

Duo Refracta

Michael Jones, percussion

Shaoai Ashley Zhang, piano

February 2, 2024 – 7:00pm

Conrad Prebys Music Center Concert Hall

Lake (2018)

Sarah Hennies (b. 1979)

Ilana Waniuk, violin

Tombeau in Memoriam Gérard Grisey (1999)

Philippe Hurel (b. 1955)

-- break --

Echoes of a Light (2022)

Kevin Good (b. 1992)

*world premiere

attacca

A Special Light (2006)

David Macbride (1951-2018)

Sarah Hennies – *Lake*

In 2016 I composed the piece “Orienting Response” for guitar solo, the first in a body of work that continued for the next few years that consisted almost exclusively of extended repetitions of short patterns. Among other things, one of the most interesting things I hear in this music is the feeling that the music is both always moving and staying in one place at the same time - a pool that’s full of internal movement but never changes shape. “Lake” was composed in 2018 for the Thin Edge New Music Collective in Toronto.

- Sarah Hennies

Philippe Hurel – *Tombeau in Memoriam Gérard Grisey*

“When Gérard died, I was working on a piece for piano and vibraphone of a playful nature. The immense grief that suddenly overwhelmed me led me to abandon the project, of which nothing but the instrument names remained. How better could I pay homage to Gérard, other than writing my very own music, with no reference to his, no signs of his influence?

Nevertheless, it was the very violence of the *Vortex temporum* solo that started my piece off. It was imperative not to study the score, and yet to retain its force and use it as a possible metaphor. I had never had to confront this type of work before. The piece took on the appearance of a ritual, and the vibraphone player found himself with extra instruments such as cow bells, Thai gongs, crotales and woodblocks - all to 'disturb' the piano without actually putting it out of tune, as Grisey had done. For the first time ever, my music will not be objective. I had great difficulty in evaluating the material, and my momentary yielding to complete intuition might not have pleased the dedicatee. The piece is, however, imbued with Grisey's spirit, and could not have seen the light of day without him.

'In the end we are all part of society, however we look at it. We have but little, count for so little of what we could call our own, in the purest sense of the term. We all of us must accept and learn, both from them who came before us, and from those who are with us now' (Goethe by Eckermann 17-2-1832 in *Gespräche mit Goethe*).”

-Philippe Hurel



Echoes of a Light / A Special Light

David wrote *A Special Light* in dedication to his neighbor, Carl Ricketts. The title is taken from Carl's funeral service, where it was eulogized that "Carl was a Special Light". While it was written specially about and for Carl, the piece has taken on broader conveyance of loss, and in some ways has become a tombeau for David himself since his passing in 2018. In his work, the glockenspiel begins more or less as a shimmering light or texture outlining melodies in the piano part. Slowly, as the piece develops, the two instruments move out of rhythmic sync with one another. The glockenspiel feels like it is floating away into the atmosphere of silences that surround the piece. In the last moments of the piano doesn't ring out naturally but instead stops abruptly as if to jolt us back into the immediate silence of the room. Its cessation makes the listener acutely aware of its absence having arrived too soon.

A Special Light was originally written and performed by Conundrum, David's percussion and piano duo with Benjamin Toth. When talking about the piece with Ben, he once told me that "the piano is the body and the glockenspiel is the soul. When our time comes they separate and the soul moves on." I don't know whether David intended this or not but it resonates with me every time I hear David's music.

I struggled for several years wanting to write something to memorialize David. I wrote several pieces but none of them felt like a true representation of him and what he meant to me. David was not only my composition teacher but also one of my closest friends and mentors. We played tennis together, shared many meals and conversations and played music together for the five years that I lived in Connecticut. David taught me about writing music as a practical art form to live my life. Not just composition on a technical level (where to put which notes, rhythmic devices etc.) but composition on a meaningful and personal level. For David, composing and playing music with friends was always about community. His influence on people and community is a direct influence on how I write music now. My piece *The Chords In My Life*, which provides some of the material for *Echoes of a Light*, couldn't exist without his guiding hand.

When I set out to write something in his memory, part of the issue I grappled with is how perfectly *A Special Light* already served as his eulogy. I realized that what would actually be the easiest and most comfortable way for me to write something for David would be to use his music in combination with my own work as a basis for a new piece. Thus, *Echoes of a Light* was born. It uses material from David's Chord from *The Chords in My Life* in combination with melodic content from his marimba solo, *Triptych*, and themes from *A Special Light* itself. *Echoes of a Light* essentially works as an extended prelude to *A Special Light*. It seeks to reflect on David's life, its entanglement with his music, and their reverberations that continue to ripple through those affected by him today.

- Kevin Good

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PERFORMER NAME

Michael Jones is a percussionist and conductor based in Southern California. His work focuses on championing new pieces of the 21st century as well as works from the 20th century avant-garde. He is particularly interested in time, memory, perception, and the lyricism of embodied performance. Composers he has worked closely with include David Macbride, Kevin Good, Pluto Bell, and Matt Sargent among others. He has performed at the LA Philharmonic's Noon-to-Midnight Festival, The Ojai Music Festival, The Other Minds Festival, Monday Evening Concerts, The Dog Star Orchestra Festival, and San Diego New Music. He regularly performs with red fish blue fish, the graduate percussion ensemble at the University of California, San Diego.

Ilana Waniuk (she/her/hers) is a versatile violinist with interests ranging from improvisation to visual arts. Along with pianist Cheryl Duvall, Ilana is a founding member and co-artistic director of Tkarón:to (Toronto) - based contemporary music ensemble Thin Edge New Music Collective, and Balancing on the Edge (multidisciplinary production company merging contemporary music and circus arts). She is also a founding member of in^set, a flexible trio with Teresa Díaz de Cossio (flute) and David Aguila (trumpet) dedicated to creation, improvisation and experimentation. Ilana divides her time between Tkarón:to and La Jolla where she is currently a doctoral candidate in contemporary performance at the University of California San Diego.

A pianist with "impressive technical skill and innate musicality" (Unsuik Chin), **Shaoai Ashley Zhang** is an active solo and chamber musician. A champion of contemporary music, Ms. Zhang has premiered dozens of new works and collaborated closely with composers including Helmut Lachenmann, Sofia Gubaidulina, and Unsuik Chin. Dr. Zhang presents recitals featuring both new and old piano repertoire, which puts contemporary music in dialogue with the past. Recent engagements include appearances as a soloist in Unsuik Chin's Double Concerto with the Palimpsest Ensemble, as well as Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 22, K. 482 with the UC San Diego Chamber Orchestra. Currently, Dr. Zhang is an Emerging Artist for the LA concert series Piano Spheres.

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