



BALANCE CAMPAIGN

Still Life

Meghan Shanley Alger, *flutes*
Anastasia Christofakis, *clarinets*
Sandy Choi, *violin*
Erin Snedecor, *cello*
Elizabeth Hill, *piano*
Emory Hensley, *percussion*

Thursday, March 10, 2022



PROGRAM

“His House is Not of This Land”Jonathan Bailey Holland
“Still Life With Avalanche”Missy Mazzoli
“a sense of who”Annika Socolofsky

INTERMISSION

“Refracted”Alyssa Weinberg
“Wissahickon PoeTrees”Jennifer Higdon

ABOUT BALANCE CAMPAIGN

Balance Campaign is a DC area contemporary classical ensemble dedicated to commissioning and performing new works by underrepresented women, LGBTQ+, and minority composers, as well as composers with connections to the DC area.

Since their start in 2017, the group has been in residence at University of Maryland, Baltimore County and the District New Music Coalition, where they curated full programs and workshop new works with students.

As the District New Music Coalition's 2019 Ensemble-in-Residence, Balance Campaign forged connections with audiences and musicians by performing a series of concerts featuring the work of living composers in the D.C. metro area. In summer 2019, Balance Campaign was awarded a residency at the Avaloch Farm Music Institute, where they collaborated with composer Nathan Lincoln de Cusatis on their first commission, *ANIMAL*, which premiered October 2019 at Fordham University during their Northeast 'DESTRUCTION' Tour. They are currently working closely with composers Viet Cuong and Lexi Bryant-Tavani on new commissions to be premiered in 2023.

PROGRAM NOTES

Jonathan Bailey Holland, *His House is Not of This Land*

Originally from Flint, Michigan, composer Jonathan Bailey Holland (b. 1974) began studying composition while a student at the Interlochen Arts Academy, where he received a school-wide award for his very first composition. Upon graduation from Interlochen, he continued his composition studies with Ned Rorem at the Curtis Institute of Music, where he earned a Bachelor of Music degree. He went on to receive a Ph.D. in Music from Harvard University in 2000, where his primary teachers were Bernard Rands and Mario Davidovsky. He has also studied with Andrew Imbrie, Yehudi Wyner, Robert Saxton, and Robert Sirota. Currently, he is Chair of Composition, Contemporary Music, and Core Studies at Boston Conservatory at Berklee. He is also a Founding Faculty member in the first ever low-residency MFA in Music Composition program at Vermont College of Fine Arts, where he also served as Faculty Chair from 2016 until 2019.

Commissioned in 2015 by the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble, *His House is Not of This Land* is inspired by visual artist Cornelia Parker's work *Anti-Mass*, currently on display at de Young in San Francisco, CA.

Anti-Mass is constructed from the charred pieces of a predominately African-American Southern Baptist church that was destroyed by arson.

“Confronting viewers with the temporal nature of everything physical, Parker captures the spirit of those who previously worshiped in the building until the fire turned it into a testament to violence directed against African Americans. Her work hovers as a miraculous, spectral object evoking both the lost church and the presence of its congregation through an absence more powerful than any figurative image.”
—*de Young Museum*

Like Parker's instillation, Holland's work evokes the spirit of this destroyed church in the solemn recitation of the opening, followed by a call and response texture that mimics the speech patterns of clergy and congregations from Holland's memory.

Missy Mazzoli, *Still Life With Avalanche*

Still Life With Avalanche (2008) was commissioned by eighth blackbird. The piece is essentially a pile of melodies collapsing in a chaotic free fall. The players layer bursts of sound over the static drones of harmonicas, sketching out a strange and evocative sonic landscape. I wrote this piece while in residence at Blue Mountain Center, a beautiful artist colony in upstate New York. Halfway through my stay there I received a phone call telling me my cousin had passed away very suddenly. There's a moment in this piece when you can hear that phone call, when the piece changes direction, when the shock of real life works its way into the music's joyful and exuberant exterior. This is a piece about finding beauty in chaos, and vice versa. It is dedicated to the memory (the joyful, the exuberant and the shocking) of Andrew Rose. —*Missy Mazzoli*

Annika Socolofsky, a sense of who

“I find that people who come from small places have a very strong sense of who they are.” —Nic Gareiss

I have never come from a small place. I've spent my life jumping around from Edinburgh, to Chicago, to Pittsburgh—city after city after city. But in 2012, for the first time in my life, I moved to a smaller place. In Ann Arbor, Michigan my fiddle and I were swallowed, heads-first, into the traditional Irish music scene. Showing up to familiar faces and tunes and conversation at Conor O'Neill's on Main St. every Sunday night provided a sense of community I'd never before experienced.

Over the last few years, there's been this microscopic point inside of me that has started to grow. That point

is that sense of belonging, that sense of friendship, that sense of love, that sense of community, that sense of grounding, that inkling of a sense of who... It's been growing. And that is everything. —*Annika Socolofsky*

Alyssa Weinberg, *Refracted*

Composer Alyssa Weinberg (b. 1988) is best-known for crafting visceral, communicative scores, which have been lauded for their “frenetic yet cohesive musical language” (*icareifyoulisten*) and “heavyweight emotional dimensions.” (*bachtrack*). Weinberg finds collaboration deeply inspiring, and her music pulls concepts from her work with writers, dancers and visual artists.

Refracted is presented in episodes, each exploring a different sound world that directs the listener to a new timbral and melodic focus. The piece evokes the ephemeral nature of searching and finding curious beauty: glimpsing a beautiful ray of light, a mirage on a hot day, or experiencing a trick of the light.

Jennifer Higdon, *wissahickon poeTrees*

Nature is ominous. It is everything. Everything that exists has in some form sprung from nature. It is powerful, omnipotent and omnipresent. And to try to describe or depict nature in musical language is a nearly impossible task, because even as musicians issue forth choreographed notes from instruments, which themselves are made of materials of nature, no

one can even begin to accurately portray that most phenomenal of phenomena. And to attempt to do so, even the most successful musicalization, is to barely scratch the surface of a beautiful reality. Therefore, I humbly submit to you this work as homage to that piece of nature within the city of Philadelphia, the Wissahickon Park. As words and titles feel very insignificant in this endeavor, I have decided to use lower case letters (except where a Tree began to grow in my title). And since time and nature consistently march along, regardless of man's attempts to mark or defame, I have connected the season movements with “progressing clock” movements. The music has been composed to proceed without breaks, as nature's seasons never cease to blend from one into another.

“wissahickon poeTrees” was commissioned in 1998 by Network for New Music. —*Jennifer Higdon*

About the Wissahickon Park

A deep, forested gorge cut over the last million years by the Wissahickon Creek, this seven-mile valley is the “jewel in the crown” of Philadelphia's Fairmount Park system. “The Wissahickon”, as it is familiarly known, attracts thousands every week to its 1,800 acres to walk, hike, bike, bird watch, and ride horseback on more than 45 miles of trails. In 1964, the Wissahickon Park was designated a National Natural Landmark, and it is one of the few urban wilderness areas left in the United States.

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