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THE DINA KOSTON AND ROGER SHAPIRO  
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THE MCKIM FUND IN THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

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**ENSEMBLE**  
**INTERCONTEMPORAIN**

**MATTHIAS PINTSCHER**, MUSIC DIRECTOR

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Friday, November 13, 2015 ~ 7:30 pm  
Coolidge Auditorium  
Library of Congress, Thomas Jefferson Building

THE DINA KOSTON AND ROGER SHAPIRO FUND FOR NEW MUSIC

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Harpsichord by Thomas and Barbara Wolf, 1991,  
after Pascal Taskin, 1770

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**The Library of Congress  
Coolidge Auditorium  
Friday, November 13, 2015 — 7:30 pm**

THE DINA KOSTON AND ROGER SHAPIRO  
FUND FOR NEW MUSIC

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# ENSEMBLE INTERCONTEMPORAIN

**MATTHIAS PINTSCHER**, CONDUCTOR

**ERIC-MARIA COUTURIER**, CELLO

**HAE-SUN KANG**, VIOLIN

**HIDÉKI NAGANO & DIMITRI VASSILAKIS**, PIANOS

**DIÉGO TOSI**, VIOLIN

## LIST OF MUSICIANS

**Sophie Cherrier & Emmanuelle Ophèle**, flutes

**Philippe Grauvogel & Didier Pateau**, oboes

**Alain Billard & Jérôme Comte**, clarinets

**Pascal Gallois & Paul Riveaux**, bassoons

**Jens McManama & Jean-Christophe Vervoitte**, horns

**Clément Saunier**, trumpet

**Benny Sluchin**, trombone

**Hidéki Nagano & Dimitri Vassilakis**, pianos/keyboards

**Hae-Sun Kang & Diégo Tosi**, violins

**John Stulz**, viola

**Eric-Maria Couturier**, cello

**Nicolas Crosse**, double bass

Additional musician: **Frank Scalisi**, clarinet

# Program

HANNAH LASH (b. 1981)

Two Movements for violin and piano (2015), World Premiere

Commissioned by the McKim Fund in the Library of Congress

I. ♩ = 54

II. ♩ = 180 — ♩ = 120 — ♩ = 90 — ♩ = 180 — ♩ = 90

*Hae-Sun Kang, violin; Dimitri Vassilakis, piano*

EDGARD VARÈSE (1883-1965)

*Octandre* (1923)

I. *Assez Lent*— *Mouvementé (Lourd et sauvage)*—*Animez un peu*—*Revenez à Mouvementé*—*Tempo 1 (Assez Lent)*

II. *Très vif et nerveux*

III. *Grave (en mode de Passacaille)*—*Animé et jubilaire*—*Subitement très vif et nerveux*—*Mouv<sup>t</sup> initial, Animé et jubilaire*

MATTHIAS PINTSCHER (b. 1971)

*Profiles of Light*, U.S. Premiere of complete cycle

*Now I* for piano (2015)

*Hidéki Nagano, piano*

*Now II* for cello (2014)

Co-Commissioned by the Mortizburg Festival and the Dina Koston and Roger Shapiro Fund in the Library of Congress

*Eric-Maria Couturier, cello*

*Uriel* for cello and piano (2011-12)

*Eric-Maria Couturier, cello; Dimitri Vassilakis, piano*

GYÖRGY LIGETI (1923-2006)

*Kammerkonzert* for 13 instrumentalists (1969-70)

I. *Corrente (Fließend)*—*senza tempo*—*a tempo...*—*Più mosso*—*senza tempo*—*a tempo*—*senza tempo*—*a tempo, meno mosso*—*Tempo primo*

II. *Calmo, sostenuto*—*Più mosso*—*Poco meno mosso*—*Ancora meno mosso*—*Più mosso*—*Tempo primo*—*Più mosso...*—*Meno mosso*—*senza tempo*—*a tempo (Tempo primo)*—*meno mosso*—*senza tempo*—*a tempo*—*senza tempo*—*a tempo (Tempo primo)*—*più mosso*—*meno mosso*—*subito Presto possibile*—*subito senza tempo*—*Tempo primo*

III. *Movimento preciso e meccanico*—♩ = 40—*senza tempo*—*a tempo*—*più mosso*—*meno mosso*—*tempo primo*—*poco più mosso*—*senza tempo*—*tempo primo*—*Subito più mosso*—*tempo primo*—*meno mosso*—*tempo primo*

IV. *Presto*—*senza tempo*—*a tempo*—*meno mosso*—*senza tempo*—*tempo primo*—*senza tempo*—*tempo primo*—*senza tempo*

## INTERMISSION

ALBAN BERG (1885-1935)

### *Kammerkonzert* for piano, violin and 13 winds (1923-5)

Motto: *Aller guten Dinge... Langsame*

*Thema scherzoso con Variazioni: Leicht beschwingt (Tempo I)—A tempo (scherzando, aber etwas behäbiger)—Tempo I—Schwungvoll (Tempo II)—Meno Allegro (Tempo III)—*

Variation I: *Tempo I—Tempo II (schwungvoll)—*

Variation II: *Langsames Walzertempo—Schwungvoll—Stretta—mäßsig—Gemächliches Walzertempo—A tempo—*

Variation III: *Kräftig bewegt*

Variation IV: *Sehr rasch*

Variation V: *Tempo (I) des Themas—A tempo = Das behäbigere Tempo (aber nicht schleppen!)—Schwungvoll—Meno allegro (aber trotzdem immer bewegt)—*

*Adagio (Tempo I)—Bewegter—Schon viel ruhiger—Ganz langsam (Tempo II)—Sehr langsam (Tempo III)—Bewegter und molto rubato (Tempo IV)—Sehr breit—Schleppend (Tempo V)—Tempo I—Leidenschaftlich bewegt, also doppelt so schnell, als das vorige Tempo I—Ganz langsam—Wieder leidenschaftlich bewegt—Doppelt so langsam, Tempo V—Bedeutend bewegter und molto rubato, Tempo IV—Sehr langsame Tempo (III)—Ganz langsam, Tempo II—Tempo I—*

*Rondo ritmico con Introduzione. Introduzione: Durchwegs frei, im Charakter einer "Kadenz" vorzutragen—Plötzlich langsamer—Plötzlich wieder vorwärts!—Etwas ruhiger—A tempo, aber noch stürmischer—Etwas breiter, aber immer noch stürmisch—Rondo ritmico—Etwas langsamer—a tempo—poco pesante—tempo...—Tempo (scherzoso)—Wieder schwerer—Alla marcia—Coda—Stretta—poco pesante—a tempo ("Stretta")*

*Diégo Tosi, violin; Hidéki Nagano, piano*



## About the Program

### **HANNAH LASH, Two Movements for violin and piano**

Two Movements for violin and piano is a piece that plays with hierarchical harmonic relationships. But I seek to illuminate my own harmonic structures by a mutability of hierarchies, and an asymmetrical motivic world. It is a piece that asks questions of its own material, that violates its own rules and breaks its promises of stability.

- Hannah Lash

Hailed by *The New York Times* as “striking and resourceful...handsomely brooding,” **Hannah Lash**’s music has been performed at the Times Center in Manhattan, the Chicago Art Institute, Tanglewood Music Center, Harvard University, The Chelsea Art Museum, and on the American Opera Project’s stage in New York City. She has been commissioned by The Fromm Foundation, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Alabama Symphony Orchestra, Carnegie Hall, the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, the American Composers Orchestra, The Naumburg Foundation, The Orpheus Duo, The Howard Hanson Foundation’s Commissioning Fund, Case Western Reserve’s University Circle Wind Ensemble, MAYA, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the Arditti Quartet, the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival and the Aspen Music Festival and School, among others.

Lash has received numerous honors and prizes, including the ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award, a Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a Fromm Foundation Commission, a fellowship from Yaddo Artist Colony, the Naumburg Prize in Composition, the Barnard Rogers Prize in Composition, the Bernard and Rose Sernoffsky Prize in Composition, and numerous academic awards. Her orchestral work *Furthermore* was selected by the American Composers Orchestra for the 2010 Underwood New Music Readings. Her chamber opera, *Blood Rose*, was presented by New York City Opera’s VOX in the spring of 2011.

*New York Times* music critic Steve Smith praised Lash’s work for the JACK Quartet, *Frayed*: “Ms. Lash’s compact sequence of pale brush strokes, ghostly keening and punchy outbursts was striking and resourceful; you hoped to hear it again...” Esteemed music critic Bruce Hodges lauded Lash’s piece *Stalk* for solo harp as being “appealing...florid, and introspective.”

In addition to performances of her music in the U.S., Lash’s music is well known internationally. In April of 2008, her string quartet *Four Still* was performed in Kiev in the Ukraine’s largest international new music festival, “Musical Premieres of the Season,” curated by Carson Cooman. In the summer of 2010, her piece *Unclose* was premiered by members of Eighth Blackbird at the MusicX festival in Blonay, Switzerland.

Recent premieres include *Three Shades Without Angles*, for flute, viola and harp, by the Boston Symphony Chamber Players, *Pulse-space*, for string quartet, by the Flux Quartet, as well as several new orchestral works: *Eating Flowers*, for the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, *Nymphs*, for the Alabama Symphony Orchestra, and *This Ease*, for the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. In October 2015, the American Composers Orchestra premiered Lash’s Concerto for Harp and Chamber Orchestra, conducted by George Manahan and with Lash as soloist. Other recent premieres include *God Music Bug Music* in January 2011 with the Minnesota Orchestra, the monodrama *Stoned Prince* by New York based ensemble Loadbang in April 2013, *Subtilior Lamento* with the Da Capo Chamber Players at Carnegie Hall in 2012, and *Glockenliebe*, for three glockenspiels, with Talujon Percussion in December 2012. Her 2011 orchestral work, *Hush*, was featured on the Los Angeles Philharmonic’s Brooklyn Festival in April of 2013. Upcoming premieres include a new chamber opera, *Beowulf*, commissioned by Guerilla Opera, and a new work for Loadbang, commissioned by Columbia University’s Miller Theatre.

Lash obtained her Ph.D in Composition from Harvard University in 2010. She has held teaching positions at Harvard University (Teaching Fellow) and at Alfred University (Guest Professor of Composition), and currently serves on the composition faculty at Yale University School of Music.



## EDGARD VARÈSE, *Octandre*

Edgard Varèse had the uncanny ability to be acceptable and admired by a wide variety of composers and musicians. The diversity of the figures who respected him is telling of his accomplishment: "[few] other composers enjoyed the respect of such disparate contemporaries as Busoni, Debussy, Schoenberg and Stravinsky; few others excited the interest at once of Babbitt, Boulez, Cage and Stockhausen."<sup>1</sup> Perhaps more astounding is that the reputation of Varèse was built on only fifteen or fewer extant compositions (depending on how one counts unfinished and lesser known works). With the exception of *Un grand sommeil noir* from 1906, virtually all of Varèse's pre-1918 works were destroyed by fire or, in a regrettable incident later in life, by himself.<sup>2</sup> Most of his "classic" works date from the 1920s, and the non-orchestral works tended to privilege winds and percussion over the use of string instruments. Varèse's desire to transcend the traditional limitations of instruments (and their mode of sound production) led to pathbreaking works like *Ionisation* (for thirteen percussionists) in 1929-31 and the seminal three-track tape piece from 1957-8, *Poème électronique*.

*Octandre* dates from 1923, and utilizes an ensemble consisting of eight (appropriately) performers: flute/piccolo, B-flat and E-flat clarinet, oboe, bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone and contrabass. The work was premiered in 1924 in a concert by the International Composers' Guild, an organization Varèse co-founded with Carlos Salzedo in 1921.<sup>3</sup> During this time Varèse was living in the United States, a highly creative time inaugurated by his composition of *Amériques*. From a personnel point of view, the percussionless *Octandre* offers a practical entry point into the music of Varèse, though he managed to pack a great deal into its three brief movements.

An iconic oboe solo opens the work, presenting a distinctive melody with certain traits that say much about how *Octandre's* material is handled. Varèse repeats the material, but not exactly; durations are manipulated, motivic gestures are repeated within a phrase, ornamentation is introduced, and rhythmic variations are set up that will evolve into motivically significant entities (such as the clarinet line—the second instrument to be heard—that brings the repeated-note triplets to the fore). It is worth noting both the interval characteristics of the opening four notes and

1 Griffiths, Paul, "Varèse, Edgard," *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press.

2 Ibid. Varèse destroyed his 1908 symphonic poem *Bourgogne* around 1962.

3 Ibid.

the simplicity of the essential set of notes they create. The principal four pitches, if arranged as a series of pitch classes in a row, would just be a descending chromatic scale (G-flat, F, E, D-sharp). Such a melody would perhaps not be as memorable as what Varèse does, using the same interval class (1) to present the chromatic neighbors with three different prominent intervals: a minor ninth, a major seventh, and a minor second (all of these intervals are related to the half step). In Example 1 below, this grouping is labeled Z, while its subsets are labeled X and Y. One will recognize the essential characteristics of Z being repeated three times, with some notes contracted or expanded, and with the introduction of an ornament and an interruptive triplet that repeats X:

**Example 1**

The musical notation shows a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 2/4 time signature. The melody consists of several measures. Annotations include:
 

- A bracket labeled 'Z' spanning the first two notes of the first measure.
- Sub-brackets labeled 'X' and 'Y' under the first and second notes of the first measure, respectively.
- A bracket labeled 'Z' spanning the first two notes of the second measure.
- A bracket labeled 'Y: orn.' under a triplet of notes in the second measure.
- A bracket labeled 'X' under the first two notes of the third measure.
- A bracket labeled 'Z' spanning the first two notes of the fourth measure.
- Below the staff, brackets indicate 'expanded' intervals between the first and second notes of the second and fourth measures, and a 'contracted' interval between the first and second notes of the third measure.
- Triplet markings (a '3' over a bracket) are present under the triplet in the second measure and the final two notes of the fourth measure.

Edgard Varèse, *Octandre*, I: mm. 1-3, oboe

As the melody continues, the contours, sets and elements presented above occur in different contexts (such as the immediate continuation of the pitch set relations using D-sharp, D, C-sharp and C). There is some similarity here to Stravinsky's approach in the opening bassoon solo of *The Rite of Spring*. As the oboe line draws to a close (after the brief clarinet interjection colored by a bass harmonic), it gets progressively higher and louder, and the other instruments enter in pairs to create a giant sound; the material here includes different speeds of the repeated-note triplet idea, with an expanded set of intervals in play. Musical ideas are juxtaposed in measure-length contrasting segments, from an incisive double-tongued horn figure to high repeated figures. The parts seem to get locally stuck in their figuration, while a melodic idea in the trumpet is echoed in the horn (developed along the same lines as the opening oboe solo in terms of expansions, contractions and repeats). The oboe takes over at the end, repeating the opening measures up a tritone, but not quite finishing the line.

A long silence precedes the entrance of the piccolo, which has a solo at the beginning of the second movement. The piccolo's pitch classes, minus the D-sharp, are the retrograde of the oboe solo's (in this case, just an ascending chromatic scale: E, F, G-flat). When the clarinet enters (again, the second instrument), the interval of a major seventh is emphasized. The trombone takes a more prominent role in this movement, and the attacks of the various instruments tend to be rhythmically unified. A fascinating passage features chords with a significant but unstable clarinet line emphatically bleating its resistance. Moving into the third movement, the contrabass softly announces a triplet figure, and we again hear the cluster of half steps when the bassoon joins in. The oboe's entrance signals the start of a quasi-fugato section,

with entrances to follow in the bassoon and E-flat clarinet. By the time the contrabass and brass enter, it feels like a grotesque parody of the material is being presented. This impression is enhanced by the trumpet line, that echoes both the trumpet melody from the first movement and the persistent clarinet of the second. The brass eventually find themselves in a mechanistic groove that can only be stopped by a loud, high chord, with the earlier imitative figure in the clarinet and oboe. The final chord is held by the brass, and consists of another chromatic pitch-class cluster. By retaining certain recognizable features throughout the piece, Varèse created an inventive yet at times mechanistically frightening world that toys with the listener's expectations in a non-tonal context—a considerable achievement in such a brief work.

*David Henning Plylar*  
*Music Specialist*  
*Library of Congress, Music Division*



## **MATTHIAS PINTSCHER, *Profiles of Light***

*Now II* is the second part of the triptych called *Profiles of Light*, the first part being for piano solo (*Now I*), the second part for violoncello solo and the concluding part, called *Uriel*, being for the two instruments together.

All three pieces are inspired by the work of Barnett Newman, which has been a strong influence on my artistic understanding of what it means to cut through to the essence of reduction and most direct expression at the same time.

In some of Newman's painting I find the quality of intensely glowing light, but rather more some sort of "dark glowing" ...something you also find in the music of the late Franz Schubert where there is a layer of gravity and nostalgia even under the happiest key signatures that you might find on the surface.

I find the cello is a very suitable instrument to represent that specific condition...accompanied by a piano that sometimes functions like the resonant body of the cello, maybe something like an imaginary aligote string attached to the cello.

It is a piece about resonances, the interior ones and the ones on the outside of human conditions, of life itself.

- Matthias Pintscher

## GYÖRGY LIGETI, *Kammerkonzert for 13 instrumentalists*

Much of György Ligeti's music operates on multiple seemingly incompatible perceptual orders, simultaneously. There can be an almost glacial pace of movement at the macro/structural level, the speed at which overall harmonic, registral, timbral and other constructs are perceived—often simple in nature, like a slow chromatic descent or the methodical expansion of pitches or intervals. Contrasted with this is the frenetic activity at the musical equivalent of quantum mechanical space, where the rules are different than those that operate at higher levels—here, rapidly moving lines in various voices create a wash of sound in which great activity is perceived but not necessarily in its specifics (much like a swarm of bees with an occasional outlier becoming more distinct as it gets closer to your fleeing body). Orchestral works like *Apparitions* (1958-9) and *Atmosphères* (1961) first gave voice to these incongruous, unlikely bedfellows. Ligeti would sometimes refer to the pairing of these mechanical and organic ideas as "clocks and clouds" (a description that served as the title for his 1972-3 piece *Clocks and Clouds*).<sup>4</sup>

With respect to the localized fast-moving music that might be occurring at a given point, Ligeti described the concept of "micropolyphony:"

"Technically speaking I have always approached musical texture through part-writing. Both *Atmosphères* and *Lontano* have a dense canonic structure. But you cannot actually hear the polyphony, the canon. You hear a kind of impenetrable texture, something like a very densely woven cobweb. I have retained melodic lines in the process of composition, they are governed by rules as strict as Palestrina's or those of the Flemish school, but the rules of this polyphony are worked out by me. The polyphonic structure does not come through, you cannot hear it; it remains hidden in a microscopic, underwater world, to us inaudible. I call it micropolyphony (such a beautiful word!)."<sup>5</sup>

At times the textures produced by various instruments moving at different speeds are the product of canons, as Ligeti states above, rotated to start at a different point in the sequence yet following the same pitch-path. At other times the textures are created by an amalgamation of things like scalar activity at different rates and starting points, giving the impression of movement in a particular registral direction. One practical note I would like to make concerns Ligeti's notation of these textures. Unmeasured ideas tend to work best with soloists (as in the Chamber Concerto), because they tend to play independently. Many times, however, the notation is incredibly specific—experience shows that it is often through this "hyper-specific" notation that a composer is able to reasonably predict the sonic outcome of a passage, and in

4 Griffiths, Paul, "György Ligeti," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press.

5 As quoted in Varnai, Péter, "Beszélgetések Ligeti Györggyel," trans. Gabor J. Schabert, in *Ligeti in Conversation* (London: Eulenberg, 1983), 14-15.

some ways it is easier for some musicians to navigate than if it were presented more generally. In Ligeti's case, where one may find at once three-against-four-against-five-against-seven, and so on, it is the best way to ensure the composite result.

By the time Ligeti composed his Chamber Concerto (*Kammerkonzert*) in 1969-70,<sup>6</sup> he had honed his techniques to a point of mastery. In the Chamber Concerto he did not have the vast resources of an orchestra at hand, but instead just thirteen players: flute, oboe, clarinet, bass clarinet/clarinet, horn, trombone, 2 keyboard players (harpsichord, organ, piano and celesta), and string quintet. Composed for the ensemble "die reihe" co-founded by Friedrich Cerha, the first three movements were premiered in May of 1970; the fourth movement was commissioned separately by the Berlin Festival, and the full four-movement piece was premiered later that year.<sup>7</sup> Each movement was dedicated to a different person of significance to Ligeti (I: Maedi Wood; II: Traude Cerha; III: Friedrich Cerha; IV: Walther Schmieding).

Ligeti's Chamber Concerto is an immersive study of the possibilities of its ensemble, utilizing the "opposing" fast/slow rates of progression at the local and global levels. It is interesting to consider the pitch material that opens the concerto in light of the treatment of Varèse's linear chromatic cluster in *Octandre*. The pitches in the beginning are limited to the chromatic set between mid-register F-sharp and B-flat. This compact set is very gradually expanded to include other members. If we compare the flute and clarinet duet at the beginning of the piece, we can also see how each line is moving in the same pitch stream, but at different rates; the dashed lines show how the pitches match (for simplicity's sake I left out the bass clarinet and lower string harmonics, moving at a much slower rate but still contributing to this pitch set, in this register):

### Example 2

Ligeti, *Kammerkonzert*, I: mm. 1-2, flute and clarinet

Closer study reveals many such relationships. As more voices are added, Ligeti essentially creates a harmonic field in which the musical activity occurs. One consequence of this is that when Ligeti does deviate by adding a pitch or introducing a new instrument, the listener is aware of that difference, even if it quickly becomes subsumed in the texture. Long tones occasional poke out, as do sped-up versions of

6 The Library holds the holograph manuscript of *Ramifications*, a Koussevitzky commission completed shortly before the Chamber Concerto.

7 Steinitz, Richard, György Ligeti: Music of the Imagination (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2003), 176.

material in the strings. Timbral groupings overlap beautifully, as in the measured transition from winds to strings not far into the piece. Such considerations are always under Ligeti's control, and are at the fore of the musical argument. As time passes Ligeti begins to include unmeasured, *prestissimo* material that is played sometimes for certain durations, and at others beneath conducted/coordinated material in other parts. The net effect is a greater dissolution of meter without the loss of organized, frantic activity. One beautiful passage has the strings murmuring away (gradually changing bow position) while a seemingly unison strand is presented in the winds (they start on the same pitches, but speed up at different rates over the course of a measure). Perhaps the most dramatic moment occurs when the pitch stream finally adds an E-flat, presented in unison at the octave across much of the orchestra. The effect is akin to the arrival on E-flat in the opening movement of Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*; there it serves as the center of an arch form. Chords in the Hammond organ fill the space as Ligeti moves back to the micropolyphonic textures. A snippet of a theme is heard in the upper winds that reminds me of a grotesque quote from the finale of Mozart's forty-first symphony, but it does not last. The lower register is then employed, with a rather startling attack in the trombone. The intervals are now more spaced out, and only in the last few measures does the activity decrease in intensity.

The second movement begins in the calmer world of long-tone chords. Tone-color is a significant feature, with instruments like the oboe d'amore offering striking melodic fragments that emerge from the texture. These melodic tidbits tend to rise above the sweet cacophony of the fast-moving notes underneath. While the first movement had an E-flat as a significant arrival point, here it is the exposed and held interval of a tritone (B-F). It is a restless respite, as Ligeti moves into a new section that involves rhythmic unison presentations of rotating pitch sequences. The descent is tightly controlled, like a wound up toy that slows down as it loses its power. A brief *sul ponticello* interruption precedes a final passage of held tones, with a few slowly moving inner parts.

The third movement is a study in repeated notes, where *sforzandi* clarify the line. It starts entirely on the same pitch of E, but the tone colors and dynamics serve to articulate each line with great clarity (though as in the micropolyphonic textures from earlier, after the entrance the line is subsumed in the activity of the whole). The pitch space expands, and the rhythmic values begin to vary until the composite slows down. An unmeasured restart occurs on A-flat, with pitch shifts progressively widening the harmonic field. The return to metered music begins when the strings begin to come in plucking, gradually becoming more aggressive with snap pizzicati in the low strings ("Bartók" pizzicato). The mechanical plucking is then overwhelmed by repeated chords in the piano and harpsichord, before returning, sufficiently cowed, now quiet, fast, and unmeasured. The brass and piano now take over the role of measured music, with the winds soon to join. Again one has the sense of a winding down clock. Eventually the strings are left alone before a playful and humorous ending.

The world of spry micropolyphony returns for the fourth movement, and while the complexity of different layers of rhythms occurring simultaneously continues, there is a unity of gesture here that is different; for instance two areas of different figuration might be linked by a rising scalar ascent. Measured and unmeasured are juxtaposed, leading to a difficult-to-pull-off but impressive section in which the material is passed between groups of instruments without slackening the thirty-second note stream. A horn solo precedes a piano tantrum, the clusters of which provide an unusual accompaniment to the melodic fragments elsewhere. A scratchy contrabass takes over from the piano before being joined by it, and the bass instruments settle on highlighting a tritone. The strings take over the active lines, with the violins especially now covering a wide range. Unmeasured winds run atop the strings until all activity melts into another held tritone (this time A and E-flat, with a half-step trill on the A). The oboist signals the final unison passage in the winds, which is followed by an upward trombone glissando. Only a few small gasps remain, consisting of oscillations of ninths and tenths in the flute, clarinet, organ and celesta.



## **ALBAN BERG, *Kammerkonzert* for piano, violin and 13 winds**

The publication of Alban Berg's Chamber Concerto (*Kammerkonzert*) was accompanied by some extra information that Berg thought it would be helpful to know. It is a public letter to Arnold Schoenberg, the concerto's dedicatee and Berg's erstwhile teacher. Berg reveals multiple reasons for writing the letter, some of them programmatic, and others technical:

"...if it were known how much friendship, love, and world in human and spiritual relations I have smuggled into these three movements, the adherents of program music—if there are any left—would be delighted, and the [representatives and defenders of the "New Classicism," and "New Objectivity,"] the "linearists," "physiologists," the "contrapuntists," and the "formalists" would fall upon me in indignation at such "romantic" tendencies—if I did not make them aware that they too, if they wanted to look, would have their heart's desire."<sup>8</sup>

Here Berg gives in to the impulse to "let us know what he had done," in some detail, while retaining enough mystery to keep the (ideal) listener wanting more. An example of the "romantic" aspect of the work can be seen in his description of the opening five measures of the piece, which constitute a "Motto: *Aller guten Dinge...*" Berg follows the old tradition, perhaps most famously established by J.S. Bach, of spelling names with pitches (in German B is B-flat, H is B-natural, Es (S) is E-flat,

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8 Alban Berg, "Alban Berg's Chamber Concerto: An Open Letter," in Bryan R. Simms, *Pro Mundo—Pro Domo: The Writings of Alban Berg* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 198.

etc.). Thus the trio of Schoenberg, Webern and Berg are literally inserted into the motto for use as motivic material. Schoenberg is in the piano, Webern in the violin, and Berg in the horn (notice that the final arrival has Berg and Webern sharing the dyad of E and G, matching their mentor):

**Example 3**

Berg, *Kammerkonzert*, I: Motto with superimposed names

Other "romantic" elements include Berg's use of quotation and stylistic invocations (like the waltz). Berg references other works, like the stacked fourths before the *Gemächliches Walzertempo* in the first movement that recall Schoenberg's first chamber symphony (a work that shares the same number of instruments as Berg's concerto—a point he takes pains to point out in his "open letter").

On the technical side, Berg discusses the form of the work and the importance of the number three to many aspects of the music's design. There is something of the mystical in his fascination with "three"—he first references them as a "trinity" of elements. To sum up in brief some of the important formal aspects that Berg points out in his letter:

\* The first movement can be thought of as a variation set with sonata form features. The theme proper (following the motto) presents 30 bars of material; the first variation consists of the solo piano's elaborated presentation of the theme (drawing parallels to both a concerto scenario and the repeated exposition of a sonata movement); the second through fourth variations comprise the "development," and in them Berg presents the material in retrograde, inversion, and retrograde inversion respectively;<sup>9</sup> and the fifth variation has the hallmarks of a recapitulation of the theme, or a modified reprise with coda.

\* The second movement is essentially an A<sup>1</sup>-B-A<sup>2</sup> *Adagio*, which is then freely presented in retrograde (a literal palindrome in the case of section B),

<sup>9</sup> The labeling was mixed up between variations two and three in the original letter, though it was correct in the accompanying table. Simms 413.

giving an overall form of A<sup>1</sup>-B-A<sup>2</sup>-A<sup>2</sup>-B<sup>Mirror</sup>-A<sup>1</sup>, and the same number of bars as in movement one.

\* The third movement is the combination of the first two movements, expanded now to twice as many bars as each individual preceding movement. Berg describes the merger as involving:

1. Free counterpointing of the corresponding parts;
2. Successive juxtaposition of individual phrases and passages, one after the other like a duet;
3. Precise addition of whole sections from the two movements."<sup>10</sup>

Another key aspect to point out is that, similarly to Pintscher's *Profiles of Light* earlier in the program, the first movement features the piano, the second the violin, and the third the combination of the two. Early commentator Theodor Adorno noted that Berg broke his own rules, giving the violin a few plucked notes in the middle of the first movement, and the piano some low C-sharps in the center of the second movement, while otherwise the instruments do not play in those movements: "Unquestionably these passages contradict traditional ideas of compositional good etiquette. Etiquette requires that the composer respect the rules established by himself—the violin tacet in the first movement, that of the piano in the second, both instruments joining together only in the Cadenza and Rondo."<sup>11</sup>

Adorno goes on to say what people who have studied the piece already know; he points out that while Berg's letter to Schoenberg provides an overview, a framework, "...[the] concrete impediments to understanding the work are not overcome by that letter."<sup>12</sup>

Space limitations prevent me from diving further into the work's depths here, so we make do with wading for now, in the knowledge that further exploration of this work can yield worthwhile dividends. While Berg was dissatisfied with the concerto's world premiere, he had the occasion to hear its Vienna premiere later in the same month (March, 1927) with Rudolf Kolisch and Edward Steuermann<sup>13</sup> as soloists under the direction of Anton Webern. With this performance he was pleased, and it prompted his revision of the work to its current version.<sup>14</sup> Berg's

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10 Berg in Simms, 196-197.

11 Adorno, Theodor, "Epilogomena to the Chamber Concerto" in *Alban Berg: Master of the smallest link*, transl. Juliane Brand and Christopher Hailey (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 92.

12 Ibid., 94.

13 Steuermann was also a noted composer and arranger. The Library of Congress holds the Edward and Clara Steuermann Collection, which includes his piano trio transcription of Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht*. The Library also has the original sextet manuscript of that work in Schoenberg's hand.

14 Jarman, Douglas, "Introduction," Alban Berg, *Sämtliche Werke*, Band 5, Teil 1,

Chamber Concerto is a work at once rigorous and free. A composer who could so convincingly combine the worlds of proto-dodecaphonicism and its associated techniques with freely referential material, still drawing on Romantic forebears, is a unique specimen. Not many could make it seem so natural to include pianistic figuration like the triplet octave C-sharps that adorn the beautiful slower material of Variation I and the palindromic treatment of music in the same piece. The Chamber Concerto, following as it did on the heels of *Wozzeck* and preceding the *Lyric Suite*, occupies the extraordinary high ground of Berg's compositions of the period, helping to establish him as a master no longer in need of tutelage.

*David Henning Phylar*  
*Music Specialist*  
*Library of Congress, Music Division*



## About the Artists

In 1976, Pierre Boulez founded the **Ensemble intercontemporain** with the support of Michel Guy (who was Minister of Culture at the time) and the collaboration of Nicholas Snowman.

The Ensemble's 31 soloists share a passion for 20th-21st century music. They are employed on permanent contract, enabling them to fulfill the major aims of the Ensemble: performance, creation and education for young musicians and the general public.

Under the artistic direction of Matthias Pintscher the musicians work in close collaboration with composers, exploring instrumental techniques and developing projects that interweave music, dance, theater, film, video and visual arts.

In collaboration with IRCAM (Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique), the Ensemble intercontemporain is also active in the field of synthetic sound generation. New pieces are commissioned and performed on a regular basis.

The Ensemble is renowned for its strong emphasis on music education: concerts for kids, creative workshops for students, and training programs for future performers, conductors and composers. Since 2004, the Ensemble soloists have been tutoring young musicians in the field of contemporary repertoire at the Lucerne Festival Academy, a several-week educational project held by the Lucerne Festival. In residence at the Philharmonie de Paris, the Ensemble performs and records in France and abroad, taking part in major festivals worldwide. The Ensemble is financed by the Ministry of Culture and Communication and receives additional support from the Paris City Council.

**Matthias Pintscher** is the music director of the Ensemble intercontemporain. Beginning in 2016-17 he also takes up the post of principal conductor of the Lucerne Festival Academy. He continues his partnerships with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra as its Artist-in-Association, and with the Danish National Symphony Orchestra as Artist-in-Residence. Equally accomplished as conductor and composer, Pintscher has created significant works for the world's leading orchestras and regularly conducts throughout Europe, the U.S., and Australia.

Highlights of the 2015-16 season include conducting debuts with the Berlin Philharmonic, Toronto Symphony, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and Prague Philharmonia; a U.S. tour with the Ensemble intercontemporain; and the premiere of his new cello concerto by the Danish National Symphony and Alisa Weilerstein. Last season, Pintscher made debuts with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra, and the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks.

A successful and prolific composer, Pintscher's music is championed by some of today's finest performing artists, orchestras, and conductors. His works have been performed by such orchestras as the Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Berlin Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, and the Orchestre de Paris. His works are published exclusively by Bärenreiter, and recordings of his compositions can be found on Kairos, EMI, Teldec, Wergo, and Winter & Winter.

Pintscher also works regularly with leading contemporary music ensembles such as the Scharoun Ensemble, Klangforum Wien, Ensemble Modern, and Avanti (Helsinki). He has curated the music segment of the Impuls Romantik Festival in Frankfurt since 2011, and in September 2014 joined the composition faculty at the Juilliard School.



At the age of eighteen, **Éric-Maria Couturier** entered the Paris Conservatory (CNSMDP) in first place in Roland Pidoux's class, where he received the highest honors in cello, followed by a masters in chamber music in Christian Ivaldi's class. He was awarded First Prize and the Special Prize in the Trapani competition, Second Prize in Trieste and Third Prize in Florence along with pianist Laurent Wagschal, with whom he recorded an album devoted to French music in the early 20th century.

At 23 he joined the Paris Orchestra, and then became first-chair soloist with the Bordeaux National Orchestra. Since 2002, he has been a soloist with the Ensemble Intercontemporain. Couturier has played for the greatest conductors of our day, including Solti, Sawallisch, Giulini, Maazel and Boulez. A member of Trio Talweg, he has also performed the cello concertos of Haydn, Dvorak, Eötvös and Kurtág. His experience with chamber music has been enriched by playing with pianists such as Maurizio Pollini, Jean-Claude Penneret and Shani Diluka. In the realm of improvisation, Couturier plays with jazz singer David Linx, DJ ErikM, singer Laïka Fatien and double bass player Jean-Philippe Viret, with whom he recorded his latest album in a quartet. He has also recorded an album with the octet Les Violoncelles Français for the label Mirare. He plays on a Frank Ravatin cello.



Born in South Korea, **Hae-Sun Kang** began studying violin at age three. At age fifteen, she began studying at the Conservatoire de Paris (CNSMDP) under Christian Ferras. She won several international prizes (Rodolfo Lipizer in Italy, Carl Flesch in London, Yehudi Menuhin in Paris, ARD in Munich) and became first violin in the Orchestre de Paris in 1993 before joining the Ensemble intercontemporain in 1994.

Hae-Sun Kang has premiered many reference works for violin, such as Pierre Boulez' *Anthèmes II* for violin and electronics (Donaueschingen, 1997), which she recorded with Deutsche Grammophon and performed on a regular basis in Europe and the United States. She has performed concertos by Pascal Dusapin, Ivan Fedele, Matthias Pintscher, Unsuk Chin, Beat Furrer and Michael Jarrel, whose ...*prisme/incidences...* she recorded with Aeon.

Hae-Sun Kang teaches at the Conservatoire de Paris. She regularly performs recitals of works that have been dedicated to her. She has been heard in Philippe Schœller's *Elfique*, a piece for violin by Beat Furrer (Berlin Ultraschall Festival, 2007), *Double Bind?* by Unsuk Chin (Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord, 2007), *The Only Line* by Georges Aperghis (Munich Opernfestspiele), *Hist Wist* by Marco Stroppa (Printemps des Arts of Monaco, 2008), *All 'ungarese* for piano and violin by Bruno Mantovani (Messiaen Festival, 2009) and *Samarasa* by Dai Fujikura (Messiaen Festival, 2010).

Kang premiered *Synapse* for violin and orchestra by Philippe Manoury in Stuttgart in 2010, performing it again in 2011 with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France and the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra. She played the world premiere of *Partita II*, again by Philippe Manoury, for solo violin and electronics at the Festival de Lucerne in 2012. In 2013, she premiered *Trait d'Union* for violin and cello by Philippe Hurel. She also performed *Vita Nova* for violin and ensemble by Brice Pauset with the Ensemble Intercontemporain at the Cité de la musique.



Born in 1968 in Japan, **Hidéki Nagano** joined the Ensemble intercontemporain in 1996. At the age of twelve, he won first prize at the national student competition. Following his studies in Tokyo, he continued at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris, where he studied piano with Jean-Claude Penneret and vocal accompaniment with Anne Grappotte. After graduating with highest honors in vocal accompaniment, piano and chamber music, he won prizes at several international competitions: Montreal, Barcelona, and Maria-Canals. In 1998 he received two awards for young talents in Japan (the Muramatsu award and the Idemitsu award), and in 1999 obtained the Prix Samson François at the first international 20th century piano competition in Orléans.

It has always been important for Hidéki Nagano to pursue relationships with contemporary composers and to transmit uncommon repertoire. His soloist recordings include works by Antheil, Boulez, Messiaen, Murail, Dutilleux, Prokofiev, and Ravel. He regularly performs

in France and Japan as a soloist and with chamber ensembles. He has been a guest soloist with the NHK Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Charles Dutoit.



**Dimitri Vassilakis** began his musical studies in Athens, where he was born in 1967, continuing at the Paris Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique under Gérard Frémy, where he won First Prize for piano (unanimously), for chamber music and for accompaniment. He also studied with Monique Deschaussées and György Sebok. Since 1992 he has been a soloist with the Ensemble Intercontemporain. Other composers he has worked with include Iannis Xenakis, Luciano Berio, Karlheinz Stockhausen, and György Kurtág. His recording *Le Scorpion* with Les Percussions de Strasbourg won the Charles Cros Academy Grand Prix du Disque in the category “Best Contemporary Music Recording 2004.” His festival appearances include Salzburg, Edinburgh, Lucerne, the Florence Maggio Musicale, the Warsaw Autumn, the Ottawa Chamber Music Festival, and the London Proms. He has performed in concert halls such as the Berlin Philharmonic (under Sir Simon Rattle), New York Carnegie Hall, London Royal Festival Hall, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, and Buenos Aires Teatro Colón. His repertoire runs from Bach to emerging contemporary composers including the complete piano works by Pierre Boulez and Iannis Xenakis. His albums include, among others, the *Goldberg Variations* and excerpts from *The Well-Tempered Clavier* by Bach (with the label Quantum), etudes by György Ligeti and Fabiàn Panisello (Neos) and Boulez's first complete works for piano (Cybele). His recording of *Incises* (of which he performed the world premiere) appears in the boxed set of the complete works of Boulez published by DGG.



**Diégo Tosi** joined the Ensemble intercontemporain as a violinist in October 2006. He performs as a soloist in the world's greatest concert halls and plays from the repertoires of all periods.

He has made several CDs on the Solstice label, including works by Ravel, Scelsi, Berio and Boulez, which have won major awards. More recently he has recorded the entire oeuvre of virtuoso violinist Pablo de Sarasate and has just received the Del Duca prize awarded by the French Academy of Fine Arts and the SACEM's Enesco prize. Having been the unanimous choice for first prize at the Paris Conservatoire (CNSMDP), where he studied under Jean-Jacques Kantorow and Jean Lenert, he went on to train in Bloomington, IN, with Miriam Fried before winning the postgraduate Concours des Avant-scènes at the Paris Conservatoire.

During his training Diégo Tosi entered the most prestigious international competitions, including the Paganini in Genoa, the Rodrigo in Madrid, and the Valentino Bucchi in Rome, winning every time. As a young musician he also studied under Alexandre Bendersky and won many awards in various international competitions, including those of Wattlelos, Germans Claret and Moscow. He currently plays a Vuillaume on loan from the Fonds Instrumental Français [French Instrument Collection].

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