



I/O FEST 2022
THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 2022, 4 PM
THE CLARK: CONFORTI PAVILION

I/O ENSEMBLE

Carolyn Chen

Great Birnam Wood (2015)
for marbles/drum set

Matthew Gold, percussion

Ileana Perez Velázquez

Vitrales (Stained Glass) (2021)
for solo piano

- 1) *Luces finitas*
- 2) *Light falling through a stained glass window in an Old Havana home*
- 3) *Polvo de estrellas*
- 4) *Peces*

Doris Stevenson, piano

Mario Diaz de Leon

Sacrament (2017)
for flute, clarinet, marimba, and electronics

Jacqueline DeVoe, flute; Bixby Kennedy, clarinet; Matthew Gold, marimba

Carolyn Chen

Relationships with Gravity (2014)
for ensemble and video

Audrey Shadle '24, violin; Caroline Tally '22, cello; Robin Wang '24, piano; Matthew Gold, vibraphone; Roman Ruiz '22, percussion; Sara Stebbins '24, conductor

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Carolyn Chen: *Great Birnam Wood*

The direct and the indirect lead to each other in turn. It is like moving in a circle—you never come to an end. Who can exhaust the possibilities of their combination?[...] The onset of troops is like the rush of a torrent which will even roll stones along its course.

—Sun Tzu, *the Art of War*

Who can impress the forest, bid the tree/Unfix his earth-bound root?

—William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

Special thanks to Eric Derr, for/with whom this was made.

—Carolyn Chen

Ileana Perez Velázquez: *Vitrales (Stained Glass)*

This composition was inspired by stained glass art and how the light that passes through stained glass is reflected in different time periods, cultures, and locations.

1) *Luces finitas* (lights that are no longer with us) is inspired by the stained glass art that was created in the European culture of the past. This piece serves as an introduction to the cycle, containing rhythms that remind us of stained glass from churches of the baroque period, while looking at and listening to them from a contemporary optic. These gestures are progressively mixed with syncopations and intonations from other cultures.

2) *Light falling through a stained glass window in an Old Havana home*. This piece transports us to the 19th century period of colonial mansions built in Old Havana, where stained glass was part of windows and doors in the architecture of patios. This stained glass contains very bright primary colors which are reflected through the strong Caribbean sunlight in the interiors of the houses. There is not much sound privacy in old Havana, where we can hear everyone and everything that passes through the streets including Afro-Cuban percussion rhythms: fragments of this sound world are included in this piece. The smell of the sea is also reflected by sudden passing waves of fragmented arpeggios.

3) *Polvo de estrellas* (star dust) takes us to the cosmos. Stars and their lights produce visual effects when we look at them from our human perspective. Such effects can be contemplated as a magnification of stained glass effects, produced by distant universes.

4) *Peces* (Fish) is a stained glass visual art piece created by Cuban artist Amelia Pelaez in the first half of the 20th century, and is part of the permanent collection at MoMA. This piece brings us back to Cuban culture, which Pelaez represents in her work with very bright colors. Pelaez's piece is an abstract representation of the design of an old colonial Cuban house. In the center of this stained glass we can also see colorful fish, and the sea, all as part of the same abstract and colorful composition. This piece continues the spirit of *Light falling through a stained glass window in an Old Havana home*, resulting in a culmination and climax of some of the ideas presented previously in the second piece.

—Ileana Perez Velázquez

Mario Diaz de Leon: *Sacrament*

"Matter is spirit moving slowly enough to be seen." —Teilhard de Chardin

In Rosemary Radford Ruether's *Gaia and God*, she advocates for a 'sacramental tradition' of earth healing, linking historically heretical proponents of immanent divinity from Irenaeus to Whitehead. The above quote by Teilhard elegantly encapsulates an essential aspect of this thought, in which sacramental experiences are not proscribed by church authority, but are radically accessible through a celebration of body-centered, biocentric kinship. In tribute to these ideas, *Sacrament* uses repetition and variation to explore connections between speed and resonance, spaciousness and overload, growth and decay. In the opening section, arpeggiating woodwinds summon a distorted synth line, leading to a series of riff-oriented sections that cycle back to a varied beginning, nine minutes later. As in many of my works, the performers in *Sacrament* are invited to strike a balance between fierce precision and transformational nuance. The flute creates virtuosic contrasts between rapid fire arpeggios and "distorted" breath tones, the clarinet evokes fluidity and color, while the marimba alternates between hypnotic riffs, stentorian pulses, and ecstatic gestures that dance on the threshold of syncopation and pointillism.

—Mario Diaz de Leon

Carolyn Chen: *Relationships with Gravity*

I sit. The Earth sits. We pull toward each other, all the time. I don't usually think about this unless something goes. When I fall, my body meets the earth—even if I lose focus, the pull is still working. The force is always there, pulling invisibly. The fall illuminates it.

This is an assemblage on falling. I asked people for stories about falling and explanations of gravity. The ensemble responds—sometimes measured, sometimes in games—to their interwoven words and video from falling and not-falling cameras.

Relationships with Gravity was commissioned by Music at the Anthology, Inc. for the 2014 MATA Festival of New Music.

—Carolyn Chen

ABOUT I/O FEST

I/O Fest, the Williams College Department of Music's annual immersion in the music of today, is a multi-day exploration of adventurous music featuring new voices, fresh perspectives, and creative modes of musical expression. Performances, talks, and workshops are held in the '62 Center for Theatre & Dance and The Clark Art Institute, with a special interest in unconventional spaces and creative modes of performance. Featuring renowned guest artists and performances by the I/O Ensemble, faculty, and students, I/O Fest seeks to present innovative and visceral programs that invite listeners to experience music in new ways.