

Makrokosmos Project 5 Presents:

Black Angels

Thursday, June 27th 2019 @ Vestas

www.makrokosmosproject.org

PROGRAM

5pm: Vestas Happy Hour: Jeux d'eau

John Luther Adams: Dark Waves (2007)

Jacob Druckman: Reflections on the Nature of Water (1986)

Gently swelling - Profound - Relentless

DUO Stephanie & Saar, pianos

Paul Owen, marimba

6pm: Les Yeux Clos: Toru Takemitsu complete solo piano music, Part I

Rain Tree Sketch (1982)

Romance (1949)

Uninterrupted Rests (1952-59)

Two Pieces for Children - *Breeze, Clouds* (1979)

Les Yeux Clos I / Les Yeux Clos II (1979)

Rain Tree Sketch II *In Memoriam Olivier Messiaen* (1992)

Alexander Schwarzkopf, Lydia Chung, Julia Lee and Saar Ahuvia, pianists

7pm: Stars and Mountains

Gabriela Lena Frank: Seis Cantos de los Campos (2013)

Gigantes - Charangos - Arañas - Karnavalito-tito - Canto Infantil - Danza del Pueblo

Julia Wolfe: Compassion (2001)

Olivier Messiaen: Amen du désir from *Visions de l'Amen* (1943)

DUO Stephanie and Saar

8pm: Litany: Toru Takemitsu complete solo piano music, Part II

Corona (1962)

For Away (1973)

Piano Distance (1961)

Litany I (1989)

Litany II *In Memoriam Michael Vynner* (1989)

Deborah Cleaver, Susan Smith and Jeff Payne, pianists

9:15pm: Black Angels

George Crumb: Black Angels: Thirteen Images from the Dark Land for Electric String Quartet (1970)

Pyxis Quartet: Ron Blessinger and Greg Ewer, violin

Charles Noble, viola Marilyn de Oliveira, cello



Meet the 2019 Makrokosmos Project Team:

Paul Owen, percussion: www.portlandpercussiongroup.com

Pyxis Quartet: www.45thparallelpdx.org

Branic Howard, electronics and sound: www.openfieldrecording.com

Saar Ahuvia, piano, co-Artistic Director: www.stepsaarduo.com

Stephanie Ho, piano, co-Artistic Director: www.stepsaarduo.com

Deborah Cleaver, piano: www.golandskyinstitute.org

Susan Smith, piano: www.thirdangle.org

Jeff Payne, piano: www.fearnomusic.org

Julia Lee, piano: www.pdx.edu

Lydia Chung, piano: www.sonodelight.com

Alexander Schwarzkopf, piano: www.ajsmusic.org

Masataka Suemitsu, project design: www.masatakaphoto.com

Seth Nehil, video and photography: www.sethnehil.net

Dear Friends, thank you for attending Makrokosmos Project 5: Black Angels and being our core community of support. Your presence and enjoyment of tonight's music means the world to us - and makes our mission of bringing dynamic and thought-provoking music to our community possible.

This year's programming is about nature, its stunning beauty - but also its fragility and vulnerability. From dramatic crashes of ocean waves to gentle pellets of raindrops, from lush green mountains of Peru to savaged rivers of war-torn Vietnam, our relationship with nature is a complex co-dependency in need of much rumination and reflection. Two sources of natural beauty serve as genesis for this year's festival programming: Portland's Japanese Garden, a sanctuary for our much-needed bustling metro community, and Columbia River Gorge, where our beloved trails to Punch Bowl and Tunnel Falls remain closed for healing from the 2017 Eagle Creek fires. ~ Stephanie Ho & Saar Ahuvia

Dark Waves (2007; for two pianos and electronic sounds)

As I composed this music I pondered the ominous events of our times: terrorism and war, intensifying storms and wildfires, the melting of the polar ice and the rising of the seas. Yet even in the presence of our deepening fears, we find ourselves immersed in the mysterious beauty of this world. Amid the turbulent waves we may still find the light, the wisdom and the courage we need to pass through this darkness of our own making.

- John Luther Adams

Tonight Makrokosmos Project presents the complete solo piano works of **Toru Takemitsu (1930-1996)**, Japan's greatest 20th century composer. Takemitsu's music is a direct reflection of nature and the Japanese Garden.

"My music is like a garden, I am the gardener. Listening to my music can be compared to walking through a garden and experiencing the changes in light, pattern and texture."

Takemitsu began his career writing music similar to other European avant-garde composers, yet within a few years rejected this trajectory in order to seek refuge in alternative sources of inspiration. Growing up in the post-war presence of the American military, he was exposed to Western music - patriotic war songs, jazz and the full spectrum of western orchestral & keyboard instruments. Primarily self-taught, Takemitsu's earliest artistic explorations pay tribute to expressionism, serialism and the Second Viennese School, specifically Arnold Schoenberg, and later Karlheinz Stockhausen. Deeply affected by French impressionism and the composers Claude Debussy and Olivier Messiaen, the latter whom he considers his greatest musical inspiration,

Takemitsu's early output was under complete shadow of western sounds, as is demonstrated by *Romance* (1949).

In the 1960's Takemitsu became one of the founding members of the *Jikken Kobo*, or "Experimental Workshop." This interdisciplinary arts community, and his exposure to John Cage, Zen Buddhism and the *I Ching* altered his compositional aesthetics dramatically. Takemitsu, never fully content with his creative pathways, returned to his roots and began incorporating Japanese aesthetics and eastern philosophies into his compositions. His sound began to possess an otherworldly, serene, static quality due to the lack of traditional western harmonic movement; he also began incorporating poignant moments of silence or quietude in his works. Takemitsu's compositions, adopting to the laws of nature without the confines of rigid structural/thematic boundaries, sound like free sets of wandering variations, or a lingering of the same musical material with exquisitely finessed changes to timbre, melody and texture. He pays tribute to his much-needed creative awakening of embracing timelessness, stillness and indeterminacy with *Corona* (1962), a fascinating work written entirely in graphic "picture" notation.

Takemitsu's music is haunting, soulful, gestural, evocative and mysterious, a perfect unity of eastern and western arts aesthetics:

I am only thinking about the stream of sounds which surrounds me, and try to listen to them. I don't care about organizing the composition and how to begin and end a piece. There is no beginning and ending. When I compose, I touch the stream, and just express as it is. Actually there is no ending in my music. I want my music to become synonymous with the laws of nature... I don't want to control sound and move it towards one goal. Rather, I seek to free the sound as much as possible.

- Toru Takemitsu

Peruvian-American composer and California resident **Gabriela Lena Frank's** *Seis Cantos de los Campos*, composed in 2013 and commissioned by the Dranoff Two Piano Foundation, consists of six short, playful epigrams depicting the mystical mountain culture of Peru.

Gigantes are extraterrestrial savage "giants" that arrived in Peru by sea on the coast of Santa Elena. Oral legend warned that the giants were so monumental that ordinary men only reached up to their knees, the monsters' eyes as big as plates and ate as many as 50 men at the same time.

Charangos, a small Andean stringed instrument of the lute family made from the backs of armadillos, originated in the Quechua and Aymara populations in post-Columbian times and is popular in the Andean regions of Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Chile and Argentina.

Arañas, or spiders, are part of daily Andean life.

Karnavalito-tito, or "little carnival" is a traditional South American dance from the Altiplano and Puna regions that is danced for religious festivities. The current form of the dance is an expression of syncretism between indigenous and Spanish colonial culture. Its origin comes from the *Huayno*, a genre of popular Andean music originally from the Peruvian highlands.

Canto Infantil, or nursery rhymes, are light in spirit but dark in meaning...

Danza del Pueblo, or village dance, is central to the happiness of the Andean people. Every moment of life - birth, love, marriage, harvest - is celebrated with dancing.

The iconic avant-garde American composer **George Crumb** turns 90 in 2019. *Black Angels*, completed in March of 1970, was born under the apocalypse of the Vietnam War and is inscribed "In Time of War." From the horrific screeching of the opening bars mimicking the sounds of American attack helicopters swarming like insects in enemy territory, to the haunting quotation of Schubert's *Death and the Maiden*, *Black Angels* is a

frightening documentary about the tortured darkness of human civilization, a civilization that commits abandoning crime and destruction to its land and people, but also capable of peace, resolution and healing.

Is *Black Angels* an outright indictment of war? In Crumb's words: "The underlying structure of *Black Angels* is a huge arch-like design which is suspended from the three threnody pieces. The work portrays a voyage of the soul. The three stages of this voyage are Departure (fall from grace), Absence (spiritual annihilation) and Return (redemption)."

Part 1. Departure: Threnody I: Night of the Electric Insects - Sounds of Bones and Flutes - Lost Bells - Devil-music - Danse Macabre

Part 2. Absence: Pavana Lachrymae - Threnody II: Black Angels! - Sarabanda de la Muerte Oscura - Lost Bells [Echo]

Part 3. Return: God-music - Ancient Voices - Ancient Voices [Echo] - Threnody III: Night of the Electric Insects

THANK YOU, thank you, THANK YOU:

Many thanks to **Vestas** for hosting this year's festival. Your building is simply awesome!

Thank you to the **Collaborative Arts & Culture Foundation** for being Makrokosmos Project's fiscal sponsor. All donations are fully tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Our world-class pianos are from the one and only **Portland Piano Company**. They are for sale!

The delicious wines you are sipping are from Eugene's **William Rose Wines** and Willamette Valley's **Quailhurst Vineyards**. Taste more William Rose Wines at Oregon Wine LAB, Eugene's super-chic urban winery. We are so lucky to have such amazing wine sponsors this year!

Those delicious mouth-watering dumplings? Find them down the street at **The Mandarin House** in Old Town. The Mandarin House serves traditional northern Chinese food.

Our website designer **Masataka Suemitsu** makes sure that everything online is Makrokosmos-ready.

Thank you to the **Loh Family** for helping out with the reception and just about everything else!

We received a generous gift card from **Elephants Delicatessen!**

Thank you to our 2019 festival donors and sponsors!!!

Marjorie Bassin ~ Gabriele Fiorentino ~ Amy Gustafson ~ Mika Ahuvia ~ Christine Wang ~ Harold Gray ~ Larry & Arlene Dunn ~ Ellen Loh ~ Susan Sevier ~ Kathy Harris ~ Monica He ~ Michele Jensen ~ Rosa Shin ~ Larry Vollum ~ Matthew Gross & Valeria Martinez ~ John Montague & Linda Hutchins ~ Robert Durso ~ Widney & Glenn Moore ~ Laury Frieber ~ Elizabeth Dyson ~ Amelia Lukas ~ Carlene Sawyer ~ Gregory Hutter ~ Yuko deMenocal ~ Anonymous ~ Kristin Podack ~ Louise Gordon ~ Milena Mrosovsky ~ Lendon Porter ~ Gerene Rose ~ Fran Gardner ~ Gillian Smith ~ Karen Sade ~ Soyoung Kim ~ Bruce Hodgkin ~ Portland Piano Company ~ Vestas ~ William Rose Wines ~ Peter Lu & Eva Tsai ~ Quailhurst Vineyards ~ Elephants Delicatessen ~ Mandarin House ~ Robert McBride

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