

Tuesday, April 30, 2019 at 8pm
Taplin Auditorium, Fine Hall



PRINCETON SOUND KITCHEN

Dan Trueman, *Director*

Michael Pratt, *Resident Conductor*

presents

Generals Concert

**New Music by
Princeton University Composers**

Tom Morrison
Gemma Peacocke
Cleek Schrey
Connor Elias Way

with Performers

Justine Aronson, *Soprano*
Annika Socolofsky, GS, *Soprano*
Maiani Da Silva, *Violin*
Sarah Goldfeather, *Violin*
Mitchell Lyon, *Cello*
Mika Sasaki, *Piano*

PROGRAM

I.

TOM MORRISON

Incorporeal Automata (2019)

Mika Sasaki, *Piano*

Mitchell Lyon, *Cello*

Incorporeal Automata is a response to the first movement of Beat Furrer's *Drei Klavierstücke*, which deals primarily with spectral and sympathetic resonance. While I use the same technique as Furrer in parts of the piece—depressing and holding low notes so they do not sound by being struck, but by absorbing the sound of higher notes that resonate with their overtones—I am also generating resonance by incorporating feedback produced by a speaker underneath the piano. I picked this particular piece to respond to because of its lack of density. Often my music is very dense—perhaps relentlessly dense—so I figured this would be a good opportunity to try to combat that.

BEAT FURRER

Drei Klavierstücke (2004)

Mika Sasaki, *Piano*

As though he were an architect in sound – the architect of an ongoing Revolution of the Viaduct (Paul Klee) – this composer discovers in his piano pieces something which, for a master mason, might represent discarded cornerstones: the heart of the secret. It becomes apparent that in the pieces for solo piano – themselves like a collection of cornerstones in his output – a small collection of musical gems has come into being: crystalline, glittering, and utterly lucid both in form and appearance. The guiding and enlightening code for them might read: distillation by diminution. Turning to the individual works for solo piano, the earliest, *Voicelessness*, was composed in 1986. To speak of an early work, though, is hardly necessary, so complete and consistent already is the composer's ability to control the concrete interpolation of musical style and idea. Peter Oswald has considered the implications of this idea, speaking of "Furrer's art of powerfully expressing faint soundscapes." This formulation is durable and lasting, and is why we might turn our sights to the *Drei Klavierstücke* (2003/4) as a 'starting point.' Furrer's reflective sensorium finds a new artistic definition for a 'starting point' here: namely, the

starting point as beginninglessness, such that “every beginning is already an echo” (Botho Strauß). This becomes particularly clear in the first of the three pieces: it’s just there, *creatio ex nihilo*, as if it had always been there, precisely beginningless. Thus, the starting point itself becomes a substantial thematic category.

Taken together the *Drei Klavierstücke* are complementary studies, each handling a specific theme. Beat Furrer himself has spoken of “etude-like compositions, each of which is on the trail of a different aural phenomenon.” The first piece has been sweepingly regarded as ‘unharmonic.’ The core musical idea revolves around the ongoing search for resonances within overtone references: for the latent potential of interference in reverberation. Cascade-like interjections insert intermittent breaks into this process until, in the second half of the piece, the sound world focuses on the central note, A-flat, by means of differentiated dynamics and a sharp concision of articulation.

II.

GEMMA PEACOCKE

Cicada (2019)

Annika Socolofsky, *Soprano*

Maiani Da Silva, *Violin*

We exist in multitudes.

Our words have wings.

KATE SOPER

Cipher (2011)

Jenny Holzer feat. Ludwig Wittgenstein

Pietro Bembo feat. Michael Drayton

Introducing Sigmund Freud

Guido d’Arezzo presents Sarah Teasdale (feat. Jenny Holzer)

Justine Aronson, *Soprano*

Sarah Goldfeather, *Violin*

Cipher is the sixth movement of *IPSA DIXIT*, a six-movement chamber music theatre work for soprano, flute, violin, and percussion that explores the intersections of music,

language, and meaning. It may be performed as part of the full work, as a stand-alone piece, or in an excerpt of the full work comprising any number of movements.

Note by Kate Soper

Cipher wends its way along the slippery slopes where language and music and meaning collide, exposing the inherent ambiguity of musical temperament, ensemble hierarchy, and lyric comprehension via several centuries of linguistic investigations. Visual artist Jenny Holzer prepares a rationale; Ludwig Wittgenstein warns of conundrums; Renaissance humanist Pietro Bembo fêtes the phonemes; Sigmund Freud scrutinizes dream reality; and Jenny Holzer reappears with a moral that may not be as forthright as it seems: “people can understand you when you say something.”

Cipher was written for Joshua Modney.

~~~~~**INTERMISSION**~~~~~

**III.**

**MAURICIO KAGEL**

*Ludwig van* (excerpt) (1969)

**CLEEK SCHREY**

*Strange Creek Music* (2019)

*The simulacrum is never that which conceals the truth — it is the truth which conceals that there is none. The simulacrum is true.*

- Jean Baudrillard

*Fiction doesn't mean “fake,” it is not the opposite of truth. There is always a political production of truth, a conflict to make “truth” a singular and not a plural word.*

- Claire Fontaine

*Ludwig van* (full title: *Ludwig van: A report*; German: *Ludwig van: ein Bericht*) is a black-and-white German film by Mauricio Kagel. Filmed in 1969, it was first screened the following year. The work was commissioned by Westdeutscher Rundfunk for the bicentennial celebrations of the birth of Ludwig van Beethoven in 1970. The film

examines the reception of the composer and his works and how he has become a consumer product of the culture industry. The soundtrack is an arrangement of fragments of Beethoven's works, modified as if heard by the deaf composer himself; it is distinct from Kagel's 1970 composition *Ludwig van*. Prominent contemporary artists including Dieter Roth, Robert Filliou, and Joseph Beuys were involved in the design. The film investigates Beethoven as a cultural icon, revered yet exploited; the use and misuse of his works, including their appropriation to advance nationalist agendas; the difficulties and anxieties of influence performers face; Beethoven scholarship and attempts to "tame" the composer to accord with bourgeois ideals; and the difficulties of peering through the myths to catch a glimpse of the "real" Beethoven. Kagel uses the term *Musealisierung* or "musealisation" in speaking of the Beethoven cult, the term used by Theodor W. Adorno to indicate that "museums are the family sepulchres of works of art."



ELLY NEY,  
pianist.

The excerpt tonight includes a recital of Beethoven's "Waldstein" sonata by a thinly-disguised pianist Elly Ney. The percussive blows of her piano playing eventually transform into a beating heart.

The late John Johnson (1919-1996) from Strange Creek in Braxton County, West Virginia was the sort of figure around whom legends easily grow. A man of many and varied talents, and an inquiring, restless mind, he was not readily constrained by his mountain upbringing, first joining the Army and then traveling the length and breadth of the United States as an itinerant worker. He was a master of many manual trades, had a reputation as an athlete, and was also a poet and painter. He was already something of a legendary figure in West Virginia fiddling when he was first recorded at the age of 31.

*Strange Creek Music* is at one level a short documentary. At another, it is a *concrète* piece of music. I approached this as a concert work, attending to what Jennifer Walshe calls the 'non-cochlear' aspects of music composition. Few composers have excavated the 'extra-musical' dimensions of music as virtuosically and thoughtfully as Mauricio Kagel (1931-2008). In this film I take an interest in the curious process of transubstantiation

that occurs when aspects of a person live on through the traces of recorded processes. The drone vocabulary, heavily indebted to radical violinist-composers Tony Conrad and Henry Flynt, acts as a kind of neutral plane, onto which we may project our imaginations. We attempt to hear something *in* the drone. What is left — our illusions.

#### IV.

### CONNOR ELIAS WAY

*Prelude (Hommage à Messiaen)* (2019)

### OLIVIER MESSIAEN

from *Préludes pour piano* (1928-1929)

Prelude No. 6: “Cloches d’angoisses et larmes d’adieu” (“Bells of Anguish and Tears of Farewell”)

Mika Sasaki, *Piano*

One of my greatest challenges as a composer has been the development of a harmonic language. While my ear as a listener enjoys a large variety of harmonic worlds, my ear as a composer has, so far, been much more limited. I suppose that is natural to one degree or another but in recent years I’ve grown increasingly restless to expand my palette while often being unsure of how to do so. This piece is a blatant effort to explore new harmonies; specifically, ones that are denser and more chromatic than what I’ve grown accustomed to working with. I did, however, allow myself one concession: rather than diving headfirst into some completely different way of dealing with harmony, I let myself start with my normal harmonic realm as a point of departure. From there, I built more chromatic harmonies out of my “regular” modal/diatonic ones by adding chromatic dissonances. The result is a harmonic world that is still rooted in a tonal center but much more clouded than most of my music.

Messiaen seemed the perfect figure to challenge me in this pursuit of greater chromaticism. Although I didn’t employ his modes of limited transposition or otherwise attempt to sound particularly similar to him, I did attempt a breed of chromaticism that is voiced in a way I consider to be distinctly Messiaen-esque. Much of Messiaen’s music seems affected by the physicality of keyboard playing. My normal instinct is to spread out chord voicings, especially ones with dissonances, across wide registral gaps, but in this piece I took particular joy in scrunching dissonances into one handbreadth. To be

sure, much of composing is influenced by the mechanics of the instruments we write for; but in this case, I reveled in that constraint consciously.

Messiaen's early *Préludes pour piano* felt like the perfect pair for this project because one can hear the young composer wrestling with similar challenges that I am wrestling with. The sixth prelude in particular is dripping with the influence of Debussy and Ravel yet already distinctly Messiaen due to the absolutely luscious, densely chromatic chords. One can hear the harmonic world he is coming from coexisting with the harmonic world he is in the process of building for himself. I feel that perhaps I myself am at a similar juncture.

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ABOUT THE COMPOSERS

New York native **Tom Morrison** is a composer and mandolinist. His music has been performed in Germany, Thailand, China, Australia, Canada, and across the United States. Morrison is a graduate of the University of Montana and The Juilliard School, and is currently a PhD fellow at Princeton University. Morrison draws influence from nature and the experience of place among other things. tommorrisoncomposer.com

Beat Furrer was born in Schaffhausen (Switzerland) in 1954 and received his first musical training on piano at the Music School there. After moving to Vienna in 1975, he studied conducting with Otmar Suitner and composition with Roman Haubenstock-Ramati at the Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst (Frankfurt). In 1985 he founded the Klangforum Wien, which he directed until 1992, and with which he is still associated as conductor. In autumn 1991, Furrer became a full professor of composition at the Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Graz.

Together with violinist Ernst Kovacic, Furrer founded impuls, the International Ensemble and Composers Academy for Contemporary Music. In January 2019 his new opera *Violetter Schnee* (*Violet Snow*) premiered at the Staatsoper Unter den Linden in Berlin. Since the 1980s Beat Furrer has composed a wide range of works, from solo and ensemble music to orchestral and choral works and opera. He is well known for his nuanced exploration of the human voice and its relationship to instrumental sound.

Gemma Peacocke is a U.S.-based composer from Hamilton, New Zealand. Her childhood bedroom on Kitchener Street was occupied before her by Richard O'Brien, the composer who wrote *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. She has never met him.

A true crime podcast enthusiast, Gemma lives with her Kiwi husband and Korean standard poodle in Princeton, and on occasion (usually at Christmas) she makes a decent pavlova. She is a founding member of the Kinds of Kings composer collective and her upcoming projects include a piece for 30 high school percussionists, 60 sticks, and a very big bowl of ear plugs. www.gemmapeacocke.com / www.kindsofkings.com

Kate Soper is a composer, performer, and writer whose work explores the integration of drama and rhetoric into musical structure, the slippery continuums of expressivity, intelligibility and sense, and the wonderfully treacherous landscape of the human voice. She has been hailed by *The Boston Globe* as “a composer of trenchant, sometimes discomfiting, power” and by *The New Yorker* for her “limpid, exacting vocalism, impetuous theatricality, and...mastery of modernist style.” A Pulitzer Prize finalist, Soper has received awards from the Guggenheim Foundation, the American Academy of Arts and Letters (The Virgil Thomson and Goddard Lieberson awards and the Charles Ives Scholarship), the Koussevitzky Foundation, Chamber Music America, the Lili Boulanger Memorial Fund, the Music Theory Society of New York State, and ASCAP, and has been commissioned by ensembles including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the American Composers Orchestra, Carnegie Hall, the Tanglewood Music Center/BUTI, the MIVOS string quartet, and Yarn/Wire. She has received residencies and fellowships from the Civitella Raineri Foundation, the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, the Camargo Foundation, the Macdowell Colony, Tanglewood, Royaumont, and Domaine Forget, among others.

Soper is a co-director and performer for Wet Ink, a New York City-based new music ensemble dedicated to seeking out adventurous music across aesthetic boundaries.

Mauricio Kagel was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where he studied music, history of literature, and philosophy. In 1957 he moved to Cologne, Germany, where he lived until his death. Some of his pieces give specific theatrical instructions to the performers, such as to adopt certain facial expressions while playing, to make their stage entrances in a particular way, to physically interact with other performers, and so on. He has been regarded by music historians as deploying a critical intelligence interrogating the position of music in society. He was also active in the fields of film and photography, proving that

the possibilities of music are inexhaustible. In 2000 he received the Ernst von Siemens Music Prize.

Cleek Schrey; born February 29th / raised in rural Virginia; influential early musical encounters include a one-legged bird; lives above PJ's Pancake House.

Connor Elias Way is a composer from Atlanta, Georgia. He holds a BMus in Composition (*summa cum laude*) from Georgia State University and a MMus in Composition from the Peabody Institute of The Johns Hopkins University where he was presented with the Gustav Klemm Award in Composition. Connor's music has been performed by groups such as Sō Percussion, Aizuri Quartet, NeoPhonia New Music Ensemble, Chamber Cartel, Terminus Ensemble, Omnibus Ensemble, The Occasional Symphony, and at the Charleston Symphony's Magnetic South series. In January 2019, Connor's piece *Over Collapsing Cities of Steel* received its world premiere by the Minnesota Orchestra and conductor Osmo Vänskä as a part of the Minnesota Composer Institute's "Future Classics" concert. He is currently a Roger Sessions Doctoral Fellow at Princeton University where he is working towards a PhD in Music Composition.

Olivier Messiaen considered himself as much an ornithologist as a composer, organist, and pianist. Inspired in large part by his study of birdsong and his strong catholic faith, his output counts among the most fascinating of the twentieth century. A student of Charles-Marie Widor, Paul Dukas, and Marcel Dupré, he became Organist at the Église de la Sainte-Trinité in 1931, a position he held until his death in 1992. In the 1930s, he taught at the Ecole Normale de Musique de Paris and at the Schola Cantorum. There, he met André Jolivet, Daniel-Lesur and Yves Baudrier with whom he formed the famous Jeune France movement in 1936.

A devout Catholic, much of his output was influenced by his faith, as many works testify (such as *La Transfiguration de Notre Seigneur Jésus Christ*, *l'Ascension*, *Le Banquet Céleste*, *Méditations sur le Mystère de la Sainte-Trinité* and even his only opera *Saint François d'Assise*). Above all, Messiaen was fascinated by the birdsong that he heard and transcribed in his garden, and then featured in his compositions: *Catalogue d'oiseaux*, *Petites Esquisses d'oiseaux*, and *Traité de rythme*. "I only wish that composers would not forget that music is a part of time, a fraction of time, as is our own life, and that nature – an inexhaustible treasure house of sounds, colors, forms, and rhythms, and the unequalled model for total development and perpetual variations – that nature is the supreme resource." (Olivier Messiaen, from a 1958 lecture in Brussels, Belgium)

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

Soprano **Justine Aronson**'s repertoire spans the traditional and the contemporary, with performances that adventurously embrace the unexpected. She has appeared in concert as a soloist with Lucerne Festival Academy, Bang on a Can Summer Festival, Bard Music Festival, String Orchestra of Brooklyn, Carlsbad Music Festival, Brightwork New Music, Princeton Pro Musica, Reno Kantorei, Choral Arts Society of Philadelphia, Masterwork Chorale, gnarwhallaby, and the Westminster Summer Festival. Previous seasons also included appearances with the Metropolitan Opera Guild, New Jersey Chamber Singers, and Synchrony Music.

Along with Sarah Goldfeather, Justine is one half of the voice-violin duo CIPHER, which champions new works by female composers. Since its 2017 West Coast tour, they have gone on to collaborate with GRAMMY®-nominated pianist Pascal LeBoeuf for performances in New York City. The duo was in residence at Avaloch Farm Music Institute in Summer 2018 and toured the Midwest alongside Nick Photinos (Eighth Blackbird) in December 2018. Justine resides in Brooklyn with Henrietta, her twelve-pound terrier mix who may also be part cat or guinea pig.

Annika Socolofsky is a U. S. composer and avant-folk vocalist. She has collaborated with artists such as the Rochester Philharmonic, Albany Symphony, Knoxville Symphony Orchestra, Eighth Blackbird, Third Coast Percussion, Sō Percussion, and sean-nós singer Iarla Ó Lionáird. She is a recipient of a Fromm Foundation Commission, Cortona Prize, and a BMI Student Composer Award, and has been awarded fellowships to the Blackbird Creative Lab, Banff Centre, Cabrillo Festival, Bang on a Can, Cultivate at Copland House, and Brevard Music Center.

Her research focuses on physiology in contemporary vocal music, using the music of Dolly Parton to create a pedagogical approach to composition that is inclusive of many vocal styles and techniques, evading the age-old false dichotomy of straight tone vs. bel canto vocal style. Annika is a doctoral candidate in Composition at Princeton University. She holds an MA in Composition the University of Michigan. www.aksocolofsky.com

Brazilian and (North) American violinist **Maiani da Silva** enjoys a varied career as a freelancer, feeling equally at home playing in concert halls, recording studios, breweries, and parked cars. She enjoys exploring contemporary works as well as the classics, and

can occasionally be found interpretive dancing during measures of rest, or in a Latin band playing some percussive instrument. She has collaborated with various cutting-edge contemporary artists, from members of Eighth Blackbird (Lab Fellow 2018) and Bang On A Can (Fellow 2017), Wild Up, Shattered Glass, Louis Andriessen, George Lewis, and the Los Angeles Ballet, to Taylor Mac, Childish Gambino, Shara Nova (My Brightest Diamond), and Peter Gabriel. Recordings include a newly-released trio album by the Summa Trio (Navona Records) and a handful of TV/film works both in Los Angeles, CA and New York City. Maiani is co-founder and co-artistic director of The Furies, an intersectional feminist duo that focuses on empowering the female-identified/non-binary experience through chamber music and performance art. The duo will be featured in the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival this summer alongside Eighth Blackbird, premiering a work by Gemma Peacocke, among others. Maiani also enjoys dancing, collecting fossils, and in-person philosophical debates.

Sarah Goldfeather is a Minnesota born, Brooklyn-based composer-performer and the bandleader for her eponymous band, Goldfeather. As a contemporary music violinist, Sarah has performed as a soloist in Madrid, Valencia, Berlin, and the TEDxMET series at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, to name a few. She has worked closely with many artists, including 2016 MacArthur Fellow and Pulitzer Prize winner Julia Wolfe, Steve Reich, Timo Andres, Chris Cerrone, Ted Hearne, Andrew Norman, Kishi Bashi, Todd Almond, Jeremy Schonfeld, and has performed with Durand Jones and the Indications, Courtney Love, Kimbra, Lizzo, Torres, Ronnie Spector, Nona Hendryx, Gaby Moreno, Eliot Glazer, Pavo Pavo, Ensemble Signal, Beth Morrison Projects, Contemporaneous, and many more. Sarah is also the founder, co-director, and violinist of the seven-piece new music ensemble, Exceptet, one half of the soprano-violin duo, Cipher, singer and violinist for Rokenri, and played in the production of *Oklahoma!* at St. Ann's Warehouse in Fall 2018. Sarah currently resides in Lefferts Gardens, Brooklyn, and is the caretaker of eight houseplants.

Cellist **Mitchell Lyon** specializes in ensemble collaborations that run the gamut from classical piano trios, to crossover string quartets, to jazz combos, to dance and theater collaborations. A native of Philadelphia, he has performed extensively as a soloist, chamber musician, and in orchestras throughout the United States, France, and the United Kingdom. Lyon arranges, organizes, and performs house concerts at private residences throughout the boroughs of New York City and in other locations by arrangement.

Passionate in his quest to spread the joy of music to young performers, he has taught the children of New York City through various Juilliard-funded fellowship programs at schools including Children's Promise Zone and Harlem Promise Academy II. As a director of Juilliard's student-run outreach organization, ARTreach, Mitchell led several Juilliard teams to New Orleans, reaching out to children displaced by Hurricane Katrina and doing hands-on labor with Habitat for Humanity. He continues his educational outreach mission in his current role as Teaching Artist Faculty for the New York Philharmonic School Partnership Program.

Mitchell plays on a Jules Grandjon cello dating from 1880, except when he is rocking out, when he uses a Quintus carbon-fiber cello built by Tony Cook of GraceStrings with an Acoustic Combo Amp, model AG120S and a ceramic under-bridge pickup.

Pianist **Mika Sasaki** is a sought-after recitalist, chamber musician, and educator whose performances and teaching have taken her to the United Kingdom, Italy, Japan, Switzerland, and throughout the United States. Since her concerto debut with the Sinfonia of Cambridge (U.K.) at age seven, she has appeared as soloist with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, 92 Street Y Orchestra (New York City), and has performed at Weill Recital Hall, Steinway Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Palazzo Chigi Saracini (Italy), Minatomirai Hall (Japan), Tokyo Bunka Kaikan (Japan), Ozawa Hall at Tanglewood, and live on WQXR and WFMT radio. Her highly acclaimed solo debut album, *Obsidian: Mika Sasaki plays Clara Schumann*, was released on Yarlung Records in 2016, and was recently featured on Radio Sweden.

Dr. Sasaki is the pianist of Ensemble Mélange, a sextet that uniquely invites audience members to choose musical selections from a "menu" of more than two dozen vocal and instrumental works of various styles, from Baroque, Classical, Romantic, original commissions, to Broadway staples. During the 2016-2018 seasons, she performed regularly at Carnegie Hall, The Juilliard School, and in public schools and various community venues around New York City as a pianist of Ensemble Connect, a prestigious fellowship program of Carnegie Hall, The Juilliard School, and the Weill Institute in partnership with the New York City Department of Education.

Currently based in New York City, Dr. Sasaki is a faculty member at The Juilliard School, where she teaches piano and keyboard skills in the Evening Division, and Piano Topics and keyboard skills for pianists in the College Division.