

Composer Portraits

Julio Estrada

International Contemporary Ensemble

Third Coast Percussion

Steven Schick, percussion and conductor

Thursday, May 16, 8:00 p.m.



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miq'cihuatl (2004)
for voice

Julio Estrada (b. 1943)

Tony Arnold, *voice*

ni die saa, E.21f (2013) **world premiere, Miller Theatre commission**
live creation, for ensemble

Claire Chase, *flute*
Joshua Rubin, *clarinet*
Jennifer Curtis, *violin*
Daniel Lippel, *guitar*
Ross Karre, *percussion*

Canto naciente (1975-78)
for brass octet

Peter Evans, *trumpet*
Christopher Coletti, *trumpet*
Brandon Ridenour, *trumpet*
David Byrd-Marrow, *horn*
Danielle Kuhlmann, *horn*
Michael Lormand, *trombone*
David Nelson, *trombone*
Dan Peck, *tuba*

INTERMISSION

Onstage discussion with Julio Estrada and Claire Chase

eolo'oolin (1980-1998)
for percussion

Steven Schick, *percussion*
International Contemporary Ensemble
Third Coast Percussion

This program runs approximately two hours, including a brief intermission.



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Composer Portraits is presented with the friendly support of  ernst von siemens
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Support for this concert is provided, in part, by the Mexican Cultural Institute of New York.

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 wheelchair accessible. Large print programs are available upon request. For more information or to arrange accommodations, please call 212-854-7799.

About the Program

Introduction

Julio Estrada was born in Mexico City in 1943 to parents who had emigrated from Spain two years before. He studied composition with Julián Orbón at the National Conservatory, and in 1965 went to Paris for four years on a French government scholarship. While there, he studied with Nadia Boulanger, Olivier Messiaen, Iannis Xenakis, and, in Cologne, Karlheinz Stockhausen. He returned to Mexico City having absorbed the principle of composition as research, exploring theories having to do with sound, time, and form. What excited him particularly, and proved fruitful for his creative as well as theoretical work, was Stockhausen's view of pitch and rhythm as linked phenomena, produced by different speeds of vibration, and Xenakis's use of mathematical models – though these he has employed as theoretical tools, opening up new possibilities, rather than directly in composing.

Holding a post at the Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas of the Mexican national university from 1974, he worked on the implications of these ideas through the remainder of the decade in a series of Cantos, the biggest being *Canto naciente* for brass, E. 12 in his own catalogue of his works. In the 1980s he extended his interests in two further directions, seeking out new sonorities (especially on string instruments, as in his classic string quartet *ishini'ioni*) and tracking traces of pre-Columbian music, whether in written records or in surviving traditions (hence his drawing on Amerindian languages in his titles). Meanwhile, he became aware of a heritage of modern music from within Mexico, notably in the work of Julián Carrillo on microtonal intervals and Conlon Nanarrow on rhythmic structure. Both composers he perceives as creators of a musical continuum—Carrillo in the domain of pitch, if more in his theories than in his music, Nanarrow in that of rhythm. Much of his compositional activity from 1992 to 2006 was devoted to an opera after Juan Rulfo's novel *Pedro Páramo*; more recently, he has gone back to an early interest in improvisation.

Through all his work, the notion of continuity has been paramount, whether among the fundamental elements of sound or between ancient times and the present. If his output also displays unusual diversity, that may be because continuous, too, has been his urge not to repeat.

***miqi'cihuatl* for female voice, E. 20e (2004)**

Here the title is made up of two Nahuatl words, meaning “death” and “woman.” The piece is one of several Estrada has excerpted from his opera, giving us “the voice of the absent mother, heard by the imagination.” It is not a voice that stays with us for long. What we hear—protest? lament? warning? encouragement?—could be a brief intervention from an eternal world.

***ni die saa* for ensemble, E. 21f (2012), world premiere, Miller Theatre commission**

With no defined score, this work is the product of rehearsals that involved the musicians and the composer together. The title, in Zapotec, means “I do paint music.”

***Canto naciente* for brass octet, E. 12 (1975-78)**

This “nascent song” finds its nascence in the note A flat, intoned by three trumpets with different, changing dynamic profiles. As Estrada imagines it, the trumpets are at three of the corners of a cube, the other five being similarly occupied by brass instruments: two horns, two trombones, and a tuba.

At this point in his career, Estrada was preoccupied with pitch groupings—with intervals, harmonies, and scales in constant evolution, still within the system of twelve-semitone equal temperament. In the context of tonight’s program, *Canto naciente* will undoubtedly appear the most pitch-centric work, the closest to a traditional vocabulary of melody and harmony. At the same time, though, in its might and its elemental progress, it may also seem, as much as the less conservative works, to scan back to long-forgotten traditions. The nascent song is a lost song.

Playing continuously for around twelve minutes, the piece moves through various phases. As the trumpets start to move away from their initial note, and as their colleagues join them, the piece begins to sound like a giant fugue, coalescing into a central section of slow, weighty harmonies. With a turn to repeating notes, in many different rhythms, the music becomes more vehement, before it settles back into its original scoring in the neighborhood of its original pitch, disappearing as a major third.

***eolo'oolin* for six percussionists in a pentagon, E. 17 (1980-84, rev. 1998)**

The composer has written about this work as follows:

“eolo'oolin, from the Greek for ‘wind’ and the Nahuatl for ‘movement,’ initiated a phase in my work to do with creating a notion of ‘macro-timbre,’ synthesizing rhythm, sonority, and spatial elements. The idea of continuity dominates the whole piece.

“The musicians find themselves distributed in a pentagon, with five at the apices and the sixth in the center, functioning as soloist and, in due course, conductor. The lines around the periphery, and the lines between each of those artists and the center, form a special network. The spatialization is two-dimensional and sometimes virtual, the score defining the speed at which each performer must move.

“The audience can be placed within the five triangles inside the pentagon and also outside this, in a circle broken by spaces for the musicians around the sides.

“Formally, the work is made up of several sections fixed by the sextet. Various interludes engage the musicians in competition, where they must show their skills in execution and rhythmic improvisation.

“eolo'oolin has the character of a collective dance, and, by virtue of inflections that are continuously present, of involuntary allusion to the music used in the social celebrations of indigenous peoples from almost throughout the Americas.

“The first part of the work, a third of the whole, was introduced by Les Percussions de Strasbourg at the Festival Musica in 1984. The premiere of the complete piece took place in 1998 at the closing of the international summer courses in Darmstadt. The work was commissioned by the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes of Mexico in 1981, and first performed there thirty-two years later.”

Program notes by Paul Griffiths

About the Artists

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 2000-2004 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. Steven 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. Steven Schick made his Miller Theatre debut in the 1999-2000 season, and will be featured in several concerts in our upcoming 2013-14 season, including a two-part solo recital tracing the evolution of percussion music.

Hailed by *The New Yorker* as “vibrant” and “superb,” **Third Coast Percussion** explores and expands the extraordinary sonic possibilities of the percussion repertoire, delivering exciting performances for audiences of all kinds. Since its formation in 2005, Third Coast Percussion has gained national attention with concerts and recordings that meld the energy of rock music with the precision and nuance of classical chamber works. These “hard-grooving” musicians (*New York Times*) have become known for ground-breaking collaborations across a wide range of disciplines, including concerts and residency projects with engineers at the University of Notre Dame, architects at the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture, astronomers at the Adler Planetarium, and more. Third Coast Percussion is the Ensemble-in-Residence at the University of Notre Dame’s DeBartolo Performing Arts Center, a position they assumed in 2013. Third Coast champions the music of John Cage, Steve Reich, George Crumb,

Arvo Pärt, Gérard Grisey, Philippe Manoury, Wolfgang Rihm, Louis Andriessen, Toru Takemitsu, and Tan Dun, among others. The ensemble has also commissioned and performed world premieres by many of today's leading composers, including Augusta Read Thomas, Timothy Andres, Glenn Kotche, David T. Little, Marcos Balter, Ted Hearne, and ensemble members David Skidmore and Owen Clayton Condon. Third Coast's recent and upcoming concerts and residencies include the Atlas Performing Arts Center (Washington, D.C.), the University of Chicago Presents, Ensemble Music Society of Indianapolis, the Museum of Modern Art (New York), the Austin Chamber Music Festival, Millennium Park "Loops and Variations," and the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage. They have collaborated in concert with acclaimed ensembles eighth blackbird, Signal, and the Garth Newel Piano Quartet, pianists Amy Briggs and Lisa Moore, cellists Nicholas Photinos and Tobias Werner, flautist Tim Munro, vocalist Ted Hearne, and video artists Luftwerk. The members of Third Coast Percussion—Sean Connors, Robert Dillon, Peter Martin, and David Skidmore—hold degrees in music performance from Northwestern University, the Yale School of Music, the Eastman School of Music, the New England Conservatory, and Rutgers University.

Performing Tonight

Robert Dillon

Peter Martin

David Skidmore

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 33 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. Since its founding in 2001, ICE has premiered over 500 compositions—the majority of these new works by emerging composers—in venues ranging from alternative spaces to concert halls around the world. The ensemble received the American Music Center's Trailblazer Award in 2010 for its contributions to the field, and received the ASCAP/Chamber Music America Award for Adventurous Programming in 2005 and 2010. ICE is Ensemble-in-Residence at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago through 2013. The ICE musicians also serve as Artists-in-Residence at the Mostly Mozart Festival of Lincoln Center through 2013, curating and performing chamber music programs that juxtapose new and old music. ICE has released acclaimed albums on the Nonesuch, Kairos, Bridge, Naxos, Tzadik, New Focus, and New Amsterdam labels, with several forthcoming releases on Mode Records. Recent and upcoming highlights include headline



performances at the Lincoln Center Festival (New York), Musica Nova Helsinki (Finland), Wien Modern (Austria), Acht Brücken Music for Cologne (Germany), La Cité de la Musique (Paris), and tours of Japan, Brazil, and France. ICE has worked closely with conductors Ludovic Morlot, Matthias Pintscher, John Adams, and Susanna Malkki. With leading support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, ICE launched ICElab in early 2011. This new program places teams of ICE musicians in close collaboration with six emerging composers each year to develop works that push the boundaries of musical exploration. ICElab projects will be featured in more than one hundred performances from 2011–2014 and documented online through DigitICE, a new online venue. ICE's commitment to build a diverse, engaged audience for the music of our time has inspired The Listening Room, a new educational initiative for public schools without in-house arts curricula. Using team-based composition and graphic notation, ICE musicians lead students in the creation of new musical works, nurturing collaborative creative skills and building an appreciation for musical experimentation. ICE made their Miller Theatre debut in 2002 and has returned for multiple performances nearly every season since. Read more at www.iceorg.org.

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Performing Tonight

Tony Arnold, *soprano*
Claire Chase, *flute*
Joshua Rubin, *clarinet*
Peter Evans, *trumpet*
Christopher Coletti, *trumpet*
Brandon Ridenour, *trumpet*
David Byrd-Marrow, *horn*
Danielle Kuhlmann, *horn*
Michael Lormand, *trombone*
David Nelson, *trombone*
Dan Peck, *tuba*
Jennifer Curtis, *violin*
Daniel Lippel, *guitar*
Nathan Davis, *percussion*
Ross Karre, *percussion*

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 in dance, contemporary and early music, jazz, opera, and performance. Founded in 1988 with funding from John Goelet, Brooke Astor, and the Kathryn Bache Miller Fund, Miller Theatre has built a reputation for attracting new and diverse audiences to the performing arts and expanding public knowledge of contemporary music.

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Thank you for another great season!

It has been a fantastic year at Miller, and we are so pleased that you're here with us for our final performance of the season.

Our 25th Anniversary Season has just been announced, and will feature an incredible lineup of events and performances, including extraordinary Composer Portraits, two special solo performances by percussionist Steven Schick, and a phenomenal three-concert Opening Night marathon of music by the incomparable John Zorn.

Information on events and subscription series is now available at *millertheatre.com*. Tickets will go on sale later this summer, with subscriptions available beginning July 15 and single tickets available August 26.

Thank you for joining us in 2012-2013. We hope to see you often next season!

Your support brings our performances to life!

As we head into our 25th Anniversary season, every gift—large or small—enables us to continue to create exciting, vibrant performances and build new audiences for the arts. 100% of your donation directly funds programming, artist fees, and commissions.

\$20 subsidizes tickets for two students to attend their first new-music concert.

\$185 allows us to tune the piano for a performance.

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