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41st season | 344th event

New Music Concerts presents

small is beautiful

a recital by **Yoko Hirota**


Friday April 27, 2012

Gallery 345 | 345 Sorauren Avenue

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Robert Aitken, artistic director

41st season | 344th event
Friday April 27, 2012
Gallery 345 | 345 Sorare Avenue
7:15 Introduction | 8:00 pm Concert

New Music Concerts presents

small is beautiful

a recital by **Yoko Hirota**

Programme:

Arnold Schoenberg (Austria/USA 1874-1951) **Fünf Klavierstücke** (1923) [11']
I. Sehr langsam II. Sehr rasch III. Langsam
IV. Schwungvoll V. Walzer

Bruce Mather (Canada 1939) **Fantasy** (1964/1967) [7']

François Morel (Canada 1926) **Trinômes** (2011) ** [9']
I. Asagao

Robert Lemay (Canada 1960) **Hiroshima mon amour** (1998) [10']
I. Lui II. Elle III. Never IV. Hiroshima

— *Intermission* —

Laurie Radford (Canada 1958) **Roiling** (1997) [14']

Brian Cherney (Canada 1942) **Nachtstücke** (2011) * [14']
six miniatures for piano

Brian Current (Canada 1972) **Sungods** (2007) [9']
"Afflugat sol omnibus animalibus dei"

* World premiere ** Ontario premiere

*Professional management for Ms. Hirota is provided through
Michael Gerard Management Group (www.mgmg.ca),
Michael Dufresne - President (mgerard@sympatico.ca).*

This evening's concert is being recorded for archival purposes by John S. Gray. Please turn off your cell phones and other devices.

Please join us for a reception following the concert generously provided by David Olds and Sharon Lovett.

New Music Concerts

Robert Aitken, c.m., Artistic Director

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Having been praised by the press as “precise and keenly projective” and demonstrating “the highest level of proficiency,” Japanese-Canadian pianist **Yoko Hirota** is considered one of the leading interpreters of contemporary piano repertory of her generation. Born in Japan, Ms. Hirota began piano lessons at age four. She entered the State University of New York at Buffalo where she studied with Livingston Gearhart

and received her Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees in piano performance. Yoko pursued her commitment to contemporary piano literature with the prominent Canadian pianist and pedagogue, Louis-Philippe Pelletier, at McGill University where she received her doctoral degree in piano performance in 1999.

In addition to studies in North America, grants from the Canada Council for the Arts allowed Ms. Hirota to study in Europe with renowned interpreters of contemporary piano music such as Gabor Csalog at the Bartók Music Conservatory and Gabor Eckhardt at Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Hungary, Herbert Henck in Germany and Florent Boffard, former pianist with L'Ensemble InterContemporain in France.

Ms. Hirota is a strong advocate of contemporary music, in particular music by Canadian composers. She has performed in recital across North America and has been the guest soloist with orchestras including the Sudbury Symphony for the world premiere of *Oiseau de Givre*, a concerto written for her Canadian composer Robert Lemay. She is also highly regarded for her contemporary chamber ensemble skills and has performed in numerous concert series including Silver Birch Concerts (Ontario) where she is a regular guest, the Domaine Forget International Music Festival (Quebec), the Many-One Concert Series (New York City) and the Ottawa International Chamber Music Festival (Ottawa). Ms. Hirota was invited by the notable ensemble, the Nouvel Ensemble Moderne (NEM), to Canadian premiere the challenging work, *Joy* (for 23 musicians and tape), by the renowned Finnish composer, Magnus Lindberg. The Montreal Gazette gave special recognition of her performance.

Yoko Hirota's excellence in contemporary music interpretation is reflected in the many broadcasts of her performances on Société Radio-Canada, and the many awards she has received including

winner of the SUNY/Buffalo's Baird Concerto Competition and semi-finalist at the Nutley Symphony Orchestra's Concerto Competition. At the 1996 Clara Liechtenstein Piano Competition (Montreal) the jury requested the creation of a Special Mention Prize in order to distinguish her excellence in the interpretation of twentieth century repertoire.

Ms. Hirota's professional activities also include recordings. Her first CD, "The Piano Music of Arnold Schoenberg with 17 Fragments," was released to critical acclaim and was listed as one of Essential Tracks by The Globe and Mail. Her latest CD "Small is Beautiful: Miniature Piano Pieces," a project made possible through prestigious grants from the Canada Council for the Arts and Ontario Arts Council featuring sixteen concise 20th and 21st century piano works, was released in 2009.

Ms. Hirota is a passionate educator. She is Professor of Piano and Chair of the Music Department at Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ontario, and co-founder and co-artistic director of 5-Penny New Music Concerts.

Arnold Schoenberg had a seminal influence over the course of music in the 20th century, particularly through his development of an unprecedented theory of composition in which unity in a work is provided by the use of a determined series, usually consisting of the twelve possible different semitones, their order also inverted or taken in retrograde form, and in transposed versions. Schoenberg's earlier compositions are post-romantic in character, followed by a period in which he developed his theories of atonality, music without a key or tonal centre. Born in Vienna in 1874, he spent his early career in Berlin, until the rise to power of Hitler made it necessary to leave Germany and find safety in America, where he died in 1951. With his pupils Anton Webern and Alban Berg, both of whom he outlived, he represents a group of composers known as the Second Viennese School.

Bruce Mather was born in Toronto on May 9, 1939, but has made Montréal his home since 1966 and is considered one of Québec's most important composers. He studied piano with Alberto Guerrero and composition with Oskar Morzwetz, Godfrey Ridout and John Weinzweig at the Royal Conservatory in Toronto and at the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto, completing his Bachelor's degree in 1959. Post graduate studies took him to France where he worked with Darius Milhaud (composition), whom

he had met previously at the summer course in Aspen, and Olivier Messiaen (analysis). Mather did his Masters at Stanford University with Leland Smith and received his doctorate from the University of Toronto in 1967. He has taught composition, analysis and harmony and was director of the Contemporary Music Ensemble at McGill University from 1966 to 2001. As a pianist, Mather actively promotes contemporary music and has performed widely with his wife Pierrette LePage as the Mather/LePage piano duo.

François Morel, born in 1926 in Montreal, belongs to an important group of quebecois composers born out of Claude Champagne's classes at the Montreal Conservatory of Music during the 50s. Unlike his colleagues, he chose not to continue his musical studies in Europe but instead decided to stay in Quebec. In October 1953, Leopold Stokowski premiered his *Antiphonie* in Carnegie Hall, a work still frequently performed to this day. Ever since, his works have been performed in major European cities, in Russia, in Japan, in China as well as in the United States and South America, under the direction of such reputable conductors as Monteux, Ozawa, Mehta, Decker and Abbado. He was also highly involved in the Quebec music scene in producing events for the concert scene, recordings, theatre, radio and television. For over 25 years, he was a freelance composer and conductor for the Société Radio-Canada. Morel was a founding member of the Société de Musique de Notre Temps, of the Éditions Québec-Musique and the founder and artistic director for the Ensemble Bois et Cuivres du Québec. He taught analysis, composition and orchestration at the Faculty of Music of Laval University from 1979 until his retirement in 1997.

Robert Lemay has composed many works and received numerous international awards. His music, which often employs virtuoso performance techniques, is characterized by an imaginative and unconventional use of the concert hall space. Lemay holds a Doctor of Music degree in composition from the Université de Montréal where he studied under Michel Longtin and a master's degree from Université Laval with François Morel. He also studied at the State University of New York at Buffalo, and has worked with David Felder and taken part in seminars with Brian Ferneyhough, Louis Andriessen and Donald Erb. In France he worked with François Rossé in Bordeaux and Georges Apergis at the ATEM in Paris. Presently Robert Lemay teaches at Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ontario. He is the President and the Co-artistic director of the 5-Penny New Music Concerts in Sudbury.

Laurie Radford creates music for diverse combinations of instruments and voices, electroacoustic music, and for performers in interaction with live computer-controlled signal processing of audio and video. His music has been performed and broadcast throughout North and South America, Europe and Asia. Radford studied composition, electroacoustic music and music technology in Canada at Brandon University, the University of British Columbia and McGill University. Further studies include residencies at The Banff Centre for the Arts (Canada), Les Ateliers UPIC (Paris) and the Darmstadt Ferienkurse für Neue Musik (Germany). Laurie Radford has taught electroacoustic music and composition at Concordia University (Montréal), Bishop's University (Lennoxville), McGill University (Montréal), the University of Alberta (Edmonton), the Domaine-Forget (Québec) and City University (London, UK). He is currently Senior Instructor in the Department of Music at the University of Calgary.

Roiling for piano (1997)

*....slivers of energy
riding the gusts earthward,
misshapen mirrors shattering with motor-like precision
into fragments of reflection;
snapping knives, translucent razor tongues,
cutting, inserting, prying, pecking, hammering, chiseling,
erupting into shards,
smeared over an earthly canvas;
crisp and clear,
a single blinding glint of tomorrow,
insistent, lingering, entreating, enthralling;
a roiling glaze strewn over eyes
squinting with ecstasy and abandon... — Laurie Radford, 1997*

Canadian composer **Brian Cherney** studied composition with Samuel Dolin at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto from 1960 until 1963 and later with John Weinzweig at the University of Toronto. He received graduate degrees from the University of Toronto in both composition (Mus.M.'67) and musicology (Ph.D.'74). Since 1960, Cherney has written more than ninety pieces, including orchestral music, concertos, chamber music and music for solo instruments. His music has been performed and broadcast throughout Canada and also in Europe, the United States, South America and Japan. Since 1972 he has been on the staff of the Faculty of Music (now the Schulich School of Music) at

McGill University in Montreal, where he teaches composition. From 2002 to 2005 he was Chair of the Department of Theory. Many of Cherney's works have been published by the Québec publisher Éditions Doberman-Yppan. He is also the author of a monograph on the music of Harry Somers, commissioned by the Canadian Music Centre and published by the University of Toronto Press in 1975, and co-editor with John Beckwith of *Weinzweig: Essays on His Life and Music* issued by Wilfrid Laurier University Press in 2011.

Poems for *Nachtstücke* by Brian Cherney

(*Please note that the last text is not a poem but an excerpt from a short story by James Joyce.)

I

The last stroke of midnight dies.
All day in the one chair
From dream to dream and rhyme to rhyme I have
ranged
In rambling talk with an image of air:
Vague memories, nothing but memories.
"Broken Dreams", W.B.Yeats

(Interlude I)

"The simple, natural life is the ideal one—the wise person seeks to conform to the slow gentle rhythm of the universe."
—Taoist belief

II

[...] He, leading, swiftly rolled
In tangles, and made intricate seem straight,
To mischief swift. Hope elevates, and joy
Brightens his crest; as when a wandering fire,
Compact of unctuous vapour, which the night
Condenses, and the cold environs round,
Kindled through agitation to a flame,
Which oft, they say, some evil Spirit attends,
Hovering and blazing with delusive light,
Misleads the amazed night-wanderer from his way
To bogs and mires, and oft through pond or pool;
There swallowed up and lost, from succour far.
—Paradise Lost, John Milton, Book IX, 631-42

III

Swiftly walk over the western wave,
Spirit of Night!
Out of the misty eastern cave
Where, all the long and lone daylight,
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,
Which make thee terrible and dear, -
Swift be thy flight!
—“*To the Night*”, Percy Shelley

IV

Abwärts wend ich mich zu der heiligen, unaussprechlichen, geheimnisvollen
Nacht. Fernab liegt die Welt - in eine tiefe Gruft versenkt - wust und einsam ist
ihre Stelle. In den Saiten der Brust weht tiefe Wehmut. In Tautropfen will ich
hinuntersinken und mit der Asche mich vermischen. - Fernen der Erinnerung,
Wunsche der Jugend, der Kindheit Träume, des ganzen langen Lebens kurze
Freuden und vergebliche Hoffnungen kommen in grauen Kleidern, wie
Abendnebel nach der Sonne Untergang.
—*Novalis, Hymnen an die Nacht, I*

[Aside I turn to the holy, unspeakable, mysterious Night. Afar lies the world -- sunk in a deep grave -- waste and lonely is its place. In the chords of the bosom blows a deep sadness. I am ready to sink away in drops of dew, and mingle with the ashes. -- The distances of memory, the wishes of youth, the dreams of childhood, the brief joys and vain hopes of a whole long life, arise in gray garments, like an evening vapor after the sunset.]

V

I seal myself upon thee with my might,
Abiding away out of all men's sight
Until God loosen over sea and land
The thunder of the trumpets of the night.
—“*Laus Veneris*”, Swinburne

VI

A few light taps upon the pane made him turn to the window. It had begun to snow again. He watched sleepily the flakes, silver and dark, falling obliquely against the lamplight. The time had come for him to set out on his journey westward. Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland. It was

falling on every part of the dark central plain, on the treeless hills, falling softly upon the Bog of Allen and, farther westward, softly falling into the dark mutinous Shannon waves. It was falling, too, upon every part of the lonely churchyard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried. It lay thickly drifted on the crooked crosses and headstones, on the spears of the little gate, on the barren thorns. His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead.
—“*The Dead*” from *Dubliners* by James Joyce

Brian Current studied music at McGill University and UC Berkeley. His music, lauded and performed internationally, as well as broadcast in over 35 countries, has been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Barlow Prize for Orchestral Music (USA) and the Italia Premio Fedora for Chamber Opera. Brian's pieces have been programmed by all major orchestras in Canada and also by the Indianapolis Symphony, the New York City Opera Vox Festival, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, the Oakland Symphony, the St. Lawrence String Quartet, the Warsaw National Philharmonic, the Nouvel Ensemble Moderne, the American Composers Orchestra (Carnegie Hall), Monday Evening Concerts (Los Angeles), the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. In April of 2011 Brian conducted his chamber opera *Airline Icarus*, in a fully staged production in Verbania, Italy.

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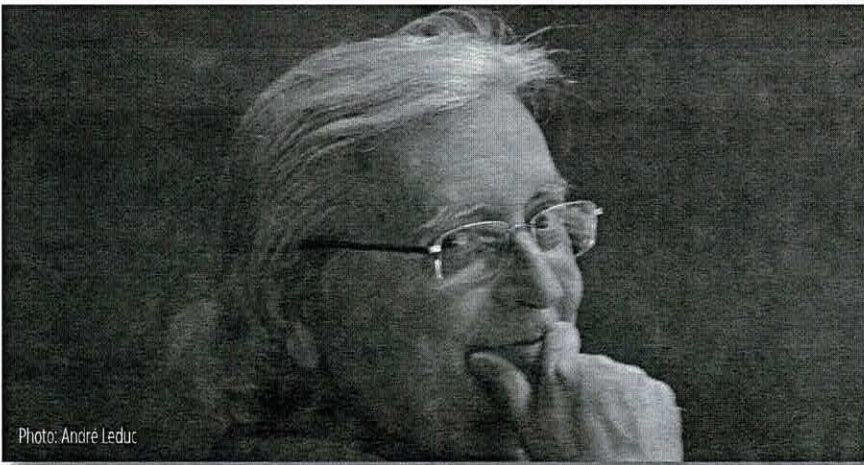


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Richard Herriott piano

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Tiina Kiik accordion with tape

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II. *Le rêve* IV. *Clémence*

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