

I/O FEST 2020

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 2020, 7:30 PM

'62 CENTER FOR THEATRE AND DANCE

YARN/WIRE

Ian Antonio, percussion | Laura Barger, piano | Ning Yu, piano | Russell Greenberg, percussion

Zosha Di Castri

Tachitipo (2016)

~ *intermission* ~

Linda Catlin Smith

Morandi (1991)

Misato Mochizuki

Le monde des ronds et des carrés (2015)

This event is generously sponsored in part by the Lecture Committee, the Oakley Center, and the Gaudino Fund.

Yarn/Wire is a New York-based percussion and piano quartet (Ian Antonio and Russell Greenberg, percussion / Laura Barger and Ning Yu, pianos). Described by The Brooklyn Rail as “fascinating and exciting, with playing that is precise and full of purpose,” the ensemble is admired for the energy and precision it brings to performances of today’s most adventurous music.

Founded in 2005, Yarn/Wire is dedicated to expanding the repertoire written for its instrumentation, through commissions and collaborative initiatives that aim to build a new and lasting body of work. Influenced by its members’ experiences with classical music, avant-garde theatre, and rock music, the ensemble champions a varied and probing repertoire.

In 2016, the ensemble won first prize in the open category as part of the inaugural M-Prize competition at the University of Michigan. More recently, it has been honored by Stony Brook University as one of its “40 under 40” alumni who are leaders in their field.

Yarn/Wire has commissioned many American and international composers including Enno Poppe, Michael Gordon, Ann Cleare, Raphaël Cendo, Peter Evans, Alex Mincek, Thomas Meadowcroft, Misato Mochizuki, Tristan Murail, Sam Pluta, Kate Soper, and Øyvind Torvund. As well, the ensemble enjoys collaborations with genre-bending artists such as Tristan Perich, Mark Fell, Sufjan Stevens, and Pete Swanson. Yarn/Wire has recorded for the WERGO, Northern Spy, Distributed Objects, Populist, and Carrier record labels in addition to maintaining their own imprint.

Yarn/Wire appears internationally at prominent festivals and venues including the Lincoln Center Festival, Edinburgh International Festival, Shanghai Symphony Orchestra Hall, rainy days festival (Luxembourg), Ultima Festival (Norway), Transit Festival (Belgium), Dublin SoundLab, Monday Evening Concerts (Los Angeles), Contempuls Festival (Prague), Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York’s Miller Theatre at Columbia University, River-to-River Festival, La MaMa Theatre, Festival of New American Music, and

London's Barbican Centre. Their ongoing series, Yarn/Wire/Currents, serves as an incubator for new experimental music in partnership with Brooklyn-based arts organization Blank Forms.

In addition, since 2016, the quartet has run the Yarn/Wire Institute at Stony Brook University, a summer festival for composers and performers interested in exploring the collaborative side of contemporary music. Through this and other educational residencies and outreach programs, Yarn/Wire works to promote not only the present but also the future of new music in the United States.

For more information, please visit: www.yarnwire.org

About the Program

Zosha Di Castri: *Tachitipo* for two pianists, two percussionists, and electronics

Tachitipo is a piece for two pianists, two percussionists, and electronics, which journeys through nine musical tableaux. It is as much about sound as it is the trajectory and illumination of the ensemble on stage, and the physical actions required of them.

This piece is a reflection on writing, and the machines we use to execute our ideas. Nietzsche wrote, "Our tools are also working on our thoughts," something I think about often when composing. Here, I return to a more antiquated technology, the typewriter, to build a syntax of sounds. The title, *Tachitipo*, comes from an 1823 typewriter model, also known as the tachigrafo, invented by the Italian Pietro Conti di Cilavegna. The typewriter epitomizes 19th and early 20th century attitudes towards writing: efficiency becomes paramount as typing begins to approach the rapid-fire speed of thought, in all of its desperate fury. It also affixes sound to the imprinting of symbols on the page, not unlike modern technologies for music notation.

The term typewriter referred both to the machine, the occupation, and the person (mainly women) who used it. Although taking up typing may have been an emancipatory act, it is interesting that though given the tools for writing, women at this time rarely held the power behind the signs they were producing. Authorship was still at a degree of remove. This was a dictation job good-girls did before getting married, a special, temporary status, not unlike the piano lessons previous generations undertook to attract suitors. Here, I reclaim the object as author, transcriber, and pianist.

The initial impetus spurring the composition came from a comic evolutionary diagram attached to an article by Kate Lunau in Maclean's Magazine, entitled "The downside of human evolution." It showed the classic progression from an ape on all fours, through early bipedal ancestors, to the anatomically modern standing human—and in direct mirror image, the eventual crouching back down of the body over the exact tools and technologies which have separated us from other species. This image of the body regressing from an erect posture to a figure hunched over work shaped the dramatic progression of the piece and its resulting sounds. I believe we create art in the hopes of transcending the everyday, to connect with others, to reach towards moments of opening, clarity or understanding, and yet the tools we've invented to facilitate this pursuit can have the consequence of isolating us even further, curling the body back in onto itself.

The resulting music in *Tachitipo* ranges from very free abstract, quasi-improvisatory textures, to rigorously controlled musical structures, with the musicians emerging out of and disappearing into fields

of nuanced noise. *Tachitipo* is dedicated to the hard-working and truly inspiring musicians of Yarn/Wire who commissioned the piece. A special thanks to the Canada Council for the Arts for their support of this project.

—Zosha Di Castri

ZOSHA DI CASTRI is a Canadian composer/pianist living in New York. Her work (which has been performed in Canada, the US, South America, Asia, and Europe) extends beyond purely concert music, including projects with electronics, sound arts, and collaborations with video and dance. She recently completed a commission titled *Hunger* for the Montreal Symphony Orchestra with improvised drummer, designed to accompany Peter Földes' 1973 silent film by the same name. Her work *Long Is the Journey, Short Is the Memory* for orchestra and chorus, which opened the first night of the 2019 BBC Proms, featuring the BBC Symphony and the BBC Singers, led by conductor Karina Canellakis in Royal Albert Hall. Other large-scale projects include a 25-minute work for soprano, recorded narrator and orchestra entitled *Dear Life* (based on a short-story by Alice Munro), and an evening-length new music theatre piece, *Phonobellow* (co-written with David Adamcyk) for International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), with performances in New York and Montreal. *Phonobellow* features five musicians, a large kinetic sound sculpture, electronics, and video in a reflection on the influence of photography and phonography on human perception.

Her orchestral compositions have been commissioned by John Adams, the San Francisco Symphony, New World Symphony, Esprit Orchestra, Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, and the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and have been featured by Montreal Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo Sinfonietta, Amazonas Philharmonic, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, among others. Zosha has made appearances with the Chicago Symphony, the L.A. Philharmonic, the New York Philharmonic and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in their chamber music series, and has worked with many leading new music groups including Talea Ensemble, Wet Ink, Ekmeles, Yarn/Wire, the NEM, and JACK Quartet. She was the recipient of the Jules Léger Prize for New Chamber Music for her work *Cortège* in 2012, and participated in Ircam's Manifeste Festival in Paris, writing an interactive electronic work for Thomas Hauert's dance company, ZOO.

Zosha completed her Bachelor of Music in piano performance and composition at McGill University, and has a doctorate from Columbia University in composition. She is currently the Francis Goelet Assistant Professor of Music at Columbia, and recently completed a year-long fellowship at the inaugural Institute for Ideas and Imagination in Paris.

Linda Catlin Smith: *Morandi*

Morandi is named after the 20th century Italian painter Giorgio Morandi. While I was writing this work, I was thinking about his numerous still life paintings, which reveal a preoccupation with the same objects, in muted colours, painted over and over again. Morandi was commissioned through the Ontario Arts Council by Kitchener-Waterloo's New Art Quartet.

—Linda Catlin Smith

LINDA CATLIN SMITH grew up in New York and lives in Toronto. She studied music in NY, and at the University of Victoria (Canada). Her music has been performed and/or recorded by: BBC Scottish

Orchestra, Exaudi, Tafelmusik, Other Minds Festival, California Ear Unit, Kitchener-Waterloo, Victoria and Vancouver Symphonies, Arraymusic, Tapestry New Opera, Gryphon Trio, Via Salzburg, Evergreen Club Gamelan, Turning Point Ensemble, Vancouver New Music, and the Del Sol, Penderecki, and Bozzini quartets, among many others; she has been performed by many notable soloists, including Eve Egoyan, Elinor Frey, Philip Thomas, Colin Tilney, Vivienne Spiteri, and Jamie Parker.

She has been supported in her work by the Canada Council, Ontario Arts Council, Chalmers Foundation, K.M. Hunter Award, Banff Centre, SOCAN Foundation and Toronto Arts Council; in 2005 her work *Garland* (for Tafelmusik) was awarded Canada's prestigious Jules Léger Prize. In addition to her work as an independent composer, she was Artistic Director of the Toronto ensemble Arraymusic from 1988 to 1993, and she was a member of the ground-breaking multidisciplinary performance collective, URGE, from 1992-2006. Linda teaches composition privately and at Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Canada.

Misato Mochizuki: *Le monde des ronds et des carrés*

My artistic practice is served by curiosity and thought about realms outside my own—photography, genetics, popular music, astronomy, cooking—which is to say that I borrow principles and adapt to music systems that speak to my imagination.

—Misato Mochizuki

Commissioned by tonight's musicians for a concert at the 2015 Lincoln Center Festival, this thirteen-minute piece "attempts," in the composer's words, "to install, in space and in music, geometric combinations arising from the shapes mentioned in the title—circles and squares—in exploring the relationships possible among the musicians, whether opposed to one another (square) or united (circle)." "I wrote the piece," she adds, "having in mind the seventieth anniversary of the end of World War II and asking myself what leads people to slaughter one another."

One of Mochizuki's circular images of union—and, presumably, of peace—is paced out by the percussionists as they begin the performance walking around the two pianos with hand-held instruments: crotales and Japanese cup bells (rin). What they play—B natural in treble-register octaves—also speaks of wholeness, and when the pianos begin to play, they do so in agreement. Union comes with a changeless, ritual aspect. The set-up gains more the geometry of a square when the percussionists arrive at stations defined by a glockenspiel and a vibraphone, and, at the same time, the concurrence begins to break down. A long accelerando also gets going, building through several minutes to a climax. This is not, however, the end, for out of it comes a different oneness and a different breakdown.

In creating a work so theatrical, Mochizuki surely was guided, not least at the end, by how Yarn/Wire, in its personnel, embodies old relationships of cohesion and conflict, antagonism and reciprocity.

—Paul Griffiths

Born in Tokyo in 1969, MISATO MOCHIZUKI went on from the Tokyo University of the Arts to complete her studies in Paris, first with Paul Méfano and Emanuel Nunes at the Conservatoire and then, in 1996-97, with Tristan Murail at IRCAM. Like Toshio Hosokawa, half a generation her senior, she gained from years abroad a dual positioning, Japanese and European. Her early commissions included pieces for the Witten Chamber Music Days (*Chimera* for ensemble, 2000) and the NHK Symphony Orchestra

(*Cloud Nine*, 2004). In 2007, the Suntory Foundation presented a portrait concert in Tokyo; two years later, her chamber opera *The Great Bakery Attack*, after two stories by Haruki Murakami, had its première in Lucerne.

Much of her music reflects an appreciation of nature, but of nature mediated by scientific and philosophical investigation. Natural patterns and cycles will occur—often patterns of repetition and growth, measured by a regular yet subtle pulse—but the starting point is more likely to be a book on genetics than a walk in the forest. Photography, too, for how it renders and alters nature, has been important to her thinking.

Occasionally she has written for Japanese instruments—alone in a score for a classic of the Japanese silent cinema, Kenji Mizoguchi's *Taki no shiraito* (The Water Magician), or with western instruments in *Silent Circle* for flute, koto, and sextet (2006)—but most of her works are for fully western resources, usually instrumental, and show no particular national traits. In drawing alongside great works of the European tradition, as in her *Pré-Echo* (2005), a prelude for Bach's Fifth Cello Suite, or *Intermezzi IV* (2011), intended similarly to come before Brahms's F minor Clarinet Sonata, or *Nirai* (2012), designed as an intermezzo between Beethoven's Second and Sixth symphonies, she comes as no stranger.

Spending time in both geographical domains, she teaches regularly at courses in western Europe besides holding a position at Meiji Gakuin University. Her most recent works include a second string quartet, *Brains*, premiered by the Quatuor Diotima.