

Composer Portraits

Chaya Czernowin

International Contemporary Ensemble

Jeffrey Gavett, *baritone*

Kai Wessel, *countertenor*

Steven Schick, *conductor*

—◆◆◆—
Thursday, October 23, 8:00 p.m.
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From the Executive Director

Welcome back! From the Lionel Loueke Trio to Le Poème Harmonique to the International Contemporary Ensemble, this October we'll hear from a wide variety of artists who all have one thing in common: they are part of our community at Miller.

The opening concert of our Composer Portraits series—a tribute to Chou Wen-chung—highlighted this theme of homecoming. Professor Chou is a highly esteemed member of the Columbia community, who made his mark both as an innovative composer and as a beloved member of the faculty.

Interestingly, I first came to know Professor Chou's work as a student. As an undergrad I would scour the music library for new flute pieces, and I discovered *Cursive* (1963) for flute and piano. It was too difficult for me to play—I couldn't even read bass clef yet—but it introduced me to his work, and I've been an admirer ever since. So I'm delighted to be able to share his music, which has played a role in my personal development as a musician, as it has for so many others.

Tonight's Composer Portrait is also a deeply personal one for me. Its seeds were planted a few years ago, at Chaya Czernowin's Portrait in 2010-11. I've always admired Chaya's music—unique, fearless, and rich—and I was thrilled that she was part of the first season that I programmed at Miller. Even before she left, I knew I wanted to work together again, so a few months later we set the wheels in motion for the program that now comes to fruition. With two world premieres and a Miller commission, it's vast and ambitious, with dozens of performers and two incredible soloists.

All of this month's artists are people I've known for years. Building these lasting relationships is one of the most rewarding aspects of my work, and I'm so excited to share these performances with our community of adventurous listeners.

Melissa Smey
Executive Director

Composer Portraits

Thursday, October 23, 8:00 p.m.

Chaya Czernowin

International Contemporary Ensemble

Jeffrey Gavett, *baritone*

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Steven Schick, *conductor*

Chaya Czernowin (b. 1957)

Five action sketches (2014) **world premiere, Miller Theatre commission**

V. Sand

Wintersongs II: Stones (2003)

Five action sketches

IV. Silver

Wintersongs IV: Wounds/Mistletoe (2013)

Five action sketches

III. Raw

INTERMISSION

Onstage discussion with Chaya Czernowin and Claire Chase

Five action sketches

II. So Narrow

Five action sketches

I. Breathe

Wintersongs V: Forgotten light (2014) **world premiere**

This program runs approximately two hours and fifteen minutes,
including intermission.

*Major support for Composer Portraits is provided by the
National Endowment for the Arts and the Francis Goelet Charitable Lead Trusts.*

Please note that photography and the use of recording devices are not permitted. Remember to turn off all cellular phones and pagers before tonight's performance begins. Miller Theatre is ADA accessible. Large print programs are available upon request. For more information or to arrange accommodations, please call 212-854-7799.

About the Program

The series *Wintersongs* started around 2002. It was a piece of 13 minutes with low instruments and a lot of noise and electronics. This piece was dark and its vitality was halted. The low instruments moved like the slow search of a plant towards light. As I was writing the piece, a very close friend, the composer Mark Osborn who was 33 years old at the time, died in a terrible and absurd car accident. The piece became also a lament.

Soon I recognized that *Wintersongs I* was a very concentrated layer of a larger piece. I wanted to hear the septet without the electronics and to reinterpret the instrumental part anew. Three percussions were added, and *Wintersongs II: Stones* was written. It included the same instrumental material of the septet but with some temporal variation and a new added line of percussion, and without the electronics.

Still the piece wanted to grow. It was as if the original was a photograph on which I could first paint and then write, and later erase and even glue on diverse media. For the next nine years, from 2004 to 2014, I had a plan that I would continue to invent new and very different interpretations of *Wintersongs*.

It was a beautiful plan: *Wintersongs IV* was supposed to have high septet coming in, scratching and erasing parts of the original low septet and creating strong tension between the high and fast new material and the slow and low original septet. In the last piece, *Wintersongs V*, this tension was supposed to break. Its cracking would expose a love song, the heart of the whole piece, which had been hidden, much like a deep archaeological layer only now discovered. A beautiful combination of piano cembalo, guitar, and two singers would be added for this layer. In all these reincarnations the original septet would be the basis and remain present.

However, writing *Wintersongs* did not pan out as expected.

When I came back to *Wintersongs* in 2014 to compose the last two movements, a strong change had taken place in my work. While the instrumental groups stayed the same as they had been for the last ten years, I felt that I could not restrict myself with the

narrative of the high contrast and the love song while keeping the original *Wintersongs* always present. My perspective had changed. Now, instead of *Wintersongs* being a base over which one paints or writes, the original septet of the first *Wintersongs* became a shade of a memory—a threatening memory in *Wintersongs V* and a poetic, vanishing memory in *Wintersongs IV*. The piece had become more like an organic plant with different layers of growth, each independent yet part of the same whole; it was a contemplation of how memory evolves and eludes us.

In contrast to the *Wintersongs* series the *Five action sketches* are very spontaneous, quick and focused fragments, which complement the whole series and *Wintersongs V* in particular.

Wintersongs V is dedicated to Dieter Schnebel on his 85th birthday, in celebration of his music and his thinking, and to ICE, with joy and admiration.

Program notes by Chaya Czernowin

About the Artists

Chaya Czernowin was born and brought up in Israel. After her studies in Israel, at the age of 25, she continued studying in Germany (DAAD grant) and the United States, and then was invited to live in Tokyo, Japan (Asahi Shimbun Fellowship and American NEA grant), in Germany (at the Akademie Schloss Solitude), and in Vienna. She has held professorships at UCSD, at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, Austria (2006-2009), where she was the first woman to be appointed as a composition professor, and at Harvard University in (2009 to present) where she is the Walter Bigelow Rosen Professor of Music. Together with Jean-Baptiste Jolly, the director of Akademie Schloss Solitude near Stuttgart, and with composer Steven Kazuo Takasugi, Czernowin founded the summer Academy at Schloss Solitude, a biannual course for composers. Takasugi and Czernowin also teach at Tzlil Meudcan, an international course based in Israel founded by Yaron Deutsch of Ensemble Nikel.

Czernowin's output includes chamber and orchestral music, with and without electronics. She composed two large-scale works for the stage: *Prima... ins Innere* (2000, Munich Biennale), which was awarded the Bayerischer

Theater Preis, and *Adama* (2004/5) with Mozart's *Zaide* (Salzburg Festival 2006). She was appointed Artist-in-Residence at the Salzburg Festival in 2005/06 and Artist-in-Residence at the Lucerne Festival, Switzerland in 2013. In addition to numerous other prizes, Czernowin represented Israel at Unesco composer's Rostorum 1981 and was awarded the DAAD scholarship (1983-85), Stipendiumpreis (1988), and Kranichsteiner Musikpreis (1992) at the Darmstadt Fereinkurse; IRCAM reading panel commission (1998); scholarships of SWR Experimental Studio Freiburg (1998/2000/2001); the composer's prize of Siemens Foundation (2003); the Rockefeller Foundation (2004); and Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship (2011). She is published by Schott. Her music is recorded on Mode records NY, Wergo, Col Legno, Deutsche Gramophone, Neos, Ethos, Telos, and Einstein Records.

Baritone **Jeffrey Gavett** performs a repertoire spanning from Gregorian chant to newly commissioned works and his own compositions. An active collaborative musician, he has sung with a broad array of artists, ranging from the Rolling Stones and indie rock group Clogs to new music groups ICE, New Juilliard Ensemble, the



Grammy-winning Roomful of Teeth, SEM Ensemble, Ensemble Signal, Talea Ensemble, and his own ensembles Ekmeles and loadbang. He has worked with composers including Beat Furrer, David Lang, Nico Muhly, Terry Riley, Caroline Shaw, Steven Takasugi, and Charles Wuorinen. As a soloist in New York he has performed in Alice Tully Hall, Issue Project Room, The Kitchen, Merkin Hall, Miller Theatre, Le Poisson Rouge, Roulette, The Stone, and Zankel Hall, and has been praised for his “attractive” and “even-tempered” voice by the *New York Times*. He made his European debut in 2014 performing in Rudolf Komorous’s *Nonomiya* and the world premiere of Petr Kotik’s *Master-Pieces* at New Opera Days Ostrava in the Czech Republic; then singing Berio’s *Coro* under the baton of Sir Simon Rattle at the Lucerne Festival Academy. Gavett holds degrees from Westminster Choir College and Manhattan School of Music.

The German countertenor **Kai Wessel** studied music theory, composition, and singing at Lübeck Academy of Music. He received prizes at the German Vocal Competition in Berlin in 1984 and 1988 and at the Musica Antiqua Competition of the Flanders Festival in Bruges in 1990, and stipends from the Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes, Gotthard Schierse Stiftung of Berlin, and the DAAD. He also served as an assistant of René Jacobs in the production of operas (by Cesti, Cavalli, and Gluck) for the International

Week of Early Music in Innsbruck, for the WDR Radio, and at the Hamburg State Opera. Concerts, radio broadcasts, and recordings have followed under René Jacobs, William Christie, Ton Koopman, Martin Haselböck, Hans-Werner Henze, and others. Wessel belongs to the Ensemble Contrapunctus and the Ensemble Vocal Européen de La Chapelle Royale led by Philippe Herreweghe. He was engaged in the Festivals in Innsbruck, Göttingen, Bruchsal, Frankfurt, among others. He has performed and premiered works of his own composition and works composed especially for him in Germany and abroad.

Steven Schick was born in Iowa and raised in a farming family. For the past thirty years he has championed contemporary percussion music as a performer and teacher, by commissioning and premiering more than one hundred new works for percussion. Schick is Distinguished Professor of Music at the University of California, San Diego, and a Consulting Artist in Percussion at the Manhattan School of Music. He was the percussionist of the Bang on a Can All-Stars of New York City from 1992-2002, and from 2000 to 2004 served as Artistic Director of the Centre International de Percussion de Genève in Geneva, Switzerland. Schick is founder and Artistic Director of the percussion group red fish blue fish, and in 2007 he assumed the post of Music Director and conductor of the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus.

Schick recently released three important publications. His book on solo percussion music, *The Percussionist's Art: Same Bed, Different Dreams*, was published by the University of Rochester Press; his recording of *The Mathematics of Resonant Bodies* by John Luther Adams was released by Cantaloupe Music; and, a three-CD set of the complete percussion music of Iannis Xenakis, made in collaboration with red fish blue fish, was issued by Mode Records. Past appearances at Miller Theatre include as a conductor for John Cage's *Composer Portrait* (2012), as a conductor and percussionist for James Dillion's *Nine Rivers* (2011), and as a percussionist in *Steven Schick: Solo* (2014).

International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE)

- Claire Chase, *flute*
- Alice Teyssier, *flute*
- Kelli Kathman, *flute*
- James Austin Smith, *oboe*
- Campbell MacDonald, *clarinet*
- Joshua Rubin, *clarinet*
- Ryan Muncy, *saxophone*
- Andrew Madej, *tuba*
- Kyle Armbrust, *viola*
- Michael Nicolas, *cello*
- Logan Coale, *bass*
- Peter Evans, *trumpet*
- David Nelson, *trombone*
- Nathan Davis, *percussion*
- Ross Karre, *percussion*
- Levy Lorenzo, *percussion*
- William Schimmel, *accordion*

- Jacob Greenberg, *piano*
- Cory Smythe, *harpsichord*
- Oren Fader, *guitar*
- Caley MonahanWard, *live sound*

The International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), described by the *New York Times* as “one of the most accomplished and adventurous groups in new music,” is dedicated to reshaping the way music is created and experienced. With a modular makeup of 35 leading instrumentalists, performing in forces ranging from solos to large ensembles, ICE functions as performer, presenter, and educator, advancing the music of our time by developing innovative new works and new strategies for audience engagement. ICE redefines concert music as it brings together new work and new listeners in the 21st century. Read more at iceorg.org.

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About Miller Theatre

Miller Theatre at Columbia University is the leading presenter of new music in New York City and one of the most vital forces nationwide for innovative programming. In partnership with Columbia University School of the Arts, Miller is dedicated to producing and presenting unique events, with a focus on contemporary and early music, jazz, and multimedia. Founded in 1988, Miller has helped launch the careers of myriad composers and ensembles, serving as an incubator for emerging artists and a champion of those not yet well known in the U.S. A three-time recipient of the ASCAP/Chamber Music America Award for Adventurous Programming, Miller continues to meet the high expectations set forth by its founders—to present innovative programs, support new work, and connect creative artists with adventurous audiences.

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as of September 5, 2014



Composer Portraits

“MILLER THEATER’S INVALUABLE MARQUEE SERIES OF DEEP DIVES,
A SINGLE LIVING COMPOSER AT A TIME.”
- *THE NEW YORK TIMES*

The music in this year’s Composers Portraits—shimmering and lyrical, bold and inventive—explores a wealth of influences and sonic textures, illuminating the breadth of today’s musical landscape. Join us!

Thursday, November 13

Bernard Rands (b. 1934)

International Contemporary Ensemble

Anthony Roth Costanzo, countertenor

Miller celebrates Rands’ 80th birthday with the local premiere of his newest vocal work, sensitively performed by the young Met Opera star Anthony Roth Costanzo.

Friday, December 5

Keeril Makan (b. 1972)

Either/Or

“An arrestingly gifted young American composer” (*The New Yorker*), Keeril Makan is an artist who delves deep, with an elegant control of timbre and color.

Thursday, February 5

Missy Mazzoli (b. 1980)

This Portrait highlights Mazzoli’s diverse works for strings, from solo pieces for cello and violin to works such as *Harp and Altar*, a love song to the Brooklyn Bridge that fuses string quartet with pre-recorded electronics and the poetry of Hart Crane.

Thursday, February 19

Stefano Gervasoni (b. 1962)

Italian composer Stefano Gervasoni studied composition with European masters such as Luigi Nono, Helmut Lachenmann, Brian Ferneyhough, and György Ligeti and his work reflects these influences, as well as his time spent at IRCAM.

Upcoming Events

Saturday, October 25, 8:00 p.m.

Church of St. Mary the Virgin

EARLY MUSIC

The Dark Hours

Le Poème Harmonique

Vincent Dumestre, *theorbo and artistic director*

Saturday, November 1, 8:00 p.m.

JAZZ

Cyrus Chestnut Trio

Thursday, November 13, 8:00 p.m.

COMPOSER PORTRAITS

Bernard Rands

International Contemporary Ensemble

Anthony Roth Costanzo, *countertenor*

Nicholas Masterson, *oboe*

Ryan Muncy, *saxophone*

Christian Knapp, *conductor*

Saturday, November 15, 8:00 p.m.

Church of St. Mary the Virgin

EARLY MUSIC

Celebrations from the Mediterranean

New York Polyphony

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