute opens with timbral trills representing troubled waters, then transitions into passages that are anxious and distorted. There is a moment of hope and optimism, a remembrance of past struggles that have been overcome, followed by an off-putting play on the *Star-Spangled Banner*, representing an unraveling of patriotism. In the end, we come full circle, still with unanswered and unresolved questions. The piece was commissioned by the Texas Flute Society for the 2018 Myrna Brown Competition.

—Allison Loggins-Hull

Anthozoa

Gabriella Smith ('13)

Praised by the *L.A. Times* as an “outright sensation” and deemed “the coolest, most exciting, most inventive new voice I’ve heard in ages” by *Musical America*, award-winning Curtis alumna and ecological activist Gabriella Smith’s imaginative compositions revel in the exploration of unexpected soundscapes, connecting audiences to nature and sparking joy and change through climate action. Inspired by recordings the composer made while taking a paddleboat out on the reefs of French Polynesia and named after a class of marine invertebrates that include sea anemones and coral, *Anthozoa* captures the aquatic sounds she found beneath the surface and along the seashell-scattered shoreline.

This hypnotic work features a prepared piano, sliding pizzicato cello, unpitched strikes on the violin, and a lively array of percussive found instruments that evoke the sights and sounds of graceful, flowing fans and hundreds upon thousands of tiny, tentacled polyps swaying about in their coral colonies. As the slinky, clinking, propulsive piece progresses, each musician manipulates their instruments to conjure up brightly colored fish, eels, sharks, sea turtles, and manta rays as they swim in and out of this breathtaking ecosystem. *Anthozoa* concludes with an eerie passage that hints at the impending destruction of these fragile yet resilient undersea gardens, somehow thriving despite the continued threat of climate change, warming seas, bioerosion, overfishing, and pollution.

—Ryan Scott Lathan

Landslög

Gulli Björnsson

Called “a knockout” and “wondrously inventive” by *Soundboard Magazine* and praised as “virtuosic” by *Classical Guitar Magazine*, Icelandic guitarist, composer, and programmer Gulli Björnsson creates sound worlds that unite electronics, live instruments, and stunning visuals. For his 2020 collection of pieces for solo acoustic guitar, *Landslög* (landscapes), he drew inspiration from the ice fields, soaring mountains, and volcanic peaks, bays, and fjords of his homeland. These thematically unconnected pieces—some somber and meditative, others energetic and joyous—feature repetitive patterns that become increasingly more challenging as they progress, unified only through the similar aesthetics and musical concepts they display. Ensemble 20/21’s performance, which features six selections from the eleven-piece work, is performed alongside the composer’s original visual animations, created by processing various images and stock videos through pixel processing and interactive shaders in the visual programming software Max, designed for music and multimedia.

—Ryan Scott Lathan

Folk Songs

Luciano Berio

Pioneering Italian electronic music composer, musician, conductor, and music theorist Luciano Berio once wrote, “My links with folk music are often of an emotional character. When I work with that music, I am always caught by the thrill of discovery...I return again and again to folk music because I try to establish contact between that and my own ideas about music.”¹ A prominent

figurehead in the avant-garde music scene of the mid-twentieth century, Berio dedicated his 1964 anthology of eleven songs from eight countries, *Folk Songs*, to then-wife, mezzo-soprano Cathy Berberian, a barrier-breaking innovator in contemporary vocality. Composed as his strained marriage quickly deteriorated during a residency at Mills College, the cycle was initially conceived for voice and chamber ensemble but later expanded for symphony orchestra in the early 1970s.

Neither true arrangements nor transcriptions of traditional tunes and lyrics from America, Armenia, Auvergne, Azerbaijan, France, Italy, Sardinia, and Sicily, the set highlights the idiosyncratic quiriness of Berio's personality and musical style while also interpreting these songs in a new rhythmic and harmonic light. The cycle begins with an Appalachian classic of Scottish origin, "Black is the Color," and a hymnlike Christmas carol, "I Wonder as I Wander," by classically trained singer and folklorist John Jacob Niles. The third song, an Armenian piece called "Loosin yelav," harkens back to Berberian's Armenian roots, depicting a radiant, rising moon. Number four, "Rossignolet du bois," is a French song about a little nightingale, while the Sicilian "A la femminisca" describes a woman praying for calm seas as her fisherman lover sets sail.

Berio's settings of "La donna ideale" and "Ballo" (penned in 1949 when the composer first met Berberian in Italy) incorporate traditional Italian lyrics, as they illustrate a list of favorable attributes of the perfect wife and the nonsense of a stark, raving mad lover. The Sardinian "Motettu de tristura" brings the feathered nightingale back into the picture with a decidedly dour twist, while "Malurous qu'ò uno fenno" and "La fiolaire" rework two songs (one, a commentary

on the capriciousness of love and the other, describes a love hungry girl at a spinning wheel) by French composer Joseph Canteloube from his *Chants d'Auvergne* for soprano and orchestra. The final piece, "Azerbaijan Love Song," is a nonsensical phonetic transcription of an Azeri tune taken down by Berberian while listening to an old 78 rpm recording. Complex yet remarkably creative, if not entirely cohesive, Berio's collection combines a modernist classical music aesthetic with folk idioms, resulting in a cycle that is as challenging and unusual as it is readily accessible.

¹ Osmond-Smith David, ed. and trans. *Luciano Berio: Two Interviews: with Rossana Dalmonte and Balint Andras Varga*. New York: Marion Boyars, 1985.

—Ryan Scott Lathan

In preparation to both lead and sing these pieces, the folk-inspired musical seed, the storytelling and opportunity for dramatic presentation, and the chamber music setting all prompted me to consider what it meant in these pieces to conduct, to lead. There are so very many elements that go into being a good conductor, far beyond anything we do with our hands. In these pieces, I wanted to explore how physical gesture could be a part of both musical facilitation and dramatic storytelling, how much breath influences dialogue between musicians, and, even in Berio's divinely heady setting of these tunes, how do we remove any excess classical-music-pomp and attempt to grasp at the world in which these songs originated.

—Micah Gleason

MUSICIANS

Leah Amory, from New York City, a student of Pamela Frank and Erin Keefe, holds a fellowship from an anonymous donor and entered Curtis in 2022.

Maya Anjali Buchanan, from Rapid City, S.D., a student of Ida Kavafian, is the Jill and Sheldon Bonovitz Fellow and first entered Curtis in 2018.

Julin Cheung, from Seattle, a student of Jeffrey Khaner, is the Gerry and Marguerite Lenfest Fellow and entered Curtis in 2020.

Matthew Christakos, from Toronto, a student of Peter Wiley and Gary Hoffman, is the Joseph Druian Fellow and entered Curtis in 2019.

Maxence Dauriat, from Combs-la-Ville, France, a student of Don Liuzzi, Eric Millstein, and Ji Su Jung, is a Curtis Institute of Music Fellow and entered Curtis in 2023.

Micah Gleason, from Chapel Hill, N.C., a student of Yannick Nézet-Séguin, is the Rita E. Hauser Conducting Fellow and entered Curtis in 2022.

Hwaseop Jeong, from Seoul, a student of Anthony McGill, is the Mark and Esther Kramer Fellow and entered Curtis in 2022.

TaeYeon Rachel Kim, from Seoul, a student of Peter Wiley and Gary Hoffman, is the Jeanette S. Epstein Memorial Fellow and entered Curtis in 2022.

Muxin Li, from Hangzhou, China, a student of David Starobin and Jason Vieaux, is a Curtis Institute of Music Fellow and entered Curtis in 2022.

Delvan Lin, from Auckland, New Zealand, a student of Meng-Chieh Liu, is the Karolyn Kirksey Holler Fellow and entered Curtis in 2023.

Tae McLoughlin, from South Orange, N.J., a student of Don Liuzzi, Eric Millstein, and Ji Su Jung, is the Stanley and Bertha Rogasner Fellow and entered Curtis in 2021.

Marija Räisänen, from Kaunas, Lithuania, is a member of the Erinyes Quartet, which entered Curtis's Nina von Maltzahn String Quartet Program in 2023.

Joosep Reimaa, from Tartu, Estonia, is a member of the Erinyes Quartet, which entered Curtis's Nina von Maltzahn String Quartet Program in 2023.

Anastasia Samsel, from Guilford, Conn., a student of Jeffrey Khaner, is the Julius Baker Fellow and entered Curtis in 2022.

Dillon Scott, from Lansdale, Pa., a student of Roberto Diaz and Edward Gazouleas, is the Mark E. Rubenstein Fellow and entered Curtis in 2022.

Elizabeth Stewart, from Rochester, N.Y., is a member of the Erinyes Quartet, which entered Curtis's Nina von Maltzahn String Quartet Program in 2023.

Claire Thai, from Tucson, Ariz., a student of Elizabeth Hainen, is the L. Daniel Dannenbaum Fellow and first entered Curtis in 2018.

Stergios Theodoridis, from Thessaloniki, Greece, is a member of the Erinyes Quartet, which entered Curtis's Nina von Maltzahn String Quartet Program in 2023.

ABOUT ENSEMBLE 20/21

Ensemble 20/21's repertoire features works from the 20th and 21st centuries. With bold collaborations and striking productions, Ensemble 20/21 embraces the cutting edge of contemporary classical music through the highest level of artistry.

Learn more at Curtis.edu/Ensemble2021.

Generous support for Ensemble 20/21 is provided by the Daniel W. Dietrich II Foundation.

Next Ensemble 20/21 Concerts

Intersection

March 30, 2024 at 7:30 p.m.

"Intersection" features Anna Meredith's astonishing 1980s electronica meets '90s clubland composition *Tuggemo*, the first movement of Edgar Meyer's virtuosic Concert Duo for Violin and Bass, Courtney Bryan's gospel and jazz-flavored fusion of the sacred and secular, *Soli Deo Gloria* for two guitars, and the world premiere of Dmitri Tymoczko's *Nerds*, for chamber ensemble.

Portrait of George Lewis

April 13, 2024 at 7:30 p.m.

Ensemble 20/21 celebrates this year's composer in residence with a "Portrait of George Lewis," featuring works by the award-winning composer, musicologist, author, computer-installation artist, and trombonist.

View more upcoming Curtis performances at
Curtis.edu/Calendar.

Follow us @CurtisInstitute:



Unauthorized use of cameras and recording devices is prohibited in Gould Rehearsal Hall.

Please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices.

Recitals are professionally recorded for educational use and possible broadcast.