

INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY ENSEMBLE

**FEATURING RAND STEIGER'S
*COALESCENCE CYCLE***



**CONRAD PREBYS MUSIC CENTER, CONCERT HALL
DECEMBER 11, 2014 7PM**

Audience members are reminded to please silence all phones and noise-generating devices before the performance.
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The Conrad Prebys Music Center is a non-smoking facility.

Coalescence: a cycle of compositions for instruments and electronics
for the International Contemporary Ensemble

Rand Steiger, composer

Cyclone (2013)

Joshua Rubin, clarinet

Concatenation (2012)

Rebekah Heller, bassoon

Light on Water (2012)

Claire Chase, flute

Jacob Greenberg, piano

Template for Improvising Trumpeter and Ensemble (2013)

Peter Evans, trumpet

Steven Schick, conductor

intermission

Mourning Fog (2012)

Kivie Cahn-Lipman, cello

Coalescence (2013)

Steven Schick, conductor

International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE)

Steven Schick, conductor

Claire Chase, flute

Alice Teyssier, flute

Nick Masterson, oboe

Joshua Rubin, clarinet

Campbell MacDonald, clarinet

Rebekah Heller, bassoon

David Byrd-Marrow, horn

Peter Evans, trumpet

Nathan Davis, percussion

Ross Karre, percussion

Jacob Greenberg, piano

Jennifer Curtis, violin

Kivie Cahn-Lipman, cello

Randall Zigler, bass

Levy Lorenzo, live sound engineer

NOTES FROM THE COMPOSER

I have long been fascinated by the way we perceive separate sounds fusing into one—how a complex contrapuntal texture can become a continuum when heard in a reverberant environment, or how tones, precisely tuned, fuse into a single timbre. This delicate perceptual cusp between a chord and a timbre is of particular interest to me, and it is one of the reasons I draw on the natural intervals of the harmonic series as my primary guide for pitch structures. Likewise, my desire to explore the blurring of events has led me to work with real-time signal processing, so that I may alter the acoustic environment in which my music is heard over the course of a piece.

My recent compositions have been characterized by this striving for synthesis through an embrace of instrumental virtuosity, a hybrid approach to harmony (exploring the intersection of tempered and just intonation), and the integration of digital audio signal processing to enrich orchestration. Through these means I hope to create a musical landscape that sounds novel yet feels natural.

Composed specifically for ICE, the *Coalescence Cycle* further explores the concept of fusion at the level of performance. Some of the constituent pieces show off individual members of the group as the gifted, charismatic soloists they are, each with a unique musical personality and set of virtuosic capabilities. Other pieces depend on the dynamic chemistry ICE members have when playing together in various combinations, retaining their individual attributes while also merging synergistically. Just as musical elements may fuse in our perception, so, too, do these individual musicians coalesce into a single inspired unit.

The audio signal processing is the result of my longstanding collaboration with my friend and colleague Miller Puckette, who has made some of the most important contributions to the development of computer music technology. In all of the pieces, the musicians play into microphones. The signals are then routed through a computer running Puckette's "Pd" software. The sound of the instruments is transformed in various ways and then disseminated out of eight speakers located throughout the auditorium. This setup enables me to dynamically vary the acoustical conditions in which you hear the music and also to move the sound around the room, often following the dynamic shape of the musical gestures. Among the processes that I work with are resonant filters (a kind of simulated piano resonance provoked by the ensemble's instruments), delays and echoes, and just-tuned harmonizing that creates chords out of single notes. My goal is for these transformed sounds to merge with the natural, unamplified instrumental sound, to produce a sonic fabric that is in constant transformation and that brings greater expressivity to the musical gestures.

Cyclone for clarinet and electronics (2013)

Around the time I began this piece, two tornados touched down in Brooklyn (not far from ICE headquarters.) Having grown up in nearby Queens, I was struck by the almost comic novelty of a tornado in Brooklyn and momentarily seized with the sense of excitement that dramatic weather can induce

before its real danger becomes apparent. I envisioned the electronics in this piece sweeping up and spinning the musical material the clarinetist plays, just as a tornado sweeps up and churns out everything in its path. Later, as I contemplated using *Cyclone* as a title, I realized that it would carry a different—and equally specific—meaning to Brooklyn residents, for whom the huge roller coaster at Coney Island is a looming and iconic presence. In the end, the title refers to both cyclones, which gives some clue as to what to expect from the signal processing.

Concatenation for bassoon and electronics (2012)

Concatenation revisits an approach I have explored in previous solo pieces that I call “nested etudes,” in which a set of contrasting materials, any one of which could have been the subject of an etude, are laid out and interwoven into a continuous conversation. In this piece, there are seven different kinds of material, each with a unique approach to signal processing:

fog – fast, low phrases echo and resonate into a rich texture that moves quickly among the speakers;
bloom – a single, long expressive note blooms into a complex, just-tuned chord;
climb – gestures spin around the speakers as they rise in pitch;
flutter – tremolos echo and move;
metal – loud tones with distortion;
cry – long notes with glissandos excite resonant filters;
scurry – fleeting gestures are harmonized in trichords and spun.

After the initial exposition, these musical elements reappear in varying orders and phrase lengths as the piece plays out. The result is an elaborate conversation among the various elements.

Light on Water for flute, piano, and electronics (2012)

I live near the Los Peñasquitos marsh in San Diego, and walking past it every day I have been struck by how many different ways light reflects off the surface of the water. Sometimes it mirrors dull morning grayness; at other times, when the sun is bright and the water high, it produces brilliant, sparkling flecks. These conditions can create a sense of disorienting beauty, and these feelings and images were on my mind as I developed the material for the piece.

Template for Improvising Trumpeter and Ensemble for trumpet soloist, with ensemble and electronics (2013)

Template is a collaborative work that relies on the performers to make a significant creative contribution. Almost the entire solo trumpet part is improvised, with only a few brief notated phrases (or prescribed rests) appearing at key moments in the score. There are opportunities for others in the ensemble to improvise at particular times as well—sometimes in a brief solo, sometimes in groups of various sizes—which enables me to explore a kind of cross-fading of creative control from my predetermined

contributions to those made by the performers in real time.

Mourning Fog for cello and electronics (2012)

Along the coast in San Diego, mornings are often cloudy, and fog sometimes blankets the Los Peñasquitos marsh near my home. As the fog dissipates and the sun appears, revealing sea birds, plants and reflective water, the somber stillness of the early morning gives way to the sights and sounds of vibrant marsh life. I had this transition in mind when I wrote *Mourning Fog*, which also reflects on what I experienced after suffering a personal loss, with the all-encompassing feeling of melancholy gradually—almost imperceptibly—lifting over time. You will hear the cello, accompanied by its own sound captured and transformed as the piece progresses. There are no pre-recorded or synthesized sounds.

Coalescence for thirteen soloists and electronics (2013)

The final piece is a chamber concerto that passes the role of soloist from instrument to instrument until every player has been featured. The piece begins as a trumpet concerto. The piccolo then evolves into a counter-soloist as the trumpet fades and the piccolo takes over as the exclusive soloist. A similar process follows that cross-fades successively from piccolo to violin, bassoon, piano, cello, horn, cor anglais, double bass, bass clarinet, drums, and, finally, flute. The accompanying ensemble music does not always change in phase with the soloists, so two scenarios are playing out simultaneously. This keeps the piece in constant transition until we hear everything at once in a complex explosion of activity that brings the concert to a close.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to Claire Chase for her audacious challenge to create an entire program of new works, and for her and her colleagues' friendship and inspiring musicality. I also want to thank Ramesh Rao for inviting me to be Composer-In-Residence at Calit2, and for his strong support of my collaboration with ICE throughout this time. Thanks also to Miller Puckette for his brilliant software and crucial guidance. And thanks to Jessica Flores, Joe Kucera, and their colleagues for their great work pulling together a very complex week of recordings and performances. Finally, thanks to many others who have assisted me through this journey including Andrew Allen, Ben Hackbarth, Eric Hamdan, Adam Roberts, Christopher Warren, Kevin Zhang and, in particular, Rebecca Jo Plant.

COMPOSER

Rand Steiger's music has been commissioned and performed by many ensembles, including the American Composers Orchestra, Ensemble Intercontemporain, International Contemporary Ensemble, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, San Diego Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, where he served as Composer Fellow. Soloists he has composed for include Matthew Barley, Maya Beiser, Claire Chase, Daniel Druckman, Peter Evans, Alan Feinberg, George Lewis, Susan Narucki, and Steven Schick.

Many of Steiger's works combine orchestral instruments with real-time digital audio signal processing and spatialization. They also propose a hybrid approach to just and equal-tempered tuning, exploring the delicate perceptual cusp between a harmony and a timbre that occurs when tones are precisely tuned. Some examples of works deploying these techniques include: *Ecosphere*, developed during residencies at Ircam and premiered by the Ensemble Intercontemporain in Paris; *Traversing*, written for cellist Mathew Barley and premiered by the Southbank Sinfonia in London; *Cryosphere*, premiered by the American Composers Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, and the *Coalescence Cycle*.

Steiger has also conducted many premieres and recordings. His compositions and performances are recorded on the Cambria, Centaur, CRI, Crystal, Einstein, EMF, Koch, Mode, Neuma, New Albion, New Dynamic, New World, Nonesuch and Tzadik labels.

After serving on the Faculty of California Institute of the Arts from 1982 through 1987, Steiger joined the Music Department at U.C. San Diego. In 2009 he was a Visiting Professor at Harvard University. For further information please see <http://rand.info>

PERFORMERS

International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE)

“the new gold standard for new music” - The New Yorker

“bracing, illuminating, reassuring” - Financial Times

“extraordinary” - New York Times

The International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), described by the *New York Times* as “one of the most accomplished and adventurous groups in new music,” is dedicated to reshaping the way music is created and experienced. With a modular makeup of 35 leading instrumentalists, performing in forces ranging from solos to large ensembles, ICE functions as performer, presenter, and educator, advancing the music of our time by developing innovative new works and new strategies for audience engagement. ICE redefines concert music as it brings together new work and new listeners in the 21st century.

Since its founding in 2001, ICE has premiered over 500 compositions—the majority of these new works by emerging composers—in venues spanning from alternative spaces to concert halls around the world. The ensemble has received the American Music Center’s Trailblazer Award for its contributions to the field, the ASCAP/Chamber Music America Award for Adventurous Programming, and was most recently named Musical America Worldwide’s Ensemble of the Year in 2013. From 2008 to 2013 ICE was Ensemble-in-Residence at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. ICE musicians serve as Artists-in-Residence at the Mostly Mozart Festival of Lincoln Center, curating and performing chamber music programs that juxtapose new and old music. In 2014 ICE began a partnership with the Illinois Humanities Council, the Hideout in Chicago, and the Abrons Art Center in New York to support the OpenICE initiative.

ICE has released acclaimed albums on the Nonesuch, Kairos, Bridge, Naxos, Tzadik, New Focus, New Amsterdam and Mode labels. Recent and upcoming highlights include headline performances at the Lincoln Center Festival (New York), Aspekte (Austria), Acht Brücken Music for Cologne (Germany), Festival de Música de Morelia (Mexico), Teatro Amazonas (Brazil), and performances with the Nagoya Philharmonic and Seattle Symphony. ICE has worked closely with conductors Ludovic Morlot, Matthias Pintscher, John Adams, and Susanna Mälkki. Since 2012, conductor and percussion soloist Steven Schick has served as ICE’s Artist-in-Residence.

In 2011, with leading support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, ICE created the ICElab program to place teams of ICE musicians in close collaboration with six emerging composers each year to develop works that push the boundaries of musical exploration. ICElab projects have been featured in more than one hundred performances from 2011–2014, and are documented online through ICE’s blog, and DigitICE, an online venue. In 2014 ICE launched the OpenICE initiative to bring the full scope of ICE’s programming and educational activities for free to broader audiences around the world.

ICE’s commitment to build a diverse, engaged audience for the music of our time inspired The Listening Room, an educational initiative for public schools without in-house arts curricula. Using team-based composition and graphic notation, ICE musicians lead students in the creation of new musical works, nurturing collaborative creative skills and building an appreciation for musical experimentation.

Read more at iceorg.org.

STAFF:

Claire Chase, flutist and Artistic Director (CEO) *
Joshua Rubin, clarinetist and Co-Artistic Director *
Jonathan Harris, Business Manager
Ross Karre, percussionist and Production/digitICE.org *
Rebekah Heller, bassoonist and Individual Giving *
Ryan Muncy, saxophonist and Grants *
Jacob Greenberg, pianist and Education *

Maciej Lewandowski, Production and Operations Assistant
Maro Elliott, Executive Assistant
Jesse Greenberg, Development Assistant
Alice Teyssier, Marketing Assistant
Adele Fournet, Digital Media Intern
* denotes ICE Artist Partner

Percussionist, conductor, and author **Steven Schick** was born in Iowa and raised in a farming family. For forty years he has championed contemporary music by commissioning or premiering more than one hundred-fifty new works. He was the founding percussionist of the Bang on a Can All-Stars (1992-2002) and served as Artistic Director of the Centre International de Percussion de Genève (2000-2005). Schick is founder and Artistic Director of the percussion group “red fish blue fish.” Currently he is Music Director of the La Jolla Symphony and Chorus and Artistic Director of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. In 2012 he became the first Artist-in-Residence with the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE). Schick founded and is currently Artistic Director of “Roots and Rhizomes,” a summer course on contemporary percussion music held at the Banff Centre for the Arts. He maintains a lively schedule of guest conducting including appearances in this season with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Nova Chamber Ensemble, and the Asko/Schönberg Ensemble. Schick will be music director of the 2015 Ojai Festival. Among his acclaimed publications are a book, *The Percussionist's Art: Same Bed, Different Dreams*, and numerous recordings of contemporary percussion music including a 3-CD set of the complete percussion music of Iannis Xenakis (Mode). Mode will release a companion recording on DVD of the early percussion music of Karlheinz Stockhausen in 2014. Steven Schick is Distinguished Professor of Music at the University of California, San Diego.

Kivie Cahn-Lipman is the founding cellist of ICE and the gambist, lironist, and director of the Baroque ensemble ACRONYM. He has recorded for Naxos, New Focus, Bridge, New Amsterdam, Tzadik, ECM, Kairos, Mode, Tundra, Starkland, Olde Focus, and Nonesuch, with performances in Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and other major venues on three continents. His recording of J.S. Bach's Cello Suites was praised for its “eloquent performances,” “fresh thinking,” and “energy and zeal” (*The Strad*). Kivie taught cello in a full-time position shared between Smith and Mount Holyoke Colleges from 2005-2012 and has been a faculty member at the Cortona Sessions since 2012.

Flutist **Claire Chase**, described as “the young star of the modern flute” by *The New Yorker*, is a soloist, collaborative artist, and activist for new music. Over the past decade she has given the world premieres of over 100 new works for flute, many of them tailor-made for her, and, in 2012, she was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship. Chase co-founded the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE) in 2001 and, in collaboration with her creative partner Joshua Rubin, serves as the organization's Co-Artistic Director in addition to playing over fifty concerts a year as an ensemble member. She has performed throughout the US, Europe, Asia and the Americas, and recently began Density 2036, a 23-year project to commission a new body of repertory for the flute leading up to the 100th anniversary of Edgard

Varese's *Density 21.5* (1936). She lives in Brooklyn. www.clairechase.net

Peter Evans has been a member of the New York musical community since 2003, when he moved to the city after graduating from Oberlin Conservatory. Evans enjoys working in a wide range of areas in modern music and has therefore been working to greatly broaden the expressive potential of his instrument. Current ensembles include the Zebulon trio, the Peter Evans Quintet, the collaborative trio Pulverize the Sound, and Rocket Science (with Sam Pluta, Craig Taborn and Evan Parker). Evans has been performing and recording solo trumpet music since 2003 and is widely recognized as a leading voice in that field.

Pianist **Jacob Greenberg's** work as a soloist and chamber musician has earned worldwide acclaim. As ICE's Director of Education, he leads The Listening Room, an initiative in city public schools that teaches the materials of experimental music composition. Mr. Greenberg's solo concert series, Music at Close Range, shows his equal commitment to classics of the repertoire. His solo discs on New Focus Recordings have received warm critical praise, and his 2013 recording of Olivier Messiaen's *Harawi* with soprano Tony Arnold has been singled out by critics. At Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival in recent summers, he performed Harrison Birtwistle's *Slow Frieze* with ICE and conductor Ludovic Morlot, and premiered a new solo work by Nathan Davis. www.jacobgreenberg.net.

Praised for her "flair" and "deftly illuminated" performances by the *New York Times*, bassoonist **Rebekah Heller** is a uniquely dynamic chamber, orchestral and solo musician. Equally comfortable playing established classical works and the newest of new music, Rebekah is a fiercely passionate advocate for the bassoon. Called an "impressive solo bassoonist" by the *New Yorker*, she is tirelessly committed to collaborating with composers to expand the modern repertoire for the instrument. Her debut solo album of world premiere recordings, *100 names*, has been called "pensive and potent" by the *New York Times* and was featured in the ArtsBeat Classical Playlist of the same publication. As a member of the renowned International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), Rebekah plays solo and chamber music worldwide.

Joshua Rubin is the founding clarinetist and the co-Artistic Director of the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), where he oversees the creative direction of more than one hundred concerts per season worldwide. The *New York Times* has praised him as "incapable of playing an inexpressive note." Joshua has worked closely with many of the prominent composers of our time. He can be heard on the Nonesuch, Kairos, New Focus, Mode, Cedille, Naxos, Bridge, New Amsterdam, and Tzadik labels. His album *There Never is No Light*, available on ICE's Tundra label, highlights music that uses technology to capture the human engagement of performer and listener.



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A black and white photograph of the San Diego skyline at night, with city lights reflecting on the water in the foreground. The skyline includes several prominent skyscrapers, some with distinctive architectural features like a curved tower and a building with a grid-like facade.

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