

Phillips Exeter Academy
Music Department



EARTH-*whirl(d)s*
A Duo Faculty Piano Recital by
Jung Mi Lee and Jon Sakata

Monday, April 22, 2024

7:00 PM

“the Bowld”

Forrestal Bowld Music Center

29 Tan Lane, Exeter, NH

Program

Psittaciformes Evapora Areca (2024)
for two amplified pianos

Erin Chen '25
(b. 2007)

Interra II (1980)
(arranged for two pianos by Lee/Sakata, 2009)

Pozzi Escot
(b. 1933)

Contexts/Memories: Version C (2000~)
for two pianos

Robert Cogan
(1930-2021)

- Pause -

The Rite of Spring (1913)
(arranged for piano four hands by the
composer; edited by Lee/Sakata)

Igor Stravinsky
(1882-1971)

I. Adoration of the Earth

Introduction
The Augurs of Spring: Dances of the Young Girls
Ritual [Game] of Abduction
Spring Rounds
Ritual [Game] of the Rival Tribes
Procession of the Sage
The Sage
Dance of the Earth

II. The Sacrifice

Introduction
Mystic Circles of the Young Girls
Glorification of the Chosen One
Evocation of the Ancestors
Ritual Acts of the Ancestors
Sacrificial Dance (The Chosen One)

Program Notes

Psittaciformes Evapora Areca (2024) by Erin Chen '25

Psittaciformes Evapora Areca, for two amplified pianos, was commissioned by Ms. Lee and Dr. Sakata for this evening's EARTH-whirl(d)s concert. Through acoustical decay, dissolution, and dispersion of sound, the piece explores environmental phenomena of San Francisco's Bayfront: the two instruments evoking and echoing atmospherics of the Bay, the palm trees (*Areca*) that line the piers, the parrots (*Psittaciformes*) which inhabit the park across the street. Earth – a body of many bodies, a home of many homes – scales of relationships converging and dispersing.

Composing this piece was a study of sonorities: their superpositions and their *sonic evaporation*. The piece itself invites collaboration with the performers to co-create and interpret the piece. All timing and dynamic indications in the score are suggestive, dependent on the given acoustics of instruments and performance space. An integral part of this work originates from a prior piece, *C-Complex: Evapora* (2023) for solo piano, which is 'confined' to the note 'C' in its multiple spellings: i.e., C double-flat, C flat, C natural, C sharp, C double-sharp. For both pieces, I was inspired by Lei Liang's *Garden Eight: Interludes* (1996) because of the cycle's creation of sonic environments based upon sparse but evocative materials as well as its nuanced use of inside-the-piano techniques.

-EC

INTERRA II (1980) by Pozzi Escot

Imagine being able to *hear* geometric forms? Or, in hearing sounds being able to *see* them as an ongoing series of polygons? Does this constitute an unusual form of synesthesia? Welcome to the perceptual-imaginative world of the American composer, Pozzi Escot.

The composer gave us the scores to her *Interra I* (1968) and *Interra II* (1980) in the mid-2000's. We had received her permission to make original duo arrangements of both works in preparation for a concert in Jordan Hall (New England Conservatory-Boston) in 2011.

The original 1980 version of *Interra II* is a 'duo' for solo piano with pre-recorded tracks wherein each consecutive movement is played by the soloist while a recording of the preceding, accumulating movements is heard through loudspeakers:

I Solo piano alone

II Solo piano plays II/recording of I

III Solo piano plays III/recording of I + II

IV Solo piano plays IV/recording of I + II + III

...etc...

Our 2009 arrangement for two pianos augments the already challenging pianistic writing to encompass the ‘live’ solo piano part while also ‘making live’ all the accumulating pre-recorded layers. Escot’s original hyper-dense conglomeration of geometric formations now taking on even more *spontaneous* assemblage and volatile patterning. Ongoing tectonic shifts, the harnessing and unleashing of chthonic forces, ignitions, detonations: geometries not as abstract(ed) forms but a profusion of *n*-gons becoming visceral, seismic, incendiary.

CONTEXTS/MEMORIES: Version C (2000) by Robert Cogan

Cogan has written:

Contexts/Memories had its beginnings in a set of piano pieces “for the young,” *Algebra and Mornings*, begun in 1981 and added to occasionally since then. *Contexts/Memories* is a reediting, in the cinematic sense, of those pieces: exactly the same music appears, but crosscut (remembered) differently, no longer for the young. Several different versions, different montages, exist. Version C, for one or two pianos, was created for and is dedicated to Jung Mi Lee and Jon Sakata. The title *Algebra and Mornings* draws its images from the phrases “...horses and mornings/...algebra and fire...” in the poem “Matthew 25:30” by Jorge Luis Borges, which also inspired *Contexts/Memories*: “memory itself, where a glance can make men dizzy.”

To this we add an excerpt—by the French philosopher Deleuze on Spinoza (two philosophers whom Cogan expressed deep interest in)—which we feel fittingly describes this piece:

But now it is a question of knowing whether relations (and which ones?) can compound directly to form a new, more “extensive” relation, or whether capacities can compound directly to constitute a more “intense” capacity or power. It is no longer a matter of utilizations or captures, but of sociabilities and communities. How do individuals enter into composition with one another in order to form a higher individual, ad infinitum? How can a being take

another being into its world, but while preserving or respecting the other's own relations and world? Now we are concerned, not with a relation of point to counterpoint, nor with the selection of a world, but with a symphony of Nature, the composition of a world that is increasingly wide and intense. In what order and in what manner will the powers, speeds, and slownesses be composed?

Le Sacre du Printemps (The Rite of Spring) (1913) by Igor Stravinsky

Whence the force of Spinoza's question: '*What can a body do?*', of what affects is it capable? Affects are becomings: sometimes they weaken us in so far as they diminish our power to act and decompose our relationships (sadness), sometimes they make us stronger in so far as they increase our power and make us enter a more vast or superior individual (joy). Spinoza never ceases to be amazed by the body. He is not amazed at having a body, but by what the body can do. Bodies are not defined by their genus or species, by their organs and functions, but by what they can do, by the affects of which they are capable of – in passion as well as in action.

– Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, 1977

It is perhaps not by accident that Stravinsky's astounding 'early' compositional breakthroughs took place through collaborations showcasing *bodies in movement* – astonishing new forms of movement (and affects!) at that – with his musical scores for the ballets, *The Firebird* (1910), *Petrushka* (1911), *The Rite of Spring* (1913).

Particularly the last of these three, where the choreography of bodies was so shocking that a riot (in)famously broke out at the ballet's premiere in Paris [We will leave aside the issue as to whether the riot was staged or spontaneous...]. And what radically new music to match! Both dance and music summon entirely new physicalities, not to say, gestural and dramatic violence (e.g., the work ends with a human sacrifice of 'the Chosen One' dancing to death!). Becomings and Actions: becoming-birds, becoming-insects, becoming-amphibians; taunting and jesting, wild chases and captures, tormenting jabs and lacerations; but also, the unforgettable opening scene of Nature's dawning. Stravinsky recalled of his *Rite*: "...a musical choreographic work. It represents pagan Russia and is unified by a single idea: the mystery and the great surge of the creative power of spring..."

Months before the ballet's premiere by the *Ballet Russes* in Paris, the First Act (*Adoration of the Earth*) was 'debuted' (in the piano four hands version by the composer) for a small private audience, performed

by no less than Stravinsky himself with Claude Debussy as playing partner.

Stravinsky's arrangement for one piano four hands involves its own form of 'ballet': hands maneuvering in a veritable tangle of unusual positionings, crossings, interweaves. Through an immense range of energies, magnitude of forces, sensual tactility and shocking ruptures, Stravinsky's re-imagination of 'piano technique' is as novel as Nijinsky's revolutionary, scandalous choreography of stomps, uncouth postures, ferocious athleticism and feral streaks. Through our additional editing, we could not resist further putting our hands into this most primal mix and mayhem!

— JML/JS

Bios

Erin Chen '25 is an Upper studying composition with Dr. Sakata. Erin's home of San Francisco is her main inspiration in a range of artistic endeavors in which she explores its urban condition, diverse cultures, and the natural environment. Her interest in urban studies has been heavily influenced by growing up next to the Bay, observing the environment and living as one of its many inhabitants. During the summer of 2023, Erin interned for Freeform Architecture and Development in San Francisco (a firm by the Bayfront) and participated in the Global Citizens Initiative where she began her project for developing support systems for low-income students. At the Academy, she continues this work as an Office of Multicultural Affairs proctor.



Pozzi Escot was Professor of Composition and Graduate Theoretical Studies at New England Conservatory of Music. She was born in Lima, Peru to a French diplomat and scientist. After years in both Peru and France, in 1953, she emigrated to the United States to attend Reed College and then the Juilliard School before going on to study with Philipp Jarnach at the Hamburg Musikhochschule. When the New York Philharmonic premiered her *Symphony V "Sands,"* she was named one of the five outstanding

women composers of the twentieth century, alongside Lili Boulanger and Ruth Crawford. Virgil Thomson has said, "I esteem her as the most interesting and original woman composer now functioning." Her works have received important performances in London, Munich, Belgrade, Madrid, Hamburg, Paris, Tallinn, Tokyo, Beijing, Tallinn, Chicago, Boston, Washington DC, New York... She has lectured throughout Europe, Asia, and America; served as Editor-in-Chief of *Sonus*, a global music journal; and served as President of the International Society of Hildegard von Bingen Studies. As a composer she has received many commissions and awards, her works being recorded on the Delos, Leo, Music and Arts, Neuma, Centaur, Spectrum labels. She was a MacDowell Fellow from 1962-65; in 1975, named an Outstanding Educator in America; and in 1999, selected a Woodrow Wilson Visiting Fellow.

Robert Cogan was the Chair of Graduate Theoretical Studies and Professor of Composition at New England Conservatory for nearly six decades. In 2003, he was honored by NEC, being inducted in the institution's first ever class of faculty emeriti. He was also Visiting Professor at the Berkshire Music Center, IBM Research, SUNY College at Purchase, and at the leading conservatories in Beijing and Shanghai, China. Cogan's internationally acclaimed books include *Sonic Design: The Nature of Sound and Music* (coauthor, Pozzi Escot); *New Images of Musical Sound* (Harvard University Press), recipient of the 1987 Outstanding Publication Award from the Society for Music Theory; and two books of pioneering spectrographic studies of musical sounds: *Music Seen, Music Heard* and *The Sounds of Song*. The Cleveland Orchestra, North and West German radios, RIAS Orchestra of Berlin, the BBC, and the Avignon, Berlin, Gubbio, International Society for Contemporary Music, Montanea, Nice, Prix Italia, and Tanglewood festivals have presented his music, as have distinguished performers throughout the world including Marilyn Crispell, Jan de Gaetani, Joan Heller, George Russell, Jacques-Louis Monod, and Leopold Stokowski. His works have been performed, and he has spoken on theoretical and creative matters to the College Music Society, Darmstadt Summer Courses for New Music, the International Computer Music Association, IRCAM (Paris), the Music Teachers National Association, SEM (Stockholm), Società Italiana di Analisi Musicale, the Society of Composers, the Society for Ethnomusicology, the Society for Music Theory, and at musical institutions in Belgium, China, Czechoslovakia, Finland,



France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Yugoslavia, and throughout the U.S. Cogan received the Young Composer's Radio Award (BMI), Chopin and Fulbright scholarships, German government grants, a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Residency, as well as honorary doctorates from the University of Michigan and New England Conservatory.



The **Igor Stravinsky** biographer, Stephen Walsh, wrote in 1996:

With the close of the twentieth century, it seems clear that Igor Stravinsky has emerged as one of its two or three greatest composers, and he will certainly be remembered as its most many-sided. A study of his work automatically touches on every significant tendency in the century's music, from the vibrant neo-nationalism of the early ballets, through the more abrasive, experimental nationalism of the First World War years, the neo-classicism of the twenties, thirties and forties, and the studies of old music which produced masterpieces like *Agon* and the *Canticum Sacrum* in the fifties and led on to a highly personal reinterpretation of the serial method of Schoenberg. Along the way, Stravinsky came into contact with every kind of mainstream and fringe tendency, from the noisy Futurism of pre-Mussolini Italy, to the popular music of forties Hollywood and the spiky avant-gardism of Boulez and Stockhausen [Lee/Sakata: How and why Walsh leaves out the profound impact — spanning multiple decades — of Afro-American jazz on Stravinsky befuddles us?]: and he took something, however obliquely and transformed, from all of them. But, though a mirror of his age, he never let it dictate his way of writing. Through all the changes of 'manner,' the surprises and renunciations of the natural modernist, he remained in essence the same kind of composer from *Petrushka* to the *Requiem Canticles*.

Stravinsky established himself from the start not just as an innovator, but as one for whom clarity, directness and listenability were prime virtues. *Petrushka* was immediately popular, even though new in many aspects of rhythm and texture; and while early audiences were disconcerted by the sheer ferocity of *The Rite of Spring*, they soon responded to its physical excitement and idealized primitive simplicity.

Walsh, concludes about Stravinsky's music:

Even when it sometimes baffles the mind, it always excites the corpuscles.



Concert pianists and transdisciplinary artists **Jung Mi Lee** and **Jon Sakata** are active in North America, South America, Europe, and Asia and have been featured in cultural capitols of Austria, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, The Netherlands, Norway, People's Republic of China, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland. A sampling of venues and institutions that they have performed and creatively worked at offers a glimpse into the diverse are(n)as that they are engaged with: *Radialsystem V* in Berlin, *Färgfabriken Kunsthalle* in Stockholm, the *Exhibition Pavilion of the National Museum of Architecture* in Oslo, *Bagsværd Kirke* in Copenhagen, *Myyrmäki Kirkko* in Vantaa, *Gyllensbergssalen - Sandels Cultural Centre* in Helsinki, *St. Henry's Ecumenical Art Chapel* in Turku, *Estonian History Museum* in Tallinn; Beijing Central, Shanghai, China National, Wuhan and Xi'an Conservatories; Boston, Harvard, Montreal, New Mexico, Porto Alegre, Tallinn, Tsinghua, Tufts Universities; The New School (NYC), Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Carnegie Mellon Center for Arts in Society, Wentworth Institute of Technology, Williams College Multicultural Center, Goethe-Institut-Boston, Japanese-American Cultural Center-Los Angeles, Conference in Interdisciplinary Musicology 2005 (Montreal), 2nd International Conference on Music and the Environment (Tallinn), 3rd International Conference on Chinese Music (Boston), 4th International Conference on Analytical Approaches to World Music (New York City), 33rd Annual Donald J. Robb Composer's Symposium (Albuquerque), Talloires International Composer's Symposium (Annecy).

Since 2009, Lee and Sakata have been collaborating with architects in Europe and the United States exploring the interstices between Music and Architecture: conducting research, designing multimedia installations and giving experimental concerts in Europe and the US. Highlights have included three concert tours in northern Europe engaging architects, arts institutions, and public in key modernist and

contemporary works by Alvar Aalto, Sverre Fehn, Jørn Utzon, Juha Leiviskä, Gerhard Spangenberg, Petra Gipp, and Matti Sanaksenaho in music spanning from J.S. Bach, Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms, Maurice Ravel to John Cage, Gunnar Berg, Robert Cogan, Lei Liang.

Exhibition and installation design collaborators include architect John Stephen Ellis AIA, transdisciplinary artist Nobuho Nagasawa, architect and artist Rob Trumbour AIA, painter Deborah Barlow, poet Todd Hearon, artist and curator Lauren O'Neal, architect Rolf Backmann, poet Willie Perdomo, architect and artist Bruce MacNelly.

Lee and Sakata have taught at Phillips Exeter Academy since the mid 1990's.

Concert Series Information

Visit www.exeter.edu/music-department-concerts for livestream links and program details for all performances

Do you know someone looking to join our email list to be notified of upcoming concerts?



Use this QR code to sign up for our email