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MONTH 2017

Events will be added by the Music Department.

*These concerts provide student credit for MUS 195.

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FORBES CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

School of Music

presents the

37th Contemporary Music Festival
in celebration of Canada's
Sesquicentennial

Guest Artists

Kelly-Marie Murphy, *composer*

Alexandra Smither, *soprano* • Trevor Chartrand, *piano*

L+M Duo

Elizabeth Raum, *composer*

Concert I • Celestial Meditations

Monday, October 23, 2017

8 pm

Concert Hall



There will be a 10-minute intermission.

Program

Lines of Movement (2011)* Kelly-Marie Murphy
I. Propel
II. Transfix
III. Whirl
Beth Chandler, *flute* | Diane Phoenix-Neal, *viola*
Jaclyn Wappel, *harp*

Samadhi (1979) John Hilliard
Madison Modern Music Ensemble
Lydia Carroll, *flute* | Anthony Fortuna, *English horn* | Patrick O'Brien, *clarinet*
Tony Moran, *bass clarinet* | Jianda Bai, Greg Childress, *violins*
Diane Phoenix-Neal, *viola*
Carl Donakowski, *cello*
KaiPo Lan, Caleb Pickering, Adam Dipersio, Christian Davis, *percussion*
Benjamin Bergey, *conductor*

Winter Songs (2014)* Kelly-Marie Murphy
Sheena Ramirez, *soprano* | Jaclyn Wappel, *harp*

Give Me Phoenix Wings to Fly (1997)* Kelly-Marie Murphy
Wanchi, *violin* | Carl Donakowski, *cello* | Lori Piitz, *piano*

- INTERMISSION -

Ko-ku = Empty Sky (1990)* Elliot Weisgarber (1919-2001)
(A Meditation on the Void – Darkness beyond the stars)
Sarunas Jankauskas, *clarinet*

Piano-Soleil (1992)* Denis Gougeon
Lori Piitz, *piano*

The Blue Eye of God (1992)* Nancy Telfer
Psalm 23 (1999)* Srul Irving Glick
The Lake Isle of Innisfree (2002)* Eleanor Daley

JMU Treble Chamber Choir
W. Bryce Hayes, *director*

**indicates Canadian work*

Program Notes

Lines of Movement (2011): In the early part of the twentieth century, artists were exploring a couple things. The Cubists were interested in still life and portraits and fracturing these forms into simpler objects. The Futurists were interested in movement and speed. One of the founding members of the Futurists was Giacomo Balla who spent much of his career studying the dynamics of movement and speed. He was concerned with how to create the illusion of motion and speed in his paintings. From this inspiration comes the harp trio, *Lines of Movement*. Although it is much easier to address speed, motion, and direction in music, momentum is still an engaging topic. How you build, maintain, or diffuse the energy of moving lines is critical in making a successful piece of music. The trio is approximately 15 minutes in duration and is divided into 3 movements: Propel, Transfix, and Whirl. The first movement (Propel) is about overcoming the initial resting state and reaching a dynamic level of activity. The second movement (Transfix) begins with a harp solo. The entire movement is very static and features a chaconne-like passage over which the viola and flute have solo lines. The third movement (Whirl) is an ecstatic and energetic finale that has almost no points of rest or inactivity. *Lines of Movement* was commissioned by Judy Loman for the Eleventh International Harp Congress. The piece is dedicated to Judy with great admiration. The composer acknowledges the generous financial support of The City of Ottawa and the Ontario Arts Council. (note by the composer)

Samadhi was first performed at Cornell University in 1979, where JMU Professor Emeritus John Hilliard was completing his graduate studies. The work was inspired by Conrad Aiken's eponymous poem, quoted below. It mentions the "cor anglais," or English horn, which Hilliard features in the colorful texture of the work.

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Patrons are reminded to turn off all pagers, cell phones, personal computers, and any other electronic devices.

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Program Notes (cont'd)

“Take then the music; plunge in the thickest of it,/ Thickest, darkest, richest; call it a forest,/ A million boles of trees, with leaves, leaves,/ Golden and green, flashing like scales in the sun,/ Tossed and torn in the tempest, whirling and streaming,/ With terrible sound, beneath, of boughs that crack./ ... Again, a hush comes; and the wind's a whisper./ One leaf goes pirouetting. You stand in the dusk/ In the misty shaft of light the sun flings faintly/ Through planes of green; and suddenly, out of the darkest/ And deepest and farthest of the forest, wavers/ That golden horn, cor anglais, husky-timbred,/ Sending through all this gloom of trees and silence/ Its faint half-mute nostalgia...”

Winter Songs is a setting of two stanzas from the poem “Frozen Fire”, by Canadian poet, Floris Clark McLaren (1904–1978). She wrote beautiful poems about bleak landscapes – descriptive, visceral, and quintessentially Canadian. It was written in 2014 for my daughter, Cassidy. (notes by the composer)

Give Me Phoenix Wings to Fly (1997): In addition to the myth of the Phoenix, there are two poetic influences for this piece. The first is John Keats:

But when I am consumed in the fire,
Give me new Phoenix wings to fly at my desire

The second is Robert Graves:

To bring the dead to life
is no great magic.
Few are wholly dead:
Blow on a dead man's embers
And a live flame will start.

I've always been intrigued by the myth of the Phoenix - a bird that immolates in fire and then rises up again from its own ashes. It is such a powerful image, and one which is relevant to contemporary life, as we find ourselves balanced somewhat precariously on the brink of disaster. No matter how devastating any single event might be, you can still recover and begin again: a do-over. The success in the attempt and the belief that it is possible to move forward. I structured the piece in 3 movements to cover each phase of the event; fire, bleak devastation, and rebuilding. The first movement is very fast with quick patterns swirling between the 3 instruments. It ends very loudly on the lowest note of the piano and goes without break into the second movement. The second movement is very austere, open, and soloistic, written without metre. I wanted to evoke the image of a few embers floating into the still air, glowing briefly then dying. The third movement is about rebuilding. The elements of self that survived the devastation, struggle to find one another and emerge from the ashes stronger than before. (note by the composer)

Ko-Ku = Empty Sky is one of the most significant survivors from an ancient body of Buddhist music for the vertical bamboo flute, likely reaching 10th or 11th century China, ruled by Sung Dynasty. After Mongol invasions, many Zen priests were forced to move to Korea and Japan, thus bringing their tradition of religious music with them. Weisgarber's transcription is a reduction of a traditional performance (typically, 45-minutes long!), more frequently played by the later Japanese version of the bamboo flute, shakuhachi. Ko -ku falls under the category of works that have been reserved for funerals of Buddhist priests who had attained the state of

Program Notes (cont'd)

Enlightenment. Elliott Weisgarber, composer, clarinetist and ethnomusicologist, served on the faculty of the University of British Columbia from 1960 until his retirement in 1984. His interest in Asian cultures led him to spending significant time in Japan studying the classical music of that country, which permeates much of his own compositional style. Weisgarber created a catalog of 450 compositions including chamber music, songs, orchestral works and scores for film, radio and television.

Piano-Soleil for solo piano one among the ten pieces grouped under the title SIX THÈMES SOLAIRES, composed in 1992 for the International Stepping Stone segment of the Canadian Music Competition. It is also the most important piece because it generates the music of all the other planets. *Piano-Soleil* symbolizes raw energy, intense heat, radiance, diffusion... And it is this energy, this light that illuminates each planet under a different aspect. The other nine pieces of the group are variations on the "music-light" of the sun. (notes by the composer)

The Blue Eye of God was commissioned by Les Choristes, the award-winning women's choir at the University of Western Ontario. Set to a poem by Barbara Powis, a Canadian poet from British Columbia whose works present a vivid image of the outdoors: movement, color, and a strong sense of life. Composed by Nancy Telfer (b. 1950), Canadian composer who has composed over 180 works ranging from short pieces for beginning students to full extended works for virtuoso musicians. Her music has been performed and broadcast around the world. In angular and dramatic ways, *The Blue Eye of God* explores the plight of marine animals and their “agony” in “confronting man.”

Psalm 23: Srul Irving Glick's (1932-2002) setting of *Psalm 23* was premiered at the “Sidney Sings” International Choral Festival at the Sydney Opera House in Australia in July, 1999. Of this setting Glick wrote, “Being a religious and spiritually-oriented person, setting the Psalms has always been a special joy for me. In fact, because of the spiritual nature of the work, I also decided to dedicate it, with love, to my mother of blessed memory, Ida Glick. Srul Irving Glick is one of Canada's most prolific composers, writing for all media from chamber music to oratorio. Especially significant is his vocal and choral music. His unique integration of contemporary music, Hebraic lyricism, and classical compositional techniques, formed into masterful and character-filled music that is both dramatic and lyrical, has won him considerable acclaim.

The Lake Isle of Innisfree: Eleanor Daley (b. 1955), Canadian composer of choral music, currently works in Ontario as a composer, church choirmaster, choral clinician, and accompanist. Her composition, *The Lake Isle of Innisfree* sets W.B. Yeats (1865-1939) poem of the same title. *The Lake Isle of Innisfree* exemplifies the style of the Celtic Revival: it is an attempt to create a form of poetry that was Irish in origin rather than one that adhered to the standards set by English poets and critics. It received critical acclaim in the United Kingdom and France. The text refers to the desire to go to a utopian land of peace, if not in reality at least in "the heart's core."

Guest Composer Biography

Kelly-Marie Murphy: With music described as “breathtaking” (Kitchener-Waterloo Record), “imaginative and expressive” (The National Post), “a pulse-pounding barrage on the senses” (The Globe and Mail), and “Bartok on steroids” (Birmingham News), Kelly-Marie Murphy’s voice is well known on the Canadian music scene. She has created a number of memorable works for some of Canada’s leading performers and ensembles, including the Toronto, Winnipeg, and Vancouver Symphony Orchestras, The Gryphon Trio, James Campbell, Shauna Rolston, the Cecilia and Afiara String Quartets, and Judy Loman. In addition to many academic scholarships awarded in Canada and England, Dr. Murphy has also won prizes for her music, dating back to 1992. Her career was launched when she won first prize and the People's Choice Award at the CBC Young Composer's Competition in 1994 (string quartet category). Since then, Dr. Murphy’s music has been performed around the world by outstanding soloists and ensembles, and has had radio broadcasts in over 22 countries. Her music has been interpreted by renowned conductors such as Sir Andrew Davis, David Brophy, Bramwell Tovey, and Mario Bernardi, and has been heard in iconic concert halls, such as Carnegie Hall in New York and The Mozarteum in Salzburg. Kelly-Marie Murphy was born on a NATO base in Sardegna, Italy, and grew up on Canadian Armed Forces bases all across Canada. She began her studies in composition at the University of Calgary with William Jordan and Allan Bell, and later received a Ph.D. in composition from the University of Leeds, England, where she studied with Philip Wilby. After living and working for many years in the Washington D.C. area where she was designated "an alien of extraordinary ability" by the US Immigration and Naturalization Service, she is now based in Ottawa.

About the Festival

Special Thanks

Contemporary Music Festival Committee

Casey Cangelosi, Gabriel Dobner, Eric Guinivan, Jason Haney,
Dorothy Maddison, John Peterson, Diane Phoenix-Neal, Lori Piitz, Sam Suggs

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JMU Center for Global Engagement

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The first JMU Contemporary Music Festival was held in 1981, initiated by then-director of the School of Music Joe Estock and faculty composer John Hilliard. In the years since, the festival has hosted many of the most prominent composers and performers of new music in the world today. Recent guest artists include:

Augusta Read Thomas

Stephen Hartke

The Virginia Sinfonietta

Roger Reynolds

JACK Quartet

American Modern Ensemble

Sir Peter Maxwell Davies

Alarm Will Sound

Steven Stucky

Steve Reich

New Millennium Ensemble

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