

Argento New Music Project

2017/2018 Season

Mahler – *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* & *Symphony No. 10* (arranged by Michel Galante)
March 5, 2018
Saint Peter's Church, NYC

Argento presents Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* with soprano Sharon Harms, as well as a work in progress of the first and second movements of Mahler's *Symphony No. 10* as part of the 23arts Summer Music Festival in Tannersville, located in the beautiful Catskill Mountains region of upstate New York. *Symphony No. 10* will be a pre-premiere performance of the complete 5-movement form arranged by Argento's artist director Michel Galante and conducted by Jonathan Yates, director of the classical series at the festival. The final revised version will be premiered on October 4 as part of the Moving Sounds Festival® in New York City.

Clarinetist Carol McGonnell will open the concert with *Tracing Hollow Traces*, a solo by Andile Khumalo.

Honey, I Shrunk the Orchestra
March 5, 2018
Saint Peter's Church, NYC

Irish Times critic Michael Dervan once said: "Classical music audiences know what they like and like what they know, whereas contemporary music audiences seek new musical works and experiences."

As part of Argento's ongoing effort to bring together these two audience groups, "Honey, I Shrunk The Orchestra" will feature two orchestral works that were re-scored for 13 players: Kimmy Szeto's version of Schumann's *Symphony No. 3, Rhenish*, and the world premiere of a new chamber ensemble version of Fred Lerdahl's *Chords*, reductions that reveal a new clarity of orchestration and virtuosity of ensemble performance from works of both past and present.

Chords is a mosaic of consonant and dissonant chord colors, revolving closely and distantly around a focal sonority. This new chamber ensemble version exploits the virtuoso aspects of the piece that, according to the composer, were never realized in the previous orchestral settings.

The surprisingly opaque orchestration of Schumann's *Symphony No. 3, Rhenish* was the composer's strategy to manage the mediocre Düsseldorf Orchestra through the scoring itself, often with many pages of doublings. In the *New York Times* review of Kimmy Szeto's arrangement, James Oesterreich wrote: "Even for a listener not much bothered, as some are, by Schumann's sometimes thick orchestrations, this reduction made for a fascinating exercise, clarifying myriad details."

Highlighting Schumann's relevance today, Argento will perform two contemporary chamber works: György Kurtág's *Hommage à R. Sch.* for clarinet, viola, and piano references Schumann's two personae "Eusebius and Floristan," and Martin Bresnick's *Bird As Prophet* for violin and piano is based on Schumann's late piano work "Vogel als Prophet," op. 82 no.7.

PROGRAM

György Kurtág – *Hommage à R. Sch.*, op. 15d (1990)

for clarinet, viola, and piano

Carol McGonnell, clarinet; Stephanie Griffin, viola; Margaret Kampmeier, piano

Martin Bresnick – *Bird As Prophet* (1999)

for violin and piano

Doori Na, violin; Margaret Kampmeier, piano

Fred Lerdahl – *Chords* (1974/1983, arr. 2018)

(world premiere of the chamber ensemble version)

Intermission

Robert Schumann / Kimmy Szeto – *Symphony No. 3, Rhenish* (1850) arranged for chamber ensemble (2013)

The Conversion Factor December 5, 2017 Saint Peter's Church, NYC

At the end of his life, Gérard Grisey, an iconic figure in modern music, turned his attention to the dark and mystical songs of Hugo Wolf. Argento's final concert of 2017 highlights works by composers inspired by previous musical compositions, transforming them into new works that are a reflection of their time, that reveal their own compositional voice. Alongside three exciting works by New York composers Sang Song, Du Yun and Taylor Brook, Argento will be joined by soprano Sharon Harms in *Wolf Songs* by Gérard Grisey, the iconic spectral French avant-garde composer who found in his penultimate work an unlikely source of inspiration in the 19th-century Austro-Slovene composer Hugo Wolf. Grisey orchestrates four of Hugo Wolf's expressionistic lieder with forbidding texts of Eduard Mörike, creating four dark meditations on religion, nature, and time.

Two Asian American composers will be featured in this program. Argento will perform the world premiere of Korean American composer Sang Song's *Scars*, a work that highlights the effects of post-traumatic stress syndrome that includes the experience of mourning, embodied by tragic musical quotations from Verdi's *Otello*. For portions of this work, the audience will have the option of hearing processed sounds through headphones distributed at the performance. In her

duet for violin and piano, *When a Tiger Meets a Rosa Rugosa*, Pulitzer Prize winning Chinese American composer Du Yun transforms the poem “In me, past, present, future meet” by the war-damaged British poet Siegfried into a wordless vocalise.

Early in the 20th century, Hungarian composer Béla Bartók devotedly traveled to remote villages of Transylvania to make the first outdoor field recordings of folk music, which he admired for its robust expressive power. Using seven of these recordings, Bartok composed his *Romanian Folk Dances*, presenting them to audiences within a classical concert framework that adds many levels of nuance and color to the original songs. Audience will hear the original field recordings before Argento's performance of Bartok's concert settings of these vernacular discoveries.

The program ends with Taylor Brook's *Arrhythmia*, a musical re-imagining of the first movement of Mahler's 9th Symphony. Brook asked himself what Mahler would have done if he were to write this piece today, and wrote a microtonal string quartet of which James Oestreich of the *New York Times* calls “gripping from the outset and engrossing throughout.” Argento will give the premiere performance of this quartet in an expanded version scored with percussion.

PROGRAM

Sang Song – *Scars* (World Premiere)
for ensemble and electronics

Béla Bartók – *Romanian Folk Dances*
for ensemble

~ intermission ~

Du Yun – *When a Tiger Meets a Rosa Rugosa*
for violin and piano
Ken Hamao, violin
Euntaek Kim, piano

Gérard Grisey – *Wolf Lieder*
for voice and ensemble
Sharon Harms, soprano

Taylor Brook – *Arrhythmia* (World Premiere)

Conditions of Light
October 20, 2017
Saint Peter's Church, NYC

November 20, 2017

La Marbrerie, 21 Tue Alexis Lepere, Montreuil, France

Internationally-acclaimed Ensemble Cairn travels from Paris to join forces with Argento in our season opener, on October 20, 2017, 7:30 PM at Saint Peter's Church in New York City. Under the baton of the Guillaume Bourgogne (1st prize BRAVO! 2012 for "Best classical music recording"), French-American violinist Elissa Cassini will perform the world premiere of Jérôme Combier's Koussevitsky commission *Conditions de Lumière*, a concerto for violin and ensemble.

During a pessimistic moment in international relations, Argento and Ensemble Cairn wish to highlight the positive, idealistic, generous, and creative potential of international collaborations.

This concert, the result of an intense transatlantic exchange of music between the two ensembles, will feature both French and American composers. In addition to Jérôme Combier's coloristic style, Gérard Pesson takes familiar rhythms and vernacular influences and orchestrates them with "noises" from all the instruments. Franck Bedrossian also explores musical "noise," but for its darker, more dramatic potential. On this side of the Atlantic, we perform American composers Michel Galante and Nina C. Young (Rome Prize in Composition 2015-16). Michel Galante's *Camouflage* (world premiere) features a large ensemble flanked on either side by virtuoso marimba players. In contrast to the large ensemble works on the program, flutist Emi Ferguson and violist Ken Hamao will play Nina C. Young's poetic duet *L'heure bleue*.

Suggested Donation: \$15 General / \$10 Students and Seniors

PROGRAM

Jérôme Combier – *Conditions de lumière* (2017)
WORLD PREMIERE commissioned by the Serge Koussevitzky Music Foundation
for violin and large ensemble

Michel Galante – *Camouflage* (2017)
WORLD PREMIERE for large ensemble

Gérard Pesson – *Carmagnole* (2015)
for large ensemble

Jérôme Combier – *Dog eat dog* (2013)
for guitar and cello

Nina C. Young – *L'heure bleue* (2013)
for flute and viola

Franck Bedrossian – *Innersonic* (2012)
for accordion and electric guitar

Major support for this concert is provided by the French American Cultural Exchange.