Vortex Temporum

(featuring Han Chen)

Our journey into the French spectral compositional movement runs full circle with this presentation of Gérard Grisey's Vortex Temporum, featuring Han Chen's piano playing and Matthew Schellhorn's direction. Witness the completion of the arc drawn from last season's works Grisey's Birds, Petrolicia and Philippe Hurel's Mantras. Vortex Temporum is Gérard Grisey's towering presence throughout 20th century composition, Tombeau: In Memoriam Gérard Grisey and a return of ex(0)ti(3)tend, Nina C. Young's A dose de soufflé for solo piano.

This program is personally underwritten by Eric Dean and Pat Richters.

Program

Philippe Hurel Tombeau: In Memoriam Gérard Grisey (1996) – 13'

1. Lento
2. Vif, irrégulier
3. Lento

George Nicholas, percussion
Han Chen, piano

Nina C. Young A dose de soufflé for piano scordatura (2016) – 6'

Han Chen, piano

Gérard Grisey Vortex Temporum for six instruments (1996) – 40'

1. I (30 to Gérard Grisey)
2. II (Tempo)
3. III (Vertiginous Scarlatti)
4. Interlude
5. IV (Gérard Lachmannian) Interlude

Samantha Bennett, violin
Rachel Mercer, viola
Jamie Clark, cello
Jeremy Ward, double bass
Tilman Hoyt, clarinets
Han Chen, piano
George Nicholas, conductor

PHILIPPE HUREL

Born in 1955 in Dorchester (France), Philippe Hurel accomplished his initial musical studies in Toulouse. From 1976 to 1979 he studied at the Conservatoire de Paris (CNSMDP) where he was prize for composition and Olivier Messiaen prize winner in 1979. From 1980 to 1982, he was a student of Gérard Grisey at the Conservatoire de Gennevilliers. He also took lessons and informally consulted with Iannis Xenakis. From 1982 to 1985 he was a member of the IRCAM as the field of "Musical Research". From 1986 to 1989, he was resident at the Villa Medici in Rome.

In 1989, he received the Siemens Foundation prize in Munich for his his ensembles intervallaires, and was commissioned by the Ensemble Intercontemporain.

Since 1997, he has been teaching composition by computer to students at the IRCAM. In parallel to his teaching at the IRCAM, he has been teaching at the Conservatoire de l'Ensemble Grand Lyon, which he founded with Pierre-André Valade.

His works have been performed by numerous ensembles and orchestras (Ensemble Intercontemporain, Ensemble Modern, Ensemble Avant, Ensemble Sonde, Ensemble Alternatif, Ensemble Grig, the Musica Ensemble of Venice, the ICAMS of Basle, soloists of the RAI, Oslo Sinfonietta, the Nouvel Ensemble Moderne of Montreal, the Orchestre National de Lille, Orchestre Philharmonique, Cologne Concert Choir, the Ensemble Musique Nouvelle of Bordeaux, Wiener Ensemble of Amsterdam, Pacifica Ensemble, the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, the Orchestre National de Montpellier, the Orchestre de l'Opéra de Rouen, the Orchestre Radio Symphonique, the Orchestre Radio Canada, the Melbourne Orchestra, the Stockholm Royal Philharmonic, the Santa Cecilia Radio Orchestra, the Radio Symphony Orchestra of Berlin, the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, the Orchestre Philharmonique Orchestra, the Cologne Radio Orchestra, the Leipzig radio-symphony orchestra or Pierre Boulez, Sua Pekka Salonen, Kent Nagano, David Robertson, Ed Spanjaard, Peter Eötvös, Markus Stenz, Jonathan Nott, Hannu Lintu, Lorraine Vaillancourt and Lucas Vondervorst such as Pierre-André Valade, Pascal Rophé and Renato Rivolta.

Philippe Hurel belongs to the generation of composers who have developed the principles of so-called "spectral" music, begun by Gérard Grisey and Tristan Murail at the end of the seventies. Hurel's music is characterized by a "slowness" of time, by the use of "sound" textures, mainly based on timbre and showing concern for timbral complementarities - involves processes which allow it to pass progressively from one given state of sound to another. But Hurel's music is also characterized by a "plurality" of styles and by a "hybrid" aesthetic which contains transition within the more classical style of variations. In such an extent that since Pour l'image, all his pieces involve the return - within the framework of changing musical progressions - of "musical structures" which have already been heard. This is the particular personification multiplying levels of listening characteristic the composer's taste for ambiguity. So he plays with the fact that the listener cannot recognize the return of a musical object in a collection of constantly new and polyphonic which allow numerous and contradictory timbre to reaffirm their individuality.

Greatly influenced by some current in psychoacoustics, these paradoxal passages place Philippe Hurel among those composers who have been restructured metals and rhythmic functions over the last five years.

All the metals lines he writes are concerned according to the recursivity principle, which is based on the principle of "self-similarity" (repetition of a musical object at different temporal hierarchies between line and texture. On a harmonic level, Philippe Hurel's compositions unemployed sound aggregates, which he manages to link together with ever-increasing audacity, since he considers the evolution of more intervals to be one of the important questions in music today.

While he was at first satisfied with organizing flutes made up of different periodic rhythms, the composer is today attempting to organize complex rhythmic structures where each voice is "alive" and "free" while nevertheless being part of a global movement. Contrapuntal collection of instrumental lines and polyphonical which allow numerous and contradictory timbre to reaffirm their individuality.

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Tombeau: In Memoriam Gérard Grisey (1996)

When we retreat and disintegrate are subjective, whereas periods of progress have an objective direction. The nature of the present time is revitalizing, since it is a subjective "we" or again, "The universal sickness of today is subjectivity" and yet again, "He does not deserve to be called a poet who knows only how to express his own feelings subjectively, since a true poet is able to assimilate the entire world and express its thoughts" (Schumann, Gespräche, 29-31 [1854]).

Now, if this is one composer who is able to assimilate the entire world and express its thoughts in his music, that composer is Gérard Grisey who, like Goethe the fantastic took a genuine interest in science and nature. Grisey's music is not "subjective" in the sense that it is not able to assimilate the entire world and express its thoughts". (Schumann, Gespräche, 29-31 [1854]).

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—Guy Lelong

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—Philippe Hurel

NINA C. YOUNG

b. 1984 The music of composer Nina C. Young is characterized by an acute sensitivity to how color, manifested in equal measure by the physical properties of the musical voice moves elements of the classical canon, modernism, minimalism, spectral experimentalism, popular electronic music, and popular idioms. Her projects, ranging from concert pieces to interactive installations, have been presented in some environments that explore aural architectures, resonance, and ephemera.

Young's works have been presented at the Ars Electronica, Pixel Palace, Gallery 16 Windows, Museum, LA, Pitt's Heat on Grand, and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra's Ordway Music Theatre. Young's works have been presented in the Ars Electronica, Pixel Palace, Gallery 16 Windows, Museum, LA, Pitt's Heat on Grand, and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra's Ordway Music Theatre. Young's works have been presented in the Ars Electronica, Pixel Palace, Gallery 16 Windows, Museum, LA, Pitt's Heat on Grand, and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra's Ordway Music Theatre.

Music Series. Her music has premiered international artists through performances by the Minnesota Orchestra, the Minnesota Sinfonia, the Minnesota Chamber Orchestra, the Minnesota Wolrwarsi Orchestra, the Minnesota Opera Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Minnesota Symphony, La Nouvelle Ensemble Moderne, the Alcazar Quartet, Eighth Blackbird, the Dr. Jazzett Jazz Orchestra, the Minnesota Jazz Ensemble, the Pacifica Ensemble, and the Minnesota Sinfonia. Young has also received a Fulbright Grant and could have been sent the fight of her life. She is the and we are all part of society however we look at it. We have felt, think, cast for its little of what we could and our own, in the pure sense of the term. We are all in a dance accept and learn both from them who come before us, and from those who are with us now."

(Schermann, Gespräche, 31-0 [1854]).

À bout de souffle (2016)

Martyn Noonan, Lion from Rusalka (May 23, 2016)

"Venus Temporum Restored" Project

Patricia Parachin: What is your greatest ambition in life?

Parachinzo: To become immortal... and then die.

Patricia Parachin: It's said to fall asleep, it separates people. Even when you're sleeping together, you're all alone.

'À bout de souffle' (English: 'out of breath') takes its title from Jean-Luc Godard's 1960 film (English: Breathless). The piece shares no direct relation to the narrative of the film, but the compositional process drew inspiration from both the short innovative use of jump cuts that film cites. Andrew Harris analyzed as representing "the meaningfulness of the time interval between movie decisions", and the two quotes above.

Nina C. Young's piano scordatura piece, À bout de souffle, continues Vortex Temporum. It was a great task to composed something such a delicate piece with such a monumental and personally influential work. I focused on simultaneously highlighting and obscuring the relationship between the pieces contained equal temperament and the four quarter-tone scordatura. Listen with the idea of Grisey's structural arc and the Reel arpeggio by preserving repetitive motion and transformation. Listen for the Reel arpeggio to transform through processes of dynamics, timbre and register expansion – a sort of restless breathing.

GÉRARD GRISEY

b. 1946. was born in Belfort on June 17th, 1946. He studied at the Conservatoire National de Musique de Paris from 1968 to 1972 before entering the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique in Paris. Here he was a student of Messiaen and Henri Dutilleux. He participated in Gérard Grisey's classes at Tanglewood (Olivier Messiaen's class from 1968 to 1970). During the period, he also studied with Michel Ecoulaire's classes at the Ecole Normale de Musique (1968), as well as summer schools at the Darmstadt Courses in Some (1969), and the Nadia Boulanger's classes at the American Conservatory (1970).

He was granted a scholarship by the Villa Medici in Rome from 1972 to 1974, and in 1973 founded a group called L'Ensemble with Tristan Murail, Roger Tessier and Hugues Dufourt, later to be joined by Hugues Dufourt. Dérives, Périodes and Partials were among the first pieces of spectral music.

In 1974-75, he studied acoustics with Emile Leipp at the Paris VI University, and in 1980 became a teacher at the I.R.C.A.M. In the same year he went to Berlin to teach at the DAAD (Deutsches Akademisches Austausch Dienst), and afterwards left for Strasbourg, where he was appointed Professor of Composition at the Conservatoire National de Musique.

After returning to Paris he began teaching composition at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique in Paris since 1987, and holds numerous composition seminars in France (Centre Acanthes, Lyon, Nancy and Royaumont, Paris), Germany (Kassel, Freiburg, Cologne, Cités, Hellerau), Malmö, Gothenburg, Los Angeles, Stanford, London, Moscow, Madrid, etc.)

Among his works, most of which were commissioned by famous institutions and international instrumental groups, are Dérives (1974-1976), Jour, contre-jour (1979-1979), Modulations (1977-1978), Périodes (1974), Partiels (1975), Tellurique (1987), Vortex Temporum I (Tourne (1985-1986), Le Noir de l'Etoile (1989-1990), L'Icone paradoxale (1990-1991), Espace Acoustique (1974-1989) - a cycle consisting of six pieces), Vortex Temporum(1994-1996), Quatre chants pour franchir le seuil (1997-1998).

Gerard Grisey died in Paris on 11 November 1998.

Vortex Temporum (1996)

It is difficult to overstate the profound influence Gerard Grisey's compositional style had on the trajectory of 20th and 21st century music. As one can see from his first work in his ten-work catalogue, Dérives (1974), Grisey's interest in the physicality of sound, and how it can be passed the way of its contemporaries and successors to continue through the doorway that has opened, of what is commonly called the "Spectral" movement in music. Grisey, naturally, was not the first to do this, but he was one of the first to do so in a manner that was not a mere notion of the term "experimental", to an interview with David Bunder. Grisey spoke up his thought on the matter earlier saying:

"But let us never mind, let us start with the concept of a spectrum!" (Cf. Fire. Or several versions. At the very beginning I started with real spectrums that I would analyze and then transform into external layers of writings. But now, not anymore. I just. That was 20 or 30 years ago. Still. So actually, you're not a spectral composer anymore?

(Cf. Well, I don't care! Laughs) I really don't care. That's just as I told you: just a sticker that we get at a certain period. I think my attitude is basically the same, but the departure point of composition has changed considerably. I'm not interested in the spectrum anymore. I'm not for continuity. How to compose an extended type of line in a composition without writing the sort of chromatic clusters like Ligeti in Atmosphères. What language does that extended line imply? That is really the starting point of spectralism and not the writing of spectrums in music.

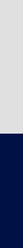
—Los Angeles, January 28, 1996

Vortex Temporum is considered by many to be Grisey's magnum opus, his crowning achievement in the realm of instrumental music. The work, in six movements, is a work that is principally one that deals with exerting circles of sonic color and the exploration of time, expanding and stretching the boundaries and dimension of the listener's experience.

—George Nicholas

Guest Artist

HAN CHEN



Hailed by the New York Times as a pianist with "a graceful touch, rhythmic precision, lapidary charm" and "pure, subtle touch," Han Chen is a pianist whose consistently high-quality playing includes important prizes in international competitions as well as increasing respect in the avant-garde. Mr. Chen's Delos CD with Alexis Ronisch, which consists of Liszt operatic transcriptions, was described by the Fanfare magazine critic as "the prize winner of the 6th China International Piano Competition. Mr. Chen's performance at the Cornelia Carpenter Center, performance as "with sensitivity and thoughtfulness." And "impressively commanding and authoritative" performance. Mr. Chen is an advocate for modern music. Mr. Chen actively performs both 20th-century classics and the emerging contemporary.

He has worked with renowned composers such as Thomas Adès, Unsuk Chin, Helmut Lachenmann, Lei Liang and Wen Yeung, given world premieres of works by Chris Rolly, Joyce and Renzato Aloyo. He is a member of the New York based group Ensemble Echapé. Mr. Chen has performed with orchestras around the world such as the New York Philharmonic, National Taiwan Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Kremen Philharmonic and Macao Orchestra. He has performed chamber music with the Ying Quartet, Brentano Quartet and Nicholas Rudzinski Clarinet, Mr. Chen graduated from The Juilliard School and the New England Conservatory, studying with Prof. Yoheved Kaplinsky and Prof. Wha Kyung Byun. He is now a doctoral student at the CUNY Graduate Center with Prof. Kapilinsky and Prof. Ursula Oppens.

Hello everyone! We are so excited to welcome you back in person!

In consideration of our venue and our own internal protocols there are few things we'd like to notify you of to ensure a safe and comfortable environment for all of us.

1. Masks will be required and social distancing will be observed in the venue. Masks will be provided if you forgot/ran out of or excuse disposable masks.
2. We do not require proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test for entry into Tyrfingur. We request that all attendees are vaccinated. This is not for lack of vaccine hesitancy, but because we are a small venue and our ability to enforce vaccination is better as a smaller organization, we do not currently have the wherewithal or legal firepower to properly manage the collection of such information and the enforcement of such a policy.
3. We want to be sure that everyone feel safe and comfortable in the venue and that everyone is vaccinated.

We're confident that these measures will be able to provide a safe, welcoming environment for our beloved audience to come back to. Thank you for your support. We can't wait to see you on Monday!