



20/21

50th
Anniversary
Season

New Music Concerts Presents

50th Anniversary Commissioning Series

Co-Artistic Directors

Robert Aitken and
Brian Current

50th Season

— 410th Event

Dec.06.20

Broadcast Online

Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge the diversity of the First Peoples of this area and honour the stewardship of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Wendat. Today Toronto is still home to many Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island and around the world and we are grateful to have the opportunity to meet, work and live on this land.

50th Anniversary Commissioning Series

Online Broadcast - 8pm

50th Season

— 410th Event

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Broadcast Online

New Works by **Kotoka Suzuki**,
Eliot Britton, and **James O'Callaghan** for
Distanced Ensemble

Programme

Kotoka Suzuki (Japan/Canada 1972)

Constraint Obstacle Studies (2020)*

Aiyun Huang Percussion
Austin Lamarche Percussion
Britton Rene Collins Percussion
Chung Ling Lo Percussion
David Schotzko Percussion
Haruka Fuji Percussion
Michael Murphy Percussion
Michelle Colton Percussion
Nikki Joshi Percussion
Rick Sacks Percussion
Ryan Scott Percussion
Zuri Wells Percussion

*world premiere commissioned by NMC

50th Anniversary Commissioning Series

Online Broadcast - 8pm

50th Season
— 410th Event

Dec.06.20
Broadcast Online

Programme continued

Eliot Britton (Canada 1982)

Hyperscale Landscape (2020)*

Aiyun Huang Percussion
Leslie Newman Flute
Keith Atkinson Oboe
Anthony Thompson Clarinet
Bee Unger Bassoon
Chris Gongos Horn
Rick Sacks Percussion
Ryan Scott Percussion
Sanya Eng Harp
Lynn Kuo Violin
Aysel Taghi-Zada Violin
Keith Hamm Viola
Amahl Arulanandam Cello
Adam Scime Double Bass

James O'Callaghan (Canada 1988)

O Cocoon (2020)*

Britton Rene Collins Percussion
Haruki Fuji Percussion
Rick Sacks Percussion
Sanya Eng Harp
Wesley Shen Piano
Lynn Kuo Violin
Aysel Taghi-Zada Violin
Keith Hamm Viola
Amahl Arulanandam Cello
Adam Scime Double Bass

*world premiere commissioned by NMC

A Message from Co-Artistic Director Brian Current



The Commissions for Distanced Ensemble were conceived during the most the frightening time of the lockdown in Canada, in the Spring of 2020 when many of us were afraid of simply going outside.

Three composers, Kotoka Suzuki, Eliot Britton and James O'Callaghan, were asked to create an original work for NMC musicians playing from their homes. Whether it was a multi-track or live videoconference, or another configuration, was entirely up to them. The important aspect was that the work was conceived from the beginning for the situation.

The spirit of the series is to encourage people to stay home so the work could not include any non-household items or unusual instruments. We also requested that composers not ask musicians to travel to a

professional recording space and to only use equipment that they already had with them.

All three composers responded magnificently to the task. They created works that not only document our present circumstances, but also stand as wonderful compositions on their own that we are proud to present on our series.

Thank you to these gifted composers and to the many talented NMC musicians who joined us from their studios.

And thank you, our audience, for being part of Extraordinary Music for Extraordinary Times. We look forward to listening along with each of you this evening. We are one audience. Distanced, but not alone.

Brian Current
Co-Artistic Director, NMC



Artist Biographies

Kotoka Suzuki

— Japan/Canada 1972

Constraint Obstacle Studies (2020)



Program Note

In response to the Covid-19 lockdown in May, I was invited by New Music Concerts to write a piece for a 'distanced' ensemble of 10-15 musicians that can be rehearsed and played in the musicians' homes with whatever equipment they happened to have with them. This video work for 12 musicians directly responds to the struggle and constraints I faced in my own creative process as well the challenging social restrictions many of us feel during this time of lockdown. The composition is a collection of three short movements, highlighting the experiences many of us share: being stuck at home, spending a lot of time in the kitchen and virtual conference calls, and with this the emotional urgency

and longing to be connected to a shared community physically.

The kitchen is often thought of as a space of security, comfort and warmth. As the world shut down during this pandemic, home cooking is one thing that kept me with a sense of happiness and normalcy. In this work, musicians perform using objects solely found in their own kitchen. Here, the individual recordings prepared by the twelve musicians become united as a collective, not only in sound but also as a visual composition. While each performer is allotted a small confined two-dimensional space, their bodies and movement connect to develop relationships that are only possible collectively.

Kotoka Suzuki

Continued

Biography

Kotoka Suzuki is a composer focusing on both instrumental and multimedia practices. She has produced several large-scale multimedia works, including spatial interactive audio-visual work for both concert and installation settings, often in collaboration with artists and scholars from other disciplines. Her work reflects on life, breath and wind and often conceives of sounds as a physical form to be manipulated through the sculptural practice of composition.

Her work has been featured internationally by performers such as Arditti String Quartet, eighth blackbird, Pacifica Quartet, Nouvel Ensemble Moderne, Continuum, and Mendelssohn Chamber Orchestra (Germany), at numerous venues and broadcasts such as Deutschland Radio, BBC Radio3, Ultraschall (Berlin, Germany), ISCM World Music Days, The Stone, ZKM Media Museum (Germany), and Music at the Anthology (MATA). Among the awards she

has received include DAAD Berlin Artists in Residence Program (Germany), Bourges First Prize in Multimedia, First Prize in International Electro-Acoustic Musica Nova Competition, New Music USA, Norton Stevens and North Shore fellowships from the MacDowell Colony, George A and Eliza Gardner Howard Foundation Fellowship, and Robert Fleming Prize from Canada Council for the Arts. She has held residencies at MacDowell Colony, Yaddo, Djerassi, Ucross and Center for Arts and Media (ZKM).

She received a B.M. degree in composition from Indiana University and a D.M.A. degree in composition at Stanford University, where she studied with Jonathan Harvey. She taught at the University of Chicago and Arizona State University and is currently an Associate Professor at the University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC) with a graduate appointment at the Faculty of Music. Her work is published on Edition RZ, EMF Media, IMEB records and Signpost Music. She is an Associate Composer at the Canadian Music Centre since 2001.

Eliot Britton

— Canada 1982

Hyperscale Landscape (2020)



Program Note

This work draws together and celebrates the patterns, connections and stories embedded in the southern Alberta prairie landscape. From the eerie forest within a tuft of sage grass to the wind swept horizon capped with a shifting prairie sky. A melody embedded within a millisecond of cricket call mimics thunder rolling through the valley. Everything unfolds in its own time. This piece leverages micro and macro scales to tell the story of land unfolding beyond the fringes of human perception. Technology shifts these sounds and images into a space where they can interact with the expressive repertoire of instrumental performers. The instrumental parts were recorded in the musicians homes in order

to magnify the quietest sounds. The audio and video materials were collected out on the land at the McIntyre Ranch using a variety of captured devices. These include digital microscopes, time-lapse action cameras and shotgun microphones. These materials, as well as videos from the musicians performing at home have been fed into a generative system that seeks patterns and similarities. The resulting material is a collection of visual assets that integrate macro and micro scales in improbable ways. For example, when presented with all the data, the computer sees a cello made of bone and grass, or a lichen made from bassoon components.

This work is the result of time spent with my friends Leroy Littlebear, Amethyst

Eliot Britton Continued

First Rider, Susan Lingle and especially Erin Thrall, who have taken the time to share their profound respect for and connection to their unique ecosystem.

Biography

Eliot Britton (b.1983) - integrates electronic, audiovisual and instrumental music through an energetic and colourful personal language. His creative output reflects an eclectic musical experience, from gramophones to videogames, drum machines to orchestras. Rhythmic gadgetry, artistry and the colours of technology permeate his works. By drawing on these sound worlds and others, Britton's compositions tap newly available resources of the 21st century. As a member of the Manitoba Metis Federation, Britton is passionate about Canadian musical culture, seeking new and engaging aesthetic directions that use technology to enhance expression.

Eliot Britton completed his Undergraduate Studies with Michael Matthews at the University of Manitoba and continued on to a MMus and PhD in music research and composition at the Schulich

School of Music at McGill University under the supervision of Prof. Sean Ferguson. Here Britton has worked as a course lecturer, researcher and composer in residence for numerous ensembles. He is the recipient of numerous prizes, and research grants including SSHRC Bombardier graduate scholarships, Hugh Le Caine and Serge Garant awards and most recently a Canadian Foundation for Innovation award and a DORA for best composition and sound design.

Currently Britton is cross appointed between Music Technology & Digital Media and Composition at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music. There he is building a media research-creation facility (Centre BPMC) and renovating the historical UofT Electronic Music Studios (EMS). As co-director of Manitoba's Cluster New Music and Integrated Arts Festival and an independent music producer Britton continues to produce events and music in a variety of contexts. His recently completed projects include "Adizokan" a 50 minute collaboration for Orchestra, dance video and electronics for the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and Red Sky Performance.

James O'Callaghan

— Canada 1988

O Cocoon

(2020)



Program Note

O Cocoon is a work about the relationship between dissociation, art, metaphysics, transformation, and virtual reality. The 10 musicians featured in the work and I each recorded audiovisual materials of instrumental and object-performance as well as everyday environments from inside and outside of their homes, prompted by notated fragments and text instructions for guided improvisations. These 11 sound-makers and 11 spaces are re-contextualized into a constantly morphing and combined virtual shared space. These sources appear sometimes directly, are sometimes manipulated, and are sometimes played back in a heritage church space in Troy, New York, offered through a curatorial

residency at *The PostContemporary*. The piece emphasizes and amplifies the loss of fidelity and clarity through long-distance transmission in a meditation on being apart. Under coalescing conditions that reinforce disembodiment, it is an effort to reclaim and rediscover embodied sensations.

In 2001 Björk's fourth album *Vespertine* was released during the crest of a wave of new means of listening through peer-to-peer file sharing services like Napster. Björk's orchestrations on the record were made with the consequence of MP3 compression in mind: using sounds from the harp, celesta, clavichord, and strings, whose 'purer' spectra better survive audio degradation. One of the main collaborators on the record, the electronic duo Matmos,

James O'Callaghan Continued

contributed samples of everyday household objects in their beatmaking. *O Cocoon* pays homage to *Vespertine* (especially the track *Cocoon*) by deriving its instrumentation and some musical materials from the now nearly 20-year old album in whose aims and conditions I find a curious affinity to our present-day circumstances of distant listening. The work also references *Insomnia* by FAITHLESS, *I am sitting in a room different from the one you are in now* by Mary and Alvin Lucier, the Ridley Scott film *Alien*, the Diego Velázquez painting *Las Meninas*, and Pauline Oliveros' *Deep Listening* practice.

O Cocoon was created with gracious access to the Woodside Church residency space operated by The PostContemporary and curator Gabriella Garcia, who also offered invaluable feedback and assistance during the creation of the work. *O Cocoon* was commissioned by New Music Concerts.

Biography

James O'Callaghan (b. 1988) is a composer and sound artist based in Montréal praised for his "mastery of materials and musical form" (Electromania, Radio France). His music has been described as "very personal... with its own colour anchored in the unpredictable." (Goethe-Institut) His work intersects acoustic and electroacoustic media, employing field recordings, amplified found objects, computer-assisted transcription of environmental sounds, and unique performance conditions.

His work spans chamber, orchestral, live electronic and acousmatic idioms, audio installations, and site-specific performances. It has been performed in 26 countries and variously commissioned by the *Groupe de Recherches Musicales* (INA-GRM), *Gaudeamus Muziekweek*, the *National Youth Orchestra of Canada*, *Esprit Orchestra*, *l'Ensemble contemporain de Montréal*, *Standing Wave*, and many others. His album *Espaces Tautologiques*, released by *empreintes DIGITALes*, won a *Prix Opus*, and was listed by *5:4* as one of the "best albums of 2016". His extended collaboration with *Ensemble Paramirabo* resulted in a portrait album of his works in 2019, entitled *Alone and unalone*. It was released on *Ravello Records* and was nominated for a *JUNO* award and a *Prix Opus*.

His music has been the recipient of nearly forty prizes and nominations, including the *ISCM Young Composer Award* (2017), the *Salvatore Martirano Award* (2016), the *Robert Fleming Prize* (2015), the *Jan V. Matejcek Award in New Classical Music* (2018), the *Jeu de Temps / Times Play First Prize*, and the *SOCAN Foundation John Weinzweig Grand Prize* (2014). Significant nominations include those for the *Gaudeamus Award* (2016), *Prix Métamorphoses* (2018), and two *JUNO Awards* (2014, 2020).

Active as an arts organiser, he co-founded and co-directed the *Montréal Contemporary Music Lab*. Originally from Vancouver, he received a *Master of Music* degree from *McGill University* in 2014.

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We look forward to seeing you during our
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