

Upcoming Events

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

Alexandra Smither, *soprano*
Trevor Chartrand, *piano*
in recital

*Alexandra Smither is the winner of Canada's 2017
Eckhardt-Gramatté Competition*

Wednesday, October 25, 2017
5 pm
Recital Hall



There will be a 10-minute intermission.

Program

<i>from</i> Chants de Terre et de Ciel 6. Résurrection	Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)
Tanzer Lieder* Sur une étoile Stimmen Dezember Wishing Wel Last Song	Ana Sokolovic (b. 1968)
Yellow Leaves A Summer's Day Radiant Dreams Farewell Old Tales	Charlotte Bray (b. 1982)
– INTERMISSION –	
Sequenza III	Luciano Berio (1925-2003)
Malfunctionlieder*	Nicole Lizée (b. 1973)
Songs of Childhood* Lullaby I To Mix a Pancake Is the Moon Tired? Swift and Sure the Swallow	Vivian Fung (b. 1975)

**indicates Canadian works*

Program Notes

About the Competition

The Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition is the most important annually held contemporary music competition for exceptional emerging Canadian performing artists in piano, voice, and strings.

Established in 1976, the Eckhardt-Gramatté National Music Competition (commonly called the E-Gré Competition) discovers, develops, and promotes exceptional young Canadian performing musicians who show artistic proficiency, knowledge, and keen interest in Canadian and international repertoire of the 20th and 21st centuries.

Young artists, alternating annually among piano, voice, and string categories, perform for two panels of nationally and internationally distinguished juries in three levels of competition.

The 41st annual E-Gré competition in strings, will take place over the first weekend in May. For the preliminary round, applicants submit recordings for blind review by three independent jurors, who select six to attend the competition weekend at Brandon University in Brandon, Manitoba. These six competitors will perform two full recitals one in the semi-final round and one in the final round. The semi-final and final rounds are live recitals performed in BU's exquisite Lorne Watson Recital Hall for an esteemed panel of jurors and enthusiastic audience members. All recitals are streamed live for national and international audiences.

Weekend highlights in master classes offered by jury members to talented musicians from the community, the Gala concert performed by the jurors, as well as the commissioned composer's presentation attended by the competitors, local musicians and composers, and enthusiastic audience members. Shortly after the competition, the winner performs recitals during a 3-week residency at the prestigious Casalmaggiore International Festival in Italy before the cross-Canada winner's tour in November.

For 40 years, the annual E-Gré Competition & Winner's National Tour have played a significant role in the early careers of Canadian performers recognized nationally and internationally for their achievements in music. E-Gré prize-winners include Officers of the Order of Canada Jon Kimura Parker, Ben Heppner, Louise Bessette, and James Ehnes.

The E-Gré Competition fosters the creation of new music by leading Canadian composers by commissioning a test piece each year. Through the creation of 36 new works and encouraging the performance of Canadian compositions since 1976, the E-Gré Competition is helping to build a musical cultural legacy for Canada.

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

The unauthorized videotaping or any other recording of this production is strictly prohibited in adherence with Federal copyright laws.

Program Notes (cont'd)

In creating our program, Trevor and I sought specifically to highlight not only Canadian composers but also female composers. The gender gap in composition representation is far from closed. We saw this as an opportunity to introduce audiences to some wonderful works and women they may not have already been acquainted with. We did also include pieces by Messiaen and Berio as they were influential to both the commissioning composer and myself in finding our respective artistic voices. Also very near and dear to my heart is working with young composers. On this program we feature new pieces by three friends of mine who have bright compositional futures.

Résurrection is the final song in Olivier Messiaen's *Chants de Terre et de Ciel*. The text was written by the composer, after the birth of his son Pascal. The entire cycle encompasses the stunning combination of the composer's personal emotions as well as reverence to God and the majesty of the universe. *Resurrection* was specifically written for Easter. The text examines both Christ's majesty as well as the humanity within his and our condition.

Ana Sokolovic's **Tanzer Lieder** examine the evolving relationship between two people. The poetry, sung in French, English, and German, has a decidedly otherworldly and sometimes absurdist feeling. The music matches the text perfectly, transporting the listener to various landscapes. It is a reminder that although love may transport us to the moon, we must all return to earth.

In **Yellow Leaves**, the poet, Caroline Thomas, created a set of 154 Haikus, based on Shakespeare's 154 Sonnets. The composer selected 33 of the Haikus as the basis for nine themed songs, five of which are recorded here. The cycle travels through a range of emotions based on love, loss and deceit. The title, Yellow Leaves – a line appearing in the poetry – reflects the completion of the song cycle in Berlin in the autumn of 2012.

Sequenza III was originally written for Luciano Berio's wife, Cathy Berberian. As with all of his sequenza, the piece explores the wildest and most extensive ends of vocal technique. The poetry for the piece was written by Markus Kutter, a good friend of Berio's. It was designed as a modular text, meaning that it can be taken apart and explored as individual syllables. This facilitates Berio's manipulation of the poem. The poem originally reads as:

Give me a few words for a woman
To sing a truth allowing us
To build a house without worrying before night comes

Malfunctionlieder was the 2017 E-Gre commission. Nicole Lizee is an absolute wonder. The score is says: "The piece comprises several film scenes that have been manipulated and 'damaged'. The performer should interact with the soundtrack/film voices and characters - at times melding with the voices and at other times

Program Notes (cont'd)

overtaking the voices. While certain theatrical, interpretive and colour elements are indicated in the score, the performer can add more at will." The piece does exactly that and the results are phenomenal.

Songs of Childhood are incredibly arresting in their simplicity and beauty. They are set to delightful texts by Christina Rossetti (1830-1894). They oscillate from dreamlike to the absurd, encompassing the vibrant mind and outlook of children. Vivian Fung's music perfectly captures both the incredulous wonder and joy of childhood. As always, Vivian's music is perfectly crafted, distinct, clean, and incredibly complex.

TOUR SCHEDULE

October 20 @ 7:30 PM – Kingston, ON

The Rehearsal Hall at The Isabel Bader Performing Arts Centre, Queen's University and New Music Kingston

October 22 @ 3:00 PM – Toronto, ON

Hart House, University of Toronto

October 24 @ 12:30 PM – Thunder Bay, ON

Jean McNulty Recital Hall, Lakehead University LUMINA Series

October 25 @ PM – Harrisonburg, Virginia

James Madison University Contemporary Music Festival

October 28 @ 7:30 PM – Sackville, NB

Brunton Auditorium, Mount Allison University

November 3 @ 12:30 PM – London, ON

Von Kuster Hall, Don Wright Faculty of Music, University of Western Ontario

November 12 @ 2:00 PM – Winnipeg, MB

Winnipeg Art Gallery, Women's Musical Club of Winnipeg

November 20 @ 12:00 PM – Calgary, AB

Eckhardt-Gramatté Recital Hall, University of Calgary

November 22 @ 12:00 PM – Vancouver, BC

Roy Barnett Recital Hall, University of British Columbia

Guest Artist Biographies

Soprano **Alexandra Smither** is quickly making a name for herself the worlds of both old and new classical music. Ms. Smither is a graduate of the University of Toronto (B.Mus 2014) where she received one of the Music Department's highest graduating awards, the Tecumseh Sherman Rogers Award. She continued her studies, fully funded, at Rice University's prestigious Shepherd School of Music (M.Mus 2016), While there she co-founded and managed the University's student-lead new music ensemble, Hear&Now. She has held fellowships at the Music Academy of the West, SongFest, as a Marc and Eva Fellow, and the Franz Schubert Institute of Lieder.

In 2017 she was a fellow at Songfest's inaugural Winter Intensive and Marilyn Horne's *The Song Continues* at Carnegie Hall. In February of 2017, she was an Artist in Residence at the Banff Centre's "Concert in the 21st Century" as the recipient of the John and Sheilagh Languille Artist Award.

In May, Alexandra toured parts of Michigan and Ontario with a program of contemporary music for soprano and violin. In June, she made her principal debut as Mrs. Waters with Toronto's Opera5 in their production of Ethyl Smyth's *The Boatswain's Mate* in Toronto before beginning her work as a soprano fellow for the 2017 Tanglewood Festival. www.alexandrasmither.com

Trevor Chartrand is an active collaborative pianist based out of Toronto, Ontario. Most recently, he worked at the Orford Music Festival as an accompanist for a violin studio. Earlier in the summer of 2017, he worked as a repetiteur for Opera 5's production "Suffragette: Fête Galante and Boatswain's Mate by Dame Ethel Smyth". This is his second year with Opera 5 after having been repetiteur for 2016's production of Johann Strauss' Die Fledermaus. In 2016, Trevor was also repetiteur, music coach, and recitative performer for the University of Michigan's production of Così fan tutte by Mozart. Trevor is active internationally as he was music director in Périgueux, France in the summers of 2015 and 2016 for the Franco American Vocal Academy (FAVA). There, he oversaw the musical preparation of four operas including Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, and Gounod's *Mireille*. Trevor was also the head coach for UW Opera's production of the Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, and was music director for the London Opera Guild Scholarship Concert series.

In addition to being active in the operatic community, Trevor is a passionate recital performer in both vocal and chamber music. Most recently, he performed the complete works for violin and piano by Sergei Prokofiev. He has traveled extensively around the world seeking musical endeavors from Canada and the United States, to Europe and Australia. In addition to working around the world, Trevor spent the past three years in Ann Arbor, Michigan at the University of Michigan where he obtained a Doctorate of Musical Arts (DMA) in collaborative piano under the tutelage of Professor Martin Katz. Trevor also holds an undergraduate degree in solo piano performance, and a Master's degree in collaborative piano, both from the University of Western Ontario.

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

School of Music Faculty, Staff and Students

Jeff Bush, *Director of the School of Music*

George Sparks, *Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts*

Regan Byrne, *Executive Director of the Forbes Center for the Performing Arts*

Shawn Tucker, Bradley Monahan, Tom Carr, *Forbes Center Production and Technical Staff*

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

George Tsontakis

Samuel Adler

George Crumb

Donald Erb

Adolphus Hailstork

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Chen Yi