A JOHN CAGE RETROSPECTIVE

with guest artist Michael Linville

Keith Aleo, faculty
Arts Academy Percussion Students

Thursday, November 29, 2018
7:30pm, Dendrinos Chapel/Recital Hall
A JOHN CAGE RETROSPECTIVE

Program


Annie Hayes, Jonathan Lucke, Jaelyn Quilizapa, Abigail Dellovade, percussion

Amores (1936, rev. 1943) ............................................................................. John Cage
Solo for Prepared Piano
Trio (9 tom toms, pod rattle)
Trio (7 woodblocks, not Chinese)
Solo for Prepared Piano

Eli Reisz, Ava Machado, Keith Aleo, percussion
Michael Linville, prepared piano

Child of Tree (1975) .................................................................................. John Cage

Keith Aleo, solo percussion

Suite for Toy Piano (1948) ............................................................................ John Cage
Movement 1
Movement 2
Movement 3
Movement 4
Movement 5

Michael Linville, toy piano

Suite for Toy Piano .................................................................................... John Cage
Composed Improvisation for one-sided drums with or without jangles (1990) ..... John Cage (performed simultaneously)
Movement 1
Movement 2
Movement 3
Movement 4
Movement 5

Michael Linville, toy piano
Keith Aleo, percussion

Duet for Cymbals (1964) ............................................................................. John Cage

Michael Linville and Keith Aleo, percussion
A special thank you to the following people and organizations for their help in the preparation of this program:

Matt Duvall (Eighth Blackbird), John Corkill (University of Chicago), The New World Symphony, The Sascha Brastoff Foundation, Bill Sallak (University of Wisconsin Green Bay), Willis Chip Miller, 1800 Doorbell, Doug Perkins (Boston Conservatory), Terry Longshore (Southern Oregon University) and The Zildjian Company

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ABOUT JOHN CAGE

In 1952, David Tudor sat down in front of a piano for four minutes and 33 seconds and did nothing. The piece 4′33″ written by John Cage, is possibly the most famous and important piece in 20th century avant-garde. 4′33″ was a distillation of years of working with found sound, noise and alternative instruments. In one short piece, Cage broke from the history of classical composition and proposed that the primary act of musical performance was not making music, but listening.

Born in Los Angeles in 1912, Cage studied for a short time at Pamona College, and later at UCLA with classical composer Arthur Schoenberg. There he realized that the music he wanted to make was radically different from the music of his time. “I certainly had no feeling for harmony, and Schoenberg thought that that would make it impossible for me to write music. He said ‘You’ll come to a wall you won’t be able to get through.’ So I said, ‘I’ll beat my head against that wall.’” But it wasn’t long before Cage found that there were others equally interested in making art in ways that broke from the rigid forms of the past. Two of
the most important of Cage’s early collaborators were the dancer Merce Cunningham and the painter Robert Rauschenberg.

Together with Cunningham and Rauschenberg at Black Mountain College, Cage began to create sound for performances and to investigate the ways music composed through chance procedures could become something beautiful. Many of Cage’s ideas about what music could be were inspired by Marcel Duchamp, who revolutionized 20th century art by presenting everyday, unadulterated objects in museum settings as finished works of art, which were called “found art,” or ready-mades by later scholars. Like Duchamp, Cage found music around him and did not necessarily rely on expressing something from within.

Cage’s first experiments involved altering standard instruments, such as putting plates and screws between a piano’s strings before playing it. As his alterations of traditional instruments became more drastic, he realized that what he needed were entirely new instruments. Pieces such as “Imaginary Landscape No 4” (1951) used 12 radios played at once and depended entirely on the chance broadcasts at the time of the performance for its actual sound. In “Water Music” (1952), he used shells and water to create another piece that was motivated by the desire to reproduce the operations that form the world of sound we find around us each day.

While his interest in chance procedures and found sound continued throughout the sixties, Cage began to focus his attention on the technologies of recording and amplification. One of his better-known pieces was “Cartridge Music” (1960), during which he amplified small household objects at a live performance. Taking the notions of chance composition even further, he often consulted the “I Ching,” or Book of Changes, to decide how he would cut up a tape of a recording and put it back together. At the same time, Cage began to focus on writing and published his first book, “Silence” (1961). This marked a shift in his attention toward literature.

In the ’70’s, with inspirations like Thoreau and Joyce, Cage began to take literary texts and transform them into music. “Roratorio, an Irish Circus on Finnegan’s Wake” (1979), was an outline for transforming any work of literature into a work of music. His sense that music was everywhere and could be made from anything brought a dynamic optimism to everything he did. While recognized as one of the most important composers of the century, John Cage’s true legacy extends far beyond the world of contemporary classical music. After him, no one could look at a painting, a book, or a person without wondering how they might sound if you listened closely.

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Double Music  John Cage/Lou Harrison

This work was composed in collaboration with Lou Harrison, each composer working independently from the other: Cage composed parts 1 and 3 (soprano and tenor), Harrison parts 2 and 4 (alto and bass). The work is for four percussionists, playing an array of exotic instruments, including sleigh bells, brake drums, sistrels, gongs, tam-tams and a thunder sheet. Both composers agreed to compose 200 measures each. Cage's parts have a rhythmic structure of 14 x 14 measures (plus a coda of 4 measures), using the number series 4, 3, 2, 5. The work's rhythmic resources are narrow, consisting entirely of eighth notes grouped in twos and threes within a steady eighth-note pulse. The superimposition of two or three rhythmically active parts creates a kaleidoscope of minute shifts in accent and a celebratory and joyous tone.

Amores  John Cage

This piece is one of the first to be written from Cage's rhythmic proportions technique. For example, the second movement is composed of 10-bar units that are each divided into four sections: 3, 2, 2 and 3. This piece is historically important for both percussion and music in general, as it marks the beginnings of what would eventually become the percussion ensemble. Movements I and IV of this composition are scored for prepared piano, which comprises of 9 screws, 8 bolts, 2 nuts and 3 strips of rubber. The piano sounds are exotic and tranquil.

Child of Tree  John Cage

This work was originally used as music for the choreographed piece by Merce Cunningham entitled Solo (aka Animal Solo/Dance), with stage design by Sonja Sekula. While on tour in Arizona with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company in 1975, one of the dancers, Charles Moulton, brought a dried cactus to Cage, placed it near his ear, and plucked its spines. This inspired Cage to use cacti as musical instruments in pieces like Child of Tree and Branches. The score consists solely of performance instructions as to how to select 10 instruments via I Ching chance operations. All instruments should be made of plant matter, or be themselves plant materials (e.g. leaves from trees, branches etc.). One of the instruments should be a pod (rattle) from a Poinciana tree, which grow in Mexico and Florida. Cage instructs: "Using a stopwatch, the soloist improvises clarifying the time structure by means of the instruments. This improvisation is the performance."

Suite for Toy Piano  John Cage

This suite is in 5 short, numbered movements, and obviously employs a very limited gamut of tones: the nine white keys from E below middle C to the F above. Those for Movements I and V are limited to five tones: G to D. Only in movements III and IV do all nine tones appear. The rhythmic structure is 7-7-6-6-4. This suite is one of Cage's most charming and whimsical compositions. It is humorous and somewhat ironic, giving exaggerated dynamics that can't be fully realized on a toy piano, i.e. from sffz to ppp.
Composed Improvisation for one-sided drums with or without jangles  
John Cage

This work is in several versions – for Steinberger Bass Guitar, One-Sided Drums with or without Jangles, and Snare Drum Alone. It was written for Glen Velez and comprises 2 pages of text with performance instructions. Each has 3 time brackets, 1 of which is variable, surrounded by 2 that are fixed. Each time bracket contains 1-8 events and 1-64 icti. The performer performs chance operations to decide the number of events and icti to be played, as well as specifics concerning the use of instruments and durations of sounds.

In the spirit of John Cage, we will perform the Suite for Toy Piano alone, followed by a second performance of the same piece together with the Composed Improvisation. Cage was a proponent of playing his pieces simultaneously and, by chance, there are movements of musical magic and/or chance operations that have no significant connection.

Duet for Cymbals  
John Cage

This work is not a work Cage actually composed, but rather suggested in the subtitle and performance instructions of his Cartridge Music. In these instructions, Cage suggests connecting contact microphones to cymbals. The word 'Cartridge' in the title refers to the cartridge of phonographic pick-ups, into the aperture of which is fitted a needle. In Cartridge Music, the performer is instructed to insert all manner of unspecified small objects into the cartridge to produce a wide variety of sounds. In both compositions, the performers make his or her own part from the materials provided: 20 numbered sheets with irregular shapes (the number of shapes corresponding to the number of the sheet) and 4 transparencies, one with points, one with circles, another with a circle marked like a stopwatch, and the last with a dotted curving line, with a circle at one end. These transparencies are to be superimposed on one of the 20 sheets, in order to create a constellation from which one creates one's part. This is one of Cage’s earliest attempts to create live electronic music.

Credo in US  
John Cage

This work was originally used as music for the eponymous choreographed piece by Merce Cunningham and Jean Erdman, following the phraseology of the dance. It is the first instance wherein Cage uses records or radios, and also incorporates music of other composers (he suggests Dvorak, Beethoven, Sibelius, or Shostakovich). He described the work as a suite with a satirical character. Erdman recalls that for the first performance, a 'tack-piano' was used (a piano with thumbtacks inserted into the felt of the hammers). The pianist mutes the strings at times or plays the piano body (as a percussionist).

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MICHAEL LINVILLE has established a rich and varied professional life as a pianist, percussionist, harpist, conductor, arranger and educator. As the Dean for Chamber Music and Fellow Development at the New World Symphony in Miami Beach, Linville curates three different concert series as part of the Symphony’s season, programming repertoire and coaching its Fellows. As a concert pianist, Linville has performed with NWS, the San Francisco Symphony, The Breckenridge Festival Orchestra and regional orchestras around the United States. An avid skier, Linville enjoys spending as may winter days as he can on the slopes of Breckenridge with his partner Cesar.

KEITH ALEO has a multifaceted career as a performer, educator and administrator. He is the Director of Percussion at Interlochen Center for the Arts, encompassing Interlochen Arts Camp, Percussion Institute, Adult Band Camp and the Academy. He is also an Education and Orchestral Consultant for the Zildjian Company in Norwell, Mass. His playing credits include the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra and, in 2004, the Boston Symphony Orchestra. He was a member of the percussion section of the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra from 1989-2003, and a member of the percussion faculty at the University of Miami from 1994-2003. His teaching credits also include The Boston Conservatory, The University of Rhode Island and University of Connecticut. Aleo has given master classes and workshops on percussion instruments at numerous universities conventions. Highlights have included the Percussive Arts Society State and International Conventions, Paris France, the Paris Conservatory, the PAS Italian Percussion Festival and multiple Music Educator Conferences. He is published by Bachovich Publishing.

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UPCOMING ARTS ACADEMY PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE CONCERTS

February 22 - 7:30pm ~ Dendrinos Chapel and Recital Hall
April 12 - 7:30pm ~ Corson Auditorium

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UPCOMING HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2018-19 IAA PERFORMING ARTS SERIES

Swan Lake, Arts Academy Dance Company and Orchestra
December 6, 7 - 7:30pm; December 8 - 2pm and 7:30pm ~ Corson Auditorium

Interlochen presents Tchaikovsky's brilliant and beautiful ballet Swan Lake as this year's holiday classic. This beloved tale of a princess turned into a swan by an evil sorcerer's curse is a time-honored ballet classic, and an experience for the whole family. Interlochen's Director of Dance Joseph Morrissey brings all the music, emotion and stunning choreography of this tale of fantasy to the Corson Auditorium. Tchaikovsky’s timeless score performed by the Interlochen Arts Academy Orchestra under the conductorship of Leslie B. Dunner.
Stefan Jackiw & Conrad Tao  
January 19 - 7:30pm ~ Corson Auditorium  
Don't miss this incredible opportunity to see two of the world's most talented young musicians playing a variety of well-loved music. Recognized as one of his generation's most significant violinists, 33-year old Stefan Jackiw joins forces with 24-year old pianist Conrad Tao, dubbed a musician of "probing intellect and open-hearted vision" by the New York Times.

The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center  
March 13 - 7:30pm ~ Dendrinos Chapel and Recital Hall  
A mesmerizing evening of the world’s finest chamber music as performed by this technically flawless ensemble from the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, (CMS) is one of eleven constituents of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the largest performing arts complex in the world. The Chamber Music Society has its home in Alice Tully Hall—the finest hall in the world for chamber music. Through its performance, education, and recording/broadcast activities, it draws more people to chamber music than any other organization of its kind.

NPR's From The Top  
March 15 - 7:30pm ~ Corson Auditorium  
NPR's From the Top is the country’s largest national platform celebrating the stories, talents and character of young, classically-trained musicians.

Sean Jones with Interlochen Arts Academy Jazz Ensemble  
April 26 - 7:30pm ~ Corson Auditorium

For information and tickets, visit tickets.interlochen.org

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