

# The Ph.D./D.M.A. Programs in Music

May 10, 2017 7:30 p.m.

*Baisley Powell Elebash Recital Hall*



## Brigid Coleridge, violin with Lee Dionne, piano and Julia Yang, cello

*Sabina* for solo violin (2008-9)

Andrew Norman  
(b. 1979)

*Sonata Concertant* (1952)  
*Andante maestoso*  
*Grazioso*

Leon Kirchner  
(1919 - 2009)

*Duo concertante* (1932)  
*Cantilene*  
*Eclogue I*  
*Eclogue II*  
*Gigue*  
*Dithyramb*

Igor Stravinsky  
(1882-1971)

### INTERMISSION

Trio in E minor, op. 67 (1944)  
*Andante – Moderato – Poco più mosso*  
*Allegro con brio*  
*Largo*  
*Allegretto - Adagio*

Dmitri Shostakovich  
(1906-1975)

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the D.M.A. degree.  
Please switch off your cell phones and refrain from taking flash pictures.

## Notes on the Program

In his biography of Leon Kirchner, Robert Riggs relates the amusing anecdote of Igor Stravinsky and Leon Kirchner's first meeting in person in 1950s Hollywood. By that time a reigning demi-god of composition in the American musical landscape, Stravinsky had professed himself impressed by Kirchner, and had invited the younger composer and his wife to dinner. Kirchner, awed by the presence at the meal of not only Stravinsky but also the celebrated Aldous Huxley, nevertheless found himself perplexed and disappointed by the seating arrangements: Stravinsky's dining room was populated with numerous small tables that could accommodate only two people, and Kirchner reluctantly spent the dinner in small talk with Stravinsky's wife, whilst at a neighbouring table Stravinsky dined with Kirchner's wife.

The dynamics of conversation between two people, two instruments, preoccupies both Stravinsky and Kirchner's Concertante works for violin and piano. **Stravinsky's Duo Concertant** was premiered in Berlin in 1932, and was the unexpected result of a particularly fruitful ongoing collaboration with the violinist Samuel Dushkin, for whom Stravinsky had recently written the Violin Concerto (1931). This followed a period during which Stravinsky had professed himself uninterested in writing for piano and strings: 'For many years I had taken no pleasure in the blend of strings struck in the piano with strings set in vibration with the bow. In order to reconcile myself to this instrumental combination, I was compelled to turn to the minimum of instruments, that is to say, only two, in which I saw the possibility of solving the instrumental and acoustic problem.' The Duo Concertant clearly portrays Stravinsky's neo-classical interest, specifically his recent reading of Petrarch: four movements of the five movement suite bear poetic titles (Cantilene; Eclogue I and II; Dithyrambe) and Stravinsky himself described the 'object' of the work as 'to create a lyrical composition, a work of musical versification.'

The opening Cantilene suggests the at times antagonistic relationship between the piano and violin: the piano's explosive opening evaporating to a menacing murmur to make way for the violin's biting figurations. The middle section sees the instruments competitively asserting their instrument's stereotype, the violin singing long melodic lines over the piano's bustling scalar patterns. In the first Eclogue, a folk idiom is introduced: the violin morphing from a drone over the piano's warbling melody to a sparring punctuation of the piano's incessant movement. This frenetic activity gives way to the wistful, spare violin melody of Eclogue II accompanied by a tastefully ornamented piano line. The fourth movement, the only movement to depart from the poetic trend, fulfils its title's promise: the Gigue follows the form of its Baroque namesake, and trips uninterrupted to its conclusion. The suite ends with the poignant yearning of the Dithyrambe, Stravinsky's classical lyricism in full bloom.

It is no surprise that when **Kirchner** played through his newly composed two-movement **Sonata Concertante** for Stravinsky in 1952, the older composer preferred the 'neo-classical' second movement. Kirchner was both delighted and confused: sometime earlier he had shown the piece to Roger Sessions, who had declared his approbation for the 'more Dionysian first movement.' Yet this starkly different characterisation was perhaps in keeping with Kirchner's own likening of the Sonata's structure to the relationship of the left and right brains, connected by the corpus callosum, the nerve fibers responsible for enabling dialogue between the two very specialized spheres.

Premiered in 1952 by Tossy Spivakovsky and Kirchner himself, the Sonata Concertante is less concerned with addressing the difficulties of writing for violin and piano than it is with speaking to Kirchner's artistic vision. In his own sleeve notes for the first recording of the work (made in 1956),

Kirchner describes his ideas regarding the genesis of style: 'An artist must create a personal cosmos, a verdant world in continuity with tradition, further fulfilling man's "awareness", his "degree of consciousness", and bringing new subtilization, vision and beauty to the elements of experience. It is in this way that Idea, powered by conviction and necessity, will create its own style and the singular, momentous structure capable of realizing its intent.' Kirchner claimed Schoenberg as his ultimate influence (and influence reflected even in Kirchner's idiosyncratic capitalisation of 'Idea'), and throughout his life expressed concern for the new 'complex' musical trends emerging at the expense of real ideas and emotion (as he saw it).

The Sonata Concertante demands much of its instruments. Rather than setting violin and piano in opposition, Kirchner treats them as equal partners, as evinced in the often traded motivic material. The first movement, Andante Maestoso, begins with the violin's dramatic solo opening, soon given body by the piano's spare harmonic support. This theme appears throughout the work, offering structural punctuation, and is memorably reiterated at the explosive ending of the entire piece, emphasising its cyclic nature. The second movement, Grazioso, features a lilting, waltz-like melody traded between piano and violin. This delicate dance gradually dissipates before the movement drives furiously towards the violin's final dramatic return to the theme that began the work.

**Andrew Norman's** 2008-9 work **Sabina** is both a stand alone piece for solo instrument (violin, viola or cello), and operates as the final movement of Norman's larger nine-movement collection *The Companion Guide to Rome* (2010). Norman himself describes the inspiration behind Sabina:

In October 2006 I visited the ancient church of Santa Sabina on Rome's Aventine Hill. I entered very early in the morning, while it was still dark, and as I listened to the morning mass I watched the sunrise from within the church. The light in Santa Sabina is breathtaking; the large clerestory windows are not made of glass but of translucent stone, and when light shines through these intricately patterned windows, luminous designs appear all over the church's marble and mosaic surfaces. As I watched the light grow and change that morning, I was struck by both its enveloping, golden warmth and the delicacy and complexity of its effects. I sketched the material for this piece soon after that unforgettable experience.

Sabina explores the violin's sonic capacities, tracing a trajectory from static, pitchless 'white noise' to explosive resonance. The work evocatively captures the early morning light, fractured into dancing movement by the delicate stone and mingling with the slow-moving chant of the mass: the chant's contours are themselves filtered and fractured in the piece through the clarity and resonance of the violin's open strings. After the tumultuous climax, during which the violin reaches the limit of its expressive capacity, the piece suddenly falls away into silence. Into this void, the violin plainly states the simple chant that has underscored the entire work, this time unfiltered by open strings.

**Shostakovich's Piano Trio No. 2 in E minor, Op. 67**, was completed during a tumultuous period, both for Russia and for Shostakovich. In January 1944, the infamous siege of Leningrad had finally ended after the death of over a million Russians, and the German army was in chaotic retreat; one month later, Shostakovich's great friend, the polymath and music critic Ivan Sollertinsky, died suddenly in the midst of an emergency evacuation. A prominent music lecturer and public speaker, Sollertinsky had often given pre-concert introductions to Shostakovich's music, and had championed his music. The news hit Shostakovich hard: in a letter to Sollertinsky's widow, the composer spelled

out his grief. 'He was my closest friend. I owe all my education to him. It will be unbelievably hard for me to live without him.'

Dedicated to the memory of Sollertinsky, the Piano Trio in E minor responds to both personal and national despair. In a personal vein, it follows a Russian elegaic musical tradition of piano trios dedicated to absent friends and mentors: Tchaikovsky's trio remembers Nikolai Rubinstein; Rachmaninov in his turn dedicated a trio to Tchaikovsky. Yet there is an unremitting bleakness and a lurking sneer that speak beyond personal grief to the blackness of contemporary Russian experience.

The trio begins in fragmented fugue, the lone voice of the cello speaking palely, bleakly into the silence, its high harmonics a mere shadow of itself. The violin and piano enter in turn with the same melodic material, each speaking of this shared tragedy with their own unique voice: the violin more material, more expressive; the piano somberly from the lower registers. As the movement progresses, characterizations of this motif shift and change abruptly, thrown to impassioned heights and tossed between voices; there is a prevailing sense of unease, underscoring even rambunctious pesante passages.

The second movement is a biting ironic take on a scherzo, from which even the violin's hysterical recourse to momentary folk dance offers no respite. The third movement passacaglia plunges devastated into the scherzo's wake, the violin and cello in grief-stricken dialogue over the piano's stark, inexorable chords. The movement ends uncertainly, before launching attacca into the finale. Here, the characters heard in previous movements - bleakness, peasant dance, lamentation - are brought together in grotesque, distorted form, together with a new Klezmer element (both a personal reference to Sollertinsky and a reference to wider horrors). The crazed climax culminates in a frenetic vision of the first movement's opening theme, lending the Trio as a whole an air of despairing inevitability. The finale ends with the same ghostly harmonics of the Trio's beginning, disappearing finally into silence.

## About the Artists

**Brigid Coleridge** is an Australian violinist and a current doctoral candidate at the City University of New York, studying with Daniel Phillips. She completed her Artist Diploma at the Royal College of Music, London, and she received her Master of Music Performance degree from RCM, following a Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Music at the University of Melbourne, majoring in Music Performance, French Language and English Literature. Brigid is a frequent recitalist (including a recent recital tour of Holland), and performs regularly with duo partner, pianist Lee Dionne. Her appearances as concerto soloist have included the works of Tchaikovsky, Brahms, Mendelssohn and Shostakovich. Brigid is also a committed chamber musician, and has been a regular performer at Yellow Barn Chamber Music Festival. She is a former recipient of the Welsford Smithers Travelling Scholarship from the University of Melbourne and an Ian Potter Cultural Trust Award.

Pianist **Lee Dionne** holds passion, imagination and play at the core of his art. In addition to his work with Merz Trio, Lee appears frequently as a member of NYC-based groups Cantata Profana and Ensemble Connect.

As a soloist Lee recently made debut appearances at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and the Philharmonic in Bratislava. He has appeared performing concerti alongside the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, the Bilkent Symphony Orchestra, the Yale Symphony Orchestra, and the

Philharmonia Virtuosi, and as a chamber musician he has been invited to perform at Staunton Music Festival, Yellow Barn Music Festival, and Norfolk Summer Music.

Lee has been the recipient of numerous fellowships and awards, including a DAAD fellowship for study abroad in Germany, a Presser Foundation music award, and third prize in the 2012 James Mottram International Piano Competition. He is currently a candidate for both the Doctorate of Musical Arts in piano performance from Yale School of Music and the Soloist Diploma in piano performance from the Musikhochschule in Hannover, Germany.

Lee's many wonderful teachers and mentors have included Boris Berman, Matti Raekallio, Wei-yi Yang, Patricia Zander, Wilma Machover, Michael Friedmann, Paul Berry, and Arthur Haas.  
[www.leedionne.com](http://www.leedionne.com)

**Julia Yang**, a native of Tallahassee, Florida, currently resides in Brooklyn as cellist of Carnegie Hall's Ensemble Connect and founding member of Merz Trio. From 2014-16, she was based in Miami Beach as a member of the New World Symphony where she performed as concerto soloist, principal cellist, chamber musician and solo recitalist.

With her former Zaffre String Quartet, Julia made 2016 festival appearances at Yellow Barn, Banff Chamber Residency, Centrum Chamber Music Workshop and the Four Seasons Winter Workshop. Other festivals include the 2016 Krzyzowa-Music festival where her performance was broadcasted on Polish TV. On the New World Center's Chamber Music Series, Julia was highlighted for her "deep tone" and "precision" in performances of piano trios (South Florida Classical Review). She also co-directed and curated New World Symphony's Forum and Impromptu, two chamber music concert series at the New World Center and the Art Center of South Florida.

As soloist, Julia has performed recitals and concertos as winner of numerous competitions including New World Symphony 2014 and Northwestern University's 2011 Concerto Competition, and top prizes for the 2011 Union League of Chicago's Young Artist Competition, the 2011 American Opera Society Competition, and Northwestern's 2010 Thaviu String Competition.

Julia has performed as principal cellist under conductors such as Michael Tilson Thomas, Susanna Malkki, James Gaffigan, John Adams, James Conlon, Hugh Wolff, Leonard Slatkin, and Nicholas McGegan in distinguished halls ranging from New York's Carnegie Hall, Washington D.C.'s Kennedy Center to Boston's Symphony Hall.