

Thursday, March 1, 2018 at 7:30pm
Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall

Edward T. Cone Performers-in-Residence



SŌ PERCUSSION

Eric Cha-Beach, Josh Quillen,
Adam Sliwinski, and Jason Treuting

with

JACK QUARTET

Christopher Otto and Austin Wulliman, *Violins*
John Pickford Richards, *Viola*
Jay Campbell, *Cello*

PROGRAM

JASON TREUTING (b. 1977) *Nine Numbers 4* (2017)

DONNACHA DENNEHY (b. 1970) *Broken Unison* (2017)

— INTERMISSION —

DAN TRUEMAN (b. 1968) *Songs That Are Hard to Sing* (2017)
Sinking Song
Sister Song
Summoning Song
Seizing Song
Sad Song

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

JASON TREUTING (b. 1977)

Nine Numbers 4 (2017)

Nine Numbers 4 is a mallet quartet for two marimbas and two vibraphones written for Sō Percussion. Inspired in some ways by Steve Reich's *Mallet Quartet*, this three movement piece explores the bowed and struck sounds of these keyboard instruments.

This piece is the fourth in a set of nine, which are sequenced from solo percussionist to nonet.

All of the pieces in *Nine Numbers* translate the 9 x 9 solutions of Sudoku puzzles into notes and rhythms. The number nine, with its three sets of three, contains many wonderful symmetries and fractal-like characteristics. It allows for nesting structures at the largest and smallest levels.

In the pieces for fewer players, sometimes I ask the performers to help generate the score. In the solo, duo, and trio, the performers find their own puzzle solutions, and the score is a set of instructions to translate the numbers into music. In this quartet, I present the ensemble with a finished score based on my realization of the Sudoku. Different scores will exist for different ensembles. Most of the recognizable elements of the pieces will remain fixed, but surface details can change depending on the Sudoku.

The complete work of nine pieces will be the second recording of my music on Cantaloupe Music after 2006's *Amid the Noise*, featuring performances by Sō Percussion, Tigue, the Meehan/Perkins Duo, Ji Hye Jung, Sandbox Percussion, and Adam Groh.

Here is the Sudoku for Sō Percussion's version of *Nine Numbers 4*:

192 456 378
734 928 156
658 731 924
247 695 831
386 147 592
915 283 467
421 369 785
569 874 213
873 512 649

- Jason Treuting

Nine Numbers 4 was commissioned by the Composers Guild of New Jersey.

DONNACHA DENNEHY (b. 1970)

Broken Unison (2017)

With *Broken Unison*, I took the opportunity - joyfully I might add - to re-engage with questions of abstract compositional technique after a period writing more semantically charged music for operas and kind-of-operas. The work is full to the hilt with various ways of disrupting unisons, from antiphonal interchanges through

staggered chorales to a fairly dizzying use of canons of various hues, from the airily spaced to the breathily close, so close that they veer towards a kind of fractured unison at times. I became even more ambitious with some of these ferociously close canons after hearing how well the Sō Percussion players executed them while I was trying out early drafts of the piece! Paradoxically, perhaps, as the music tends more towards actual unisons in its latter parts, its mood becomes progressively broken and dark. Maybe there is a semantic undertone after all.

I think of the dialogue between pattern and texture in this piece as a kind of magic realism. I limited myself strictly to equal-tempered pitched instruments, despite the fact that much of my recent music plays with microtones to create a kind of harmony/timbre based on the overtone series. Here instead the very close canons transform in and out of something akin to a jingly-jangly pulsating resonance, the overtones spilling over each other.

Strictly in nine sections, the piece really separates into three larger parts – each accumulatively made up of a greater number of smaller sections (two, three, and four respectively) - and each demarcated by the varied iteration of a type of material defined by the employment of very bright, close canons starting in C and then slipping away semi-tonally in a manner influenced by the

harmonic language of Gesualdo's later music.

- Donnacha Dennehy

Broken Unison was commissioned by Carnegie Hall.

DAN TRUEMAN (b. 1968)

***Songs That Are Hard to Sing* (2017)**

Some of my favorite songs and tunes are terribly hard to sing. They seem tuneful but defy my efforts to sing them, leaving me in a somewhat embarrassing and inarticulate heap of grunting and muttering, with an occasional sustained high note. I could make a list, but I trust (perhaps naively) that I am not alone in this experience and am hopeful that you all have songs that are similarly enticing and beguiling. Apart from the sense that these tunes are “melodic” in some way, even if they are hard to sing and their “melodies” perhaps even impossible to fully identify, these songs have other features that are enticing; their formal repetitions (one more chorus, please!), their singular moments (what a great bridge!), and their surface characteristics (sheesh, I love those ornaments and blue notes, wish I could do that!).

In the process of writing this piece for possibly the most incredible contemporary music band imaginable — Sō Percussion and the JACK Quartet... combined! — I found myself thinking about “songs” in all of their

mysterious and wonderful facets. While I think most of these pieces will be hard or impossible to sing, my hope is that they feel like songs in various ways, like something we might be able to sing in a parallel universe, or, most ambitious, leave us wanting to sing them, even if we can't. Perhaps Yeats was on to something when, in his penultimate poem

“Cuchulain Comforted,” he tells us “Now we must sing and sing the best we can.... Or driven from home and left to die in fear.”

- Dan Trueman

Songs That Are Hard to Sing was commissioned by the Barlow Endowment for Music Composition at Brigham Young University.

Mark Your Calendars

April 18, 2018 at 7:30pm

Six Decades of Reich

(rescheduled from March 2017)

including Steve Reich's iconic work

Drumming

performed by Sō Percussion and Nexus Percussion

and other pieces from Steve Reich's six-decade career performed by guest artists including Orli Shaham, Corey Smythe, and Grey McMurray.

Graduate musicology student Victoria Aschheim will lead a pre-concert panel discussion with Donnacha Dennehy, Russell Hartenberger, Simon Morrison, and David Robertson.

Steve Reich will join Sō Percussion's Adam Sliwinski for a post-concert talk-back.

Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall

Free; tickets required

reserve at tickets.princeton.edu

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

SŌ PERCUSSION has redefined the scope of the modern percussion ensemble. Their repertoire ranges from “classics” of the 20th century, by John Cage, Steve Reich, and Iannis Xenakis, et al., to commissioning and advocating works by contemporary composers such as David Lang, Steve Mackey, and Paul Lansky, to distinctively modern collaborations with artists who work outside the classical concert hall, including vocalist Shara Worden, electronic duo Matmos, the groundbreaking Dan Deacon, legendary drummer Bobby Previte, jam band kings Medeski, Martin, and Wood, Wilco’s Glenn Kotche, choreographer Shen Wei, and composer and leader of The National, Bryce Dessner, among many others.

Sō Percussion also composes and performs their own works, ranging from standard concert pieces to immersive multi-genre programs – including *Imaginary City*, *Where (we) Live*, and *A Gun Show*, which was presented in a multi-performance presentation as part of BAM’s 2016 Next Wave Festival. In these concert-length programs, Sō Percussion employs a distinctively 21st century synthesis of original music, artistic collaboration, theatrical production values and visual art, into a powerful exploration of their own unique and personal creative experiences.

In the current season, Sō performed the New York premiere of David Lang’s *man made* with

Louis Langrée and the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra; tours a new work by Caroline Shaw with soprano Dawn Upshaw and pianist Gil Kalish to the Kennedy Center, San Francisco Performances, UCLA, Penn State, and elsewhere; returns to Carnegie Hall with the JACK Quartet in a program of new works by Princeton composers Donnacha Dennehy and Dan Trueman; tours the United Kingdom with its original production exploring the community and culture of English coal mining country, *From Out a Darker Sea*; and more.

Recent highlights include an acclaimed Trilogy portrait at the Lincoln Center Festival; appearances at Bonnaroo, the Eaux Claires Festival, MassMoCA, and TED 2016; international tours to Poland and Ireland; performances of *man made* with conductor Gustavo Dudamel and the LA Phil; Bryce Dessner’s *Music for Wood and Strings* at the Barbican Centre in London; and an original score for a live performance and broadcast of WNYC’s *Radiolab* with hosts Jad Abumrad and Robert Krulwich at BAM.

Rooted in the belief that music is an essential facet of human life, a social bond, and an effective tool in creating agency and citizenship, Sō enthusiastically pursues a growing range of social and community outreach. Examples include their Brooklyn Bound presentations of younger composers; commitments to purchasing offsets to compensate for carbon-heavy activities such as

touring travel; and leading their SōSI students in an annual food-packing drive, yielding up to 25,000 meals, for the Crisis Center of Mercer County through EndHungerNE.

The members of Sō Percussion are the Edward T. Cone Performers-in-Residence at Princeton University, where they offer educational work and present an annual series of concerts.

They are also Co-Directors of the percussion department at the Bard College-Conservatory of Music, and run the annual Sō Percussion Summer Institute (SōSI, now in its ninth year), providing college-age composers and percussionists an immersive exposure to collaboration and project development.

Sō Percussion's 2017-2018 season is supported by The Aaron Copland Fund, The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, The Howard Gilman Foundation, The Alice M. Ditson Fund, The National Endowment for the Arts: Art Works, The New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, The New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and New Music USA's NYC New Music Impact Fund made possible with funding from The Scherman Foundation's Katharine S. and Axel G. Rosin Fund.

Sō Percussion uses Vic Firth sticks, Zildjian cymbals, Remo drumheads, Estey Organs, and Pearl/Adams instruments. Sō Percussion would like to thank these companies for their generous support and donations.

Deemed “superheroes of the new music world” (*The Boston Globe*), the **JACK QUARTET** is “the go-to quartet for contemporary music, tying impeccable musicianship to intellectual ferocity and a take-no-prisoners sense of commitment.” (*The Washington Post*) “They are a musical vehicle of choice to the next great composers who walk among us.” (*The Toronto Star*) The recipient of Lincoln Center’s Martin E. Segal Award, New Music USA’s Trailblazer Award, and the CMA/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming, JACK has performed to critical acclaim at Carnegie Hall (USA), Lincoln Center (USA), Miller Theatre (USA), Wigmore Hall (United Kingdom), Muziekgebouw aan ‘t IJ (Netherlands), IRCAM (France), Kölner Philharmonie (Germany), the Lucerne Festival (Switzerland), La Biennale di Venezia (Italy), Suntory Hall (Japan), Bali Arts Festival (Indonesia), Festival Internacional Cervantino (Mexico), and Teatro Colón (Argentina).

Comprising violinists Christopher Otto and Austin Wulliman, violist John Pickford Richards, and cellist Jay Campbell, JACK is focused on new work, leading them to collaborate with composers John Luther Adams, Chaya Czernowin, Simon Steen-Andersen, Caroline Shaw, Helmut Lachenmann, Steve Reich, Matthias Pintscher, and John Zorn. Upcoming and recent premieres include works by Derek

Bermel, Cenk Ergün, Roger Reynolds, Toby Twining, and Georg Friedrich Haas.

JACK operates as a nonprofit organization dedicated to the performance, commissioning, and spread of new string quartet music. Dedicated to education, the quartet spends two weeks each summer teaching at New Music on the Point, a contemporary chamber music festival in Vermont for young performers and composers. JACK has long-standing

relationships with the University of Iowa String Quartet Residency Program, where they teach and collaborate with students each fall, and the Boston University Center for New Music, where they visit each semester. Additionally, the quartet makes regular visits to schools including Columbia University, Harvard University, New York University, Princeton University, Stanford University, and the University of Washington.

Upcoming Music at Princeton Events

Friday, March 2, 7:30pm
Sean Decker '18, Jazz Bass
Taplin Auditorium in Fine Hall

Saturday, March 3, 3pm
Seho Young '19, Piano
Taplin Auditorium in Fine Hall

Saturday, March 3, 7:30pm
Princeton University Glee Club
Walter L. Nollner Memorial Concert
Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall

Wednesday, March 7, 3:30pm
Performers as Teachers:
Jonathan Biss, Piano
presented by Princeton University Concerts
Lee Music Room, Lewis Arts complex

Friday, March 9, 7:30pm
Saturday, March 10, 7:30pm
Princeton University Orchestra:
Concerto Competition Winners
Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall

Sunday, March 11, 3pm
Richardson Chamber Players: Bernstein
& Friends, A Centennial Celebration
presented by Princeton University Concerts
Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall

Sunday, March 11, 8pm
Princeton Sound Kitchen: Wack Pianos I
Lee Music Room, Lewis Arts complex

Tuesday, March 13, 8pm
Princeton Sound Kitchen: Wack Pianos II
Lee Music Room, Lewis Arts complex

Wednesday, March 14, 7:30pm
Princeton University Glee Club Presents:
A workshop with Tenebrae Choir
Location TBA

Thursday, March 15, 7:30pm
Tenebrae
presented by Princeton University Concerts
Princeton University Chapel

Saturday, March 17, 1pm
Baby Got Bach Family Concert
presented by Princeton University Concerts
Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall

Tuesday, March 27, 7:30pm
Edward Zhang '19, Piano
Taplin Auditorium in Fine Hall

Wednesday, March 28, 7:30pm
Nathan Wong '18, Viola
Taplin Auditorium in Fine Hall

Thursday, March 29, 8pm
Andras Schiff, Piano
presented by Princeton University Concerts
Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall

For more information visit
music.princeton.edu