



20/21

50th  
Anniversary  
Season

New Music Concerts Presents

# The Ice Is Talking

**Co-Artistic Directors**

Robert Aitken and  
Brian Current

**50th Season**

— 411th Event

**May.16.21**

Broadcast Online from  
Koerner Hall

**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.

## 20/21 Concert Season

### Co-Artistic Directors

Robert Aitken and Brian Current

# The Ice Is Talking

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Online Broadcast - 8pm  
Introduction - 7:15pm

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**May.16.21**  
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**Aiyun Huang** - Percussion  
**Mark Fewer** - Violin

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## Programme

**Georges Aperghis** (Greece 1945)

Mark Fewer - Violin

*I.X* (2002)

**Vivian Fung** (Canada 1975)

Aiyun Huang - Percussion  
Adam Scime - Electronics

*The Ice Is Talking* (2020)

**Lei Liang** (China/USA 1972)

Aiyun Huang - Percussion  
Mark Fewer - Violin

*Déjà Vu* (2020)

**Sophie Dupuis** (Canada 1988)

Aiyun Huang - Percussion  
Mark Fewer - Violin

*Taken by the Locos* (2019)

**Tania León** (Cuba/USA 1943)

Aiyun Huang - Percussion  
Mark Fewer - Violin

*De Color* (1996–1997)

**Michael Oesterle** (Canada 1968)

Aiyun Huang - Percussion  
Mark Fewer - Violin

*Ayre* (2019)

**Jean-Claude Risset** (France 1938)

Mark Fewer - Violin  
Adam Scime - Electronics

*Variants* (1995)



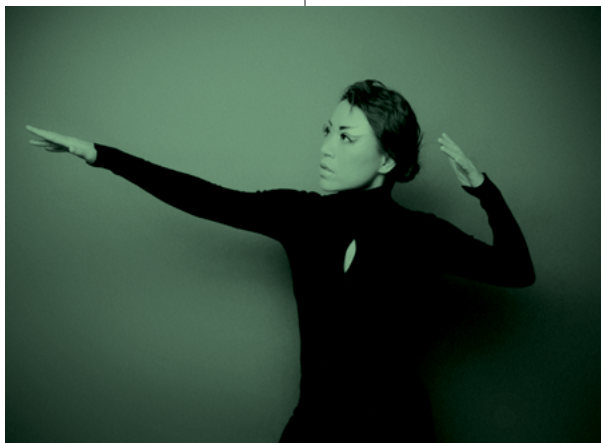
The background is a vibrant green with large, dark, organic shapes that resemble flowing liquid or smoke, creating a dynamic and abstract composition.

# Artist Biographies



# Aiyun Huang

## — Percussion



Aiyun Huang enjoys a musical life as a soloist, chamber musician, researcher, teacher, and producer. She is now a globally recognized performer since winning the 2002 First Prize and Audience Prize of the Geneva International Music Competition. Aiyun is a champion of existing repertoire and a prominent voice in the collaborative creation of new works. Huang has commissioned and premiered over two hundred works in her two decades as a soloist and chamber musician. The *Globe and Mail* critic Robert Everett-Green describes Huang's playing as "engrossing to hear and to watch" and her choice of repertoire as capable of "renovating our habits of listening."

Beyond her acclaimed body of creative work, Huang's research focuses on multidisciplinary explorations into the performing body in media technology, theatre, dance, and music using percussion as the central voice. Her research appears in the *Cambridge Companion to Percussion* and *Saving Percussion Theatre* DVD. These

publications have become valuable reference guides on how to unpack ambiguous notation in contemporary music, and they have reignited interest in the performance practice of percussion in theatre. She was the PI in "Memory in Motion: Percussion Ensemble as a Lab" (funding: FRQSC Appui à la recherche-cr ation), a program studying how percussion ensembles can learn how to perform music from memory utilizing existing and new repertoire.

Born in Taiwan, Aiyun holds a DMA from the University of California, San Diego. Between 2004 and 2006, she was a Faculty Fellow at UCSD. Between 2006 and 2017, she led the percussion program at McGill University and held the position of William Dawson Scholar. She currently holds the position of Associate Professor of Music at The University of Toronto where she heads the percussion department and directs the percussion ensemble. Since 2019, Aiyun has served as the Artistic Director of the soundSCAPE Festival in Cesena, Italy.

# Mark Fewer — Violin



Violinist Mark Fewer leads a multi-disciplined life in music. Violin soloist, chamber musician, orchestral leader, artistic director, conductor, arranger, teacher, jazz violinist, recording artist and occasional radio host, he has performed worldwide to great critical acclaim. Described as “intrepid” (The Globe and Mail), “genre-bending” (National Post), “profound” (The WholeNote), and “freaky good” (The Gazette), he has performed around the world in halls such as Carnegie, Wigmore and Salle Pleyel, and is equally at home in recital venues such as Bartok House (Budapest) to Le Poisson Rouge (NYC) to The Forum (Taipei). As a soloist, he has performed with the symphonies of Vancouver, Edmonton, Toronto, Quebec,

San Francisco and Melbourne, as well as groups such as the Fodens-Richardson Brass Band (UK), the Zapp Quartet (Amsterdam), and the McGill Percussion Ensemble. As a conductor he has directed I Musici de Montreal, l’Orchestre Symphonique de Laval, the Newfoundland Sinfonia, Guelph Symphony, Vancouver Symphony, the McGill Baroque Orchestra and the choir Capella Antica.

Mr. Fewer’s discography includes collections of works by such varied musical voices as the baroque gypsy Giovanni Pandolfi (released on the Smithsonian’s prestigious Friends of Music label, it has been a best-seller at the museum since 2009), the American “Bad Boy of Music” George Antheil (with pianist John Novacek,



## Mark Fewer Continued

it is used as soundtrack material for the cult American hit tv series “American Horror Theater – Freak Show”), jazz great Phil Dwyer (Changing Seasons, a work written expressly for Mr. Fewer showcasing his unique talents in both classical and jazz idioms, it won the 2012 Juno Award for Best Contemporary Jazz Album and was an iTunes bestseller), and Bramwell Tovey (Nine Daies Wander, winner of two UK Brass Band Record of the Year awards, the piece has Mr. Fewer reciting famous lines of Shakespeare while re-enacting the publicity stunt of comedic actor William Kemp in 1600). Other recordings include the Violin and Piano Sonatas of Johannes Brahms (with pianist Peter Longworth), and the Jazz Sonata of Bohuslav Martinu (with Art of Time director Andrew Burashko, piano). His latest recording is of the recently discovered (1972) Sonatas for Violin and Harpsichord of Antonio Vivaldi with Hank Knox. The only Canadian recording of this repertoire, it has been hailed as “bright,

assured, and technically brilliant” (TheWholeNote), and a “highly individual and refreshing addition to the catalogue” (Early Music America).

As a collaborator, Mr. Fewer was violinist with the Duke Piano Trio for more than twenty years, has been a member of the Smithsonian Chamber Players for 15 years and was, until recently, violinist with the St. Lawrence String Quartet. He has shared the classical stage with performers such as Edgar Meyer, Marc-Andre Hamelin, Leon Fleisher, Elizabeth Wallfisch, James Campbell, Anssi Karttunen and others, and the jazz stage with Dave Young, Phil Dwyer, Jim Vivian, Jodi Proznick, Brad Turner, Gene DiNovi and Pekka Kuusisto. In 2016 he was a featured soloist with Stevie Wonder and his band during the Songs in the Key of Life tour.

He is the Artistic Director of Stratford Summer Music, before which he was founding director of the SweetWater Music Festival for 16 years.

# The Composers And Their Music



# Georges Aperghis

## — I.X.



### Program Note

Aperghis wrote this piece as a homage to the passing of renowned composer Iannis Xenakis (with initials I.X.). This short but highly virtuosic work makes use of the extreme high register of the violin producing an atmosphere of shimmering brightness. With the use of many quarter tones (notes between the notes on a piano), the violinist must execute minute melodic shifts while also maintaining an unexpected lyricism present in the weeping nature of the contour. This mysterious piece is a whisper from another realm, as if Xenakis is speaking to us from another room from another time.

— Adam Scime

### Biography

Georges Aperghis was born in Athens in 1945. He has lived and worked in Paris since 1963. His work is notably characterized by a questioning about languages and the meaning. His compositions, whether instrumental, vocal or for stage, explore the borders of the intelligible, he likes to create twisted tracks which allow him to keep the listener active (stories emerge but are suddenly refuted).

Aperghis' music is not strictly linked to any dominant musical aesthetics of contemporary musical creation but follows on his century by a dialogue with other forms of art and an extreme open-mindedness to the other. This otherness is combined with innovation when he includes electronics, video, machines, automatons or robots to his performances. Aperghis works closely with a group of interpreters who are entirely part of the creative process. They are actors (Edith Scob, Michael Lonsdale, Valérie Dréville, Jos Houben), instrumentalists (Jean-Pierre Drouet, Richard Dubelski, Geneviève Strosser, Nicolas Hodges, Uli Fussenegger) or vocalists (Martine Viard, Donatienne Michel-Dansac, Lionel Peintre). From the 90's he shared new artistic collaborations with danse (Johanne Saunier, Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker) and visual arts (Daniel Lévy, Kurt D'Haeseleer, Hans Op de Beeck). The main European contemporary music ensembles have developed a working relationship with Aperghis through settled commissions that are now part of their repertory (Ictus, Klangforum Wien, Remix, Musikfabrik, Ensemble Modern, Intercontemporain, Vocalsolisten, the SWR choir).

# Vivian Fung

## — *The Ice Is Talking*



### Program Note

I grew up in Edmonton, and every year my family would vacation in the Canadian Rockies. I would greatly look forward to seeing the mountains, the majesty of the giant silhouettes, the clean, crisp air, and the proximity to nature and wildlife. I was invited back to the Banff Centre last year and decided to visit the Columbia Icefields as a bit of nostalgia for my childhood. That trip pained me deeply when I saw how much the glaciers had receded since the last time I was there, about 20 years ago. “The Ice Is Talking” is a work that is an emotional reaction to that experience. Scored for a solo percussionist and electronics, it features the percussionist as the protagonist “playing” on a block of ice. At the start, it is a celebration of the elements, taking in the beauty of a blade gliding through ice, the taps and swishes of ice being shaped into virtuosic rhythmic

patterns that speak through interjections by the performer. As the piece progresses, the piece becomes more and more violent, and the instruments reflect the rage and intensity of the protagonist, with a power drill, ice picks and stabbing motions reflecting the realization of human’s ill effects on the natural landscape. It ends with dramatic flair in the hope of raising awareness to the world around us.

– Vivian Fung

### Biography

JUNO Award-winning composer Vivian Fung has a unique talent for combining idiosyncratic textures and styles into large-scale works, reflecting her multicultural background. NPR calls her “one of today’s most eclectic composers.” This is supported by many of her works, including Clarinet Quintet: *Frenetic Memories*, a reflection on



## Vivan Fung Continued

her travels to visit minority groups in China's Yunnan province; *Earworms*, commissioned by Canada's National Arts Centre Orchestra, which musically depicts our diverted attention spans and multi-tasking lives; and *The Ice Is Talking for solo percussion and electronics*, commissioned by the Banff Centre, using three ice blocks to illustrate the beauty and fragility of our environment.

Fung has a deep interest in exploring cultures through travel and research. In early 2019, Fung traveled to Cambodia to connect with her roots and collect research for a new opera. She traveled to Southwest China in 2012 to study minority music and cultures, continuing research that previously inspired *Yunnan Folk Songs* (2011), commissioned by Fulcrum Point New Music in Chicago with support from the MAP Fund. As a composer whose trips often inspire her music, Fung has also explored diverse

cultures in North Vietnam, Spain, and Indonesia. She toured Bali in 2004, 2008, and 2010, and competed in the Bali Arts Festival as an ensemble member and composer in Gamelan Dharma Swara.

Fung has received numerous awards and grants, including the 2015 Jan V. Matejcek New Classical Music Award for achievement in new music from the Society of Composers, Authors, and Music Publishers of Canada (SOCAN), a Simon Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, the New York Foundation for the Arts' Gregory Millard Fellowship, and grants from ASCAP, BMI, American Music Center, MAP Fund, American Symphony Orchestra League, American Composers Forum, and the Canada Council for the Arts. She is an associate composer of the Canadian Music Centre and currently serves on the board of the American Composers Forum.

# Lei Liang

## — *Déjà Vu*



### Program Note

Originally written for pipa and percussion, Liang rewrote this piece for violinist Cho-Liang Lin and percussionist Zhe Lin. The material in the piece - two solo lines intertwined, is meant to evoke the different ways people interact and how several meetings between the same individuals can take on new meanings: much like unexplained *Deja Vu* in our daily lives, one may experience similar recollections even when meeting someone for the first time. The writing for the two instruments certainly takes on various characters that ebb and weave both in tandem and independently in a very playful and colourful journey for an unusual instrumental pairing. The calmness of bowed marimba keys and shimmering cymbals are often interrupted with decidedly abrasive gestures - two voices that interact in excitement and retrospection.

### Biography

Lei Liang (b.1972) is a Chinese-born American composer whose works have been described as “hauntingly beautiful and sonically colorful” by *The New York Times*, and as “far, far out of the ordinary, brilliantly original and inarguably gorgeous” by *The Washington Post*.

Winner of the 2011 Rome Prize, Lei Liang is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, an Aaron Copland Award, a Koussevitzky Music Foundation Commission and a Creative Capital Award. His concerto *Xiaoxiang* (for saxophone and orchestra) was named a finalist for the 2015 Pulitzer Prize in Music. His orchestral work, *A Thousand Mountains, A Million Streams*, won the 2021 Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition. From 2013-2016, Lei Liang served as Composer-in-Residence at the Qualcomm Institute where his multimedia works preserve and reimagine culture

## Lei Liang Continued

through combining advanced technology and scientific research. In 2018, Liang returned to the Institute as its inaugural Research Artist-in-Residence.

Lei Liang's recent works address issues of sex trafficking across the US-Mexican border (*Cuatro Corridos*), America's complex relationship with gun and violence (*Inheritance*), and environmental awareness through the sonification of coral reefs.

Lei Liang taught in China as a distinguished visiting professor at Shaanxi Normal University College of Arts in Xi'an; served as honorary professor of composition and

sound design at Wuhan Conservatory of Music and as visiting assistant professor of music at Middlebury College. He is Chancellor's Distinguished Professor of Music at the University of California, San Diego where he served as chair of the composition area and Acting Chair of the Music Department. Starting from 2018, Lei Liang serves as the Artistic Director of the Chou Wen-chung Music Research Center in China. Lei Liang's catalogue of more than a hundred compositions is published exclusively by Schott Music Corporation (New York).



# Sophie Dupuis

## — *Taken by the Locos*



### Program Note

*Taken by the Locos* was inspired by a scene in the DreamWorks animation movie *Madagascar*, where the heroes interact with a group of lemurs and other kookie creatures with protruding eyes. Their chief is so very eccentric, completely lacks tact and has absurd ideas. He is the perfect leader to this bunch of wackos who are nonetheless so very charming for the simple fact that they're absolutely unapologetically themselves. The phonetics of the word "loco" inspired the choice of percussion instruments, while the violin lines were written with the intent to portray the meaning of the word.

### Biography

Sophie Dupuis is a composer from New Brunswick interested in interdisciplinary art music, electroacoustics and music for soloists, small and large ensembles. She finds her inspiration in the picturesque scenery of the Maritimes where she grew up, in her attraction to raw electrical sounds and in her emotional response to art involving body and voice. Her works have been commissioned and performed by soloists and groups such as Duo Holz, The Arts Song Project, Made in Trio, Din of Shadows, Caution Tape Sound Collective, Thin Edge New Music Collective, and ECM+ for their Generation2018 tour.

Sophie received a Karen Kieser Prize in Canadian Music from the University of Toronto and several prizes for her studies in music, including the University Medal in Music from Dalhousie University, an Ontario Graduate Scholarship, the John



## Sophie Dupuis Continued



Weinzweig Graduate Scholarship and the Theodoros Mirkopoulos Fellowship in Composition two years in a row. She was nominated by composer James Rolfe to receive the 2019 Johanna Metcalf Performing Arts Prize Protégé award. Sophie recently completed her graduate degree and is now working on developing her skills with live and fixed electroacoustics. Aside from her activities as a composer, she works as a violinist, arranger and passionate music teacher of violin, piano and theory in Ottawa. She was Vice-President of the Canadian League of Composers since 2019 before becoming President of the organization in 2020.

Sophie holds a Bachelor of Music in composition from Dalhousie University, and a Masters of Music and Doctorate of Musical Arts in composition from the University of Toronto.

# Tania León

## — *De Color*



### Program Note

*De Color* is a set of four pieces for violin and marimba about color and how it stimulates my imagination. These pieces are concerted with the color of sound and the sound of color: sound paintings, pieces in search of colors that create colors through speed, movement, rapid dynamic changes and manipulations of sound textures.

*Pastel-blu* (as opposed to “blue”) has to do with the way I pronounce that color. I love twists on words, which sometimes inspires me to deliberately say things in certain ways. *Bronce* (Bronze), appropriate for a metal, is more light-reflective, more vertical. *Cobre* (Copper) contains a dislocated “montuno,” a syncopated pulse at the heart of many forms of dance music in America Latina. The concluding *Mestizo* is both a blend of previously used materials and an attempt to blend the colors of the two instruments (doubling, imitating each other).

Towards the end of the work, the montuno rhythmic pattern returns and prevails.

— Tania León

### Biography

Tania León (b. Havana, Cuba) is highly regarded as a composer, conductor, educator and advisor to arts organizations.

Recent commissions include works for New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, NDR Symphony Orchestra, Grossman Ensemble, International Contemporary Ensemble, and pianist Ursula Oppens with Cassatt String Quartet. Appearances as guest conductor include Philharmonic Orchestra of Marseille, Gewandhausorchester, Orquesta Sinfónica de Guanajuato, and Orquesta Sinfónica de Cuba.

Upcoming premieres feature commissions for the NewMusic USA Amplifying Voices Program, the League

## Tania León Continued

of American Orchestras in honor of Jesse Rosen, The Musical Fund Society in Philadelphia to celebrate their 200th anniversary, and for The Crossing chamber choir with Claire Chase, flutist, among others.

Her honors include the New York Governor's Lifetime Achievement, awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the ASCAP Victor Herbert Award, among others. She also received a proclamation for Composers Now by New York City Mayor, and the MadWoman Festival Award in Music (Spain).



# Michael Oesterle

## — Ayre



### Program Note

When I was a teenager I bought a book of 16th Century English Lute Ayres. I remember thinking that learning to play this music would help me write impressive acoustic guitar intros for the progressive rock music I was so enthralled with at the time. I became very fond of the pieces in that book and with the melodies of folk songs and ballads. This short piece for violin and vibraphone is in many ways a nostalgic wink to the music in that book of Ayres and a nod to the youth that thought to buy it. My idea for this piece was that the violin plays with a continuous momentum in the character of a restless folk fiddler. The vibraphone switches between imitating the violin music in the high register, and sustaining long notes in the low register like a small organ. The violin eventually calms down and the two instruments quietly hover on long sustained notes and a melodic fragment. I am very grateful to the Zita

and Mark Bernstein Family Foundation who commissioned Ayre for percussionist Aiyun Huang and violinist Mark Fewer, who premiered the piece at the Harbourfront Centre's Summer Music in the Garden Toronto Music Garden 2019.

— Michael Oesterle

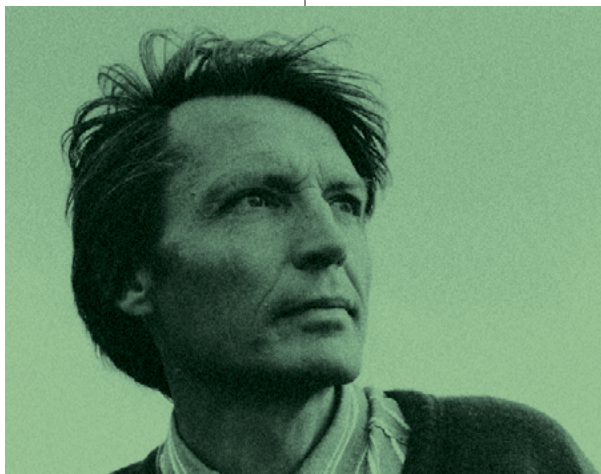
### Biography

Michael Oesterle, born in 1968, is a Canadian Composer living in Deux-Montagnes Quebec. He has composed a variety of projects for Continuum Contemporary Music, Soundstreams, and the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra. He is closely associated with Quatuor Bozzini, with whom he has collaborated for the past 25 years. A significant period in his musical life was his role as co-founder/director of Ensemble Kore, a Montreal based new music ensemble which produced innovative concerts between 1996 and 2008.



# Jean-Claude Risset

## — *Variants*



### Program Note

*Variants* is dedicated to violinist and composer Mari Kimura, who created the piece at the 1994 Helsinki Festival.

The title refers to the transformations of violin sounds produced in real-time by digital processing, but also to certain processes of variations within the violin part. For instance the timing intervals of melodic groups, causing so-called stram segregation, are echoed as mere rhythms. Digital transpositions, echoes and reverberation build up a contrapuntal and harmonic fabric which extends the violin melodies.

— Jean-Claude Risset

### Biography

Risset was born in Le Puy-en-Velay, France. Arriving at Bell Labs, New Jersey in 1964, he used Max Mathews' MUSIC IV software to digitally recreate the sounds of brass instruments. He made digital recordings of trumpets and studied their timbral composition using "pitch-synchronous" spectrum analysis tools, revealing that the amplitude and frequency of the harmonics (more correctly, partials) of these instruments would differ depending on frequency, duration and amplitude. He is also credited with performing the first experiments on a range of synthesis techniques including FM Synthesis and wave-shaping.

After creating the discrete Shepard scale, Risset created a version of the scale where the steps between each tone are continuous, and it is appropriately called the continuous Risset scale or

## Jean-Claude Risset Continued



Shepard-Risset glissando. Risset has also created a similar effect with rhythm in which tempo seems to increase or decrease endlessly.

Risset was the head of the Computer Department at IRCAM (1975-1979). At MIT Media Labs, he composed the first Duet for one pianist (1989). For his work in computer music and his 70 compositions, he received the first Golden Nica (Ars Electronica Prize, 1987), the Giga-Hertz Grand Prize 2009, and the highest French awards in both music (Grand Prix National de la Musique, 1990) and science (Gold Medal, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1999). Risset died in Marseille on 21 November 2016.

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416 961 9594  
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