

THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE, AND DANCE PRESENTS

# NEW MUSIC ENSEMBLE

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**NOVEMBER 11, 7:30 P.M. | GRIFFIN CONCERT HALL**

**DIRECTED BY CAYLA BELLAMY**



Colorado State University

**CSU NEW MUSIC ENSEMBLE**  
CAYLA BELLAMY, MUSIC DIRECTOR

NOVEMBER 11, 2021 - 7:30PM  
GRIFFIN CONCERT HALL

**PROGRAM**

***CLAPPING MUSIC (1972) / STEVE REICH (B. 1936)***

Rachel Bowyer  
Michael Coffey  
Christian Kuhlman  
Caroline Miller  
Emily Morton  
Trek Salzer  
KJ Tagestad  
Lexi Wilkerson

***ADAPTATION VARIATIONS (2019) / TAKUMA ITOH (B. 1984)***

Molly Wakefield, flute  
Trek Salzer, clarinet  
Kate Fieseler, horn  
Zo Manfredi, violin  
Kyla Witt, viola  
Katarina Pliego, cello  
Christian Kuhlman, percussion

**VELVET HAMMER (2009) / SEAN FRIAR (B. 1985)**

Emily Morton, flute  
Richard Galbreath, clarinet  
Lucas Kilpatrick, electric guitar  
Tommy O'Malley, piano  
Zack Niswender, bass  
Christian Kuhlman, percussion

**PASSAGES (2020) / ALEX SHAPIRO (B. 1962)**

KJ Tagestad and Molly Wakefield, flute  
Rachel Bowyer, Caroline Miller, and Trek Salzer, clarinet  
Michael Coffey and Lexi Wilkerson, bassoon  
Kate Fieseler, horn

**INCREASE (2002) / DAVID LANG (B. 1957)**

Emily Morton and Molly Wakefield, flute  
Rachel Bowyer and Caroline Miller, clarinet  
Michael Coffey and Lexi Wilkerson, bassoon  
Mikael Leonhardt, trumpet  
Kate Fieseler, horn  
Zo Manfredi and Elizabeth Furuiye, violin  
Kyla Witt, viola  
Katarina Pliego, cello  
Zack Niswender, bass  
Tommy O'Malley and Jooyeon Chang, keyboard  
Christian Kuhlman and Jalen Thompson, percussion

## PROGRAM NOTES

### ***Clapping Music* (1972)**

**STEVE REICH**

**Born: 03 October 1936, New York, NY**

**Currently resides in New York City**

**Duration: 4 minutes**

While touring Europe in 1971, Steve Reich's ensemble transported 2,000 pounds of audio equipment, amplifiers, and percussion instruments. "What happens if the air freight is late? What if the power goes out?" These questions were the premise behind Reich's composition *Clapping Music*. In the composer's words, "I composed *Clapping Music* to create a piece of music that would need no instruments beyond the human body."

Inspired by clapping heard in a flamenco nightclub in Brussels, *Clapping Music* is written for two performers and is based on one single rhythm. A total of thirteen measures are repeated individually between six and eight times, the first and last measures being played in unison. As the music progresses, player one continues to repeat the same rhythm while player two begins to offset their part by one eighth note. This creates a canon of cacophony requiring immense concentration on the performers' part that continues until the rhythmic pattern comes full circle and is performed in unison once again.



The repeated rhythmic pattern of Steve Reich's *Clapping Music*

Steve Reich is a Pulitzer Prize winning composer who has been described by the New York Times as, "our greatest living composer." His musical contributions, in particular those to the minimalist genre, and his development of phase music have "altered the direction of musical history," as stated in *The Guardian*. Although the composer places *Clapping Music* as the final work in his phasing experiments, the work went on to inspire music by David Bowie in a remix of his song "Love is Lost" (2013), and a sample of the piece can be heard in "On Top of the World" (2012) by Imagine Dragons.

In 2015, in collaboration with Touchpress and Queen Mary University of London, the London Sinfonietta released the Steve Reich's *Clapping Music* app. This free game for Apple iOS provides a chance for anyone to learn and perform the piece at home.

### ***Adaptation Variations (2019)***

**TAKUMA ITOH**

**Born: 1984, Japan**

**Currently resides in Honolulu, Hawai'i**

**Duration: 12 minutes**

The Hawaiian honeycreeper is a classification of bird that evolved into over fifty species over the course of centuries. According to a 2020 article from the American Bird Conservancy, however, only seventeen species remain, most of which are endangered. Honeycreepers are known for their diversity in plumage and alterations in bill shape that have taken place over time due to environmental changes. Are all of these variations the evolutionary product of a single species arriving on the islands many millennia ago?

Honeycreepers are a product of what is known as adaptive radiation, which is a biological process in which a species “rapidly diversifies, with the newly formed lineages evolving different adaptations.” These adaptations are often prompted through capitalization on a specific habitat or resource. The musical parallel of this phenomenon is a theme and variations, in which a melody is presented and then developed in the form of “musical adaptations.” Takuma Itoh set out to bring attention to these incredible birds in his composition *Adaptation Variations*. Inspired by the distinctive features of the avians, the composer utilizes a theme and variations that brings attention to the diversity amongst this winged species. The composer writes, “the long curved beaks of the i'iwi resulted in the glissandi section; the seed-eaters like the palila led to the percussive, rhythmic variation; the repeated notes of an 'amakihi song or the distinctive intervals that an 'apapane sings became rhythmic and intervallic motives throughout the work; and so on.”

Composer Itoh spent his early childhood in Japan and grew up in Northern California. He earned degrees from Cornell University, University of Michigan, and Rice University. Since 2012, Dr. Itoh has been a faculty member at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. His music has been described by the New York Times as “brashly youthful and fresh.”

### ***Velvet Hammer (2009)***

**SEAN FRIAR**

**Born: 1985, Los Angeles, CA**

**Currently resides in Denver, CO**

**Duration: 6 minutes, 30 seconds**

Originally commissioned by the NOW Ensemble, Velvet Hammer combines the raw, expressive rock sound with the form and dramatism of classical music. Rather than juxtaposing two distinct musical genres, the piece instead synthesizes various timbres, both electric and acoustic, into



what the composer describes as a “super electric guitar.” Dr. Friar goes to great lengths to “embrace the sound world of the electric guitar” rather than attempt to blend the instrument within an acoustic backdrop. High pitched, airy sounds in the woodwind instruments are used to mimic that of the guitar’s distortion and the composer takes full advantage of various effects throughout the piece to create a looming sense that “something is just about to happen.”

Composer Sean Friar’s musical training began at the age of four with rock and blues piano improvisation. The composer has since written a catalog of music in a multitude of styles. *Velvet Hammer* is an example of his mission to utilize the accessibility of rock as a gateway to the classical style. The piece was the winner of the 2011 ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award and a Nominee for the 2011 Gaudeamus Prize. Friar is Chair of Composition at the Lamont School of Music at the University of Denver.

### ***Passages* (2020)**

**ALEX SHAPIRO**

**Born: 11 January 1962, New York, NY**

**Currently resides in San Juan Islands, Washington**

**Duration: 3 minutes**

Alex Shapiro’s *Passages* is an electroacoustic composition that combines the sound of the live ensemble with a pre-recorded electronic track. The work is an example of cellular music, a form of composition that does not dictate what to play or when, but instead utilizes “musical passages” to be performed at random by the musicians. The improvised instrumental parts include musical cells that each comprise a total of four measures in 5/4 time and are written in a range of complexity. Each musician has the freedom to choose the musical cell they desire throughout the piece, the only rule being that they must start at the beginning of the passage and play all four measures before continuing. The composer also allows for any combination or number of instruments. Therefore, the piece is never performed the same way twice. Composed in 2020, Ms. Shapiro explains: “In a world in constant flux, *Passages* offers a calming, centering, meditative, and encouraging outlook.” The use of the electronic accompaniment also lends itself to the ability of musicians to record and collaborate in virtual performances in times when live performance is not possible.

Shapiro is a graduate of The Juilliard School and the Manhattan School of Music. She is a leading composer in the field of new music, in particular her synthesis of acoustic and electronic sounds. Ms. Shapiro’s music, photography, and “her holistic approach to a happy life in the arts,” are all available through her social media and website, [www.alexshapiro.org](http://www.alexshapiro.org).

***Increase* (2002)**

**DAVID LANG**

**Born: 08 January 1957, Los Angeles, CA**

**Currently resides in New York City**

**Duration: 11 minutes**

While choosing names for each of his three children, David Lang and his wife considered hundreds of options, “each representing some kind of strength or history or character trait, each linked to a different hope or tradition.” The name “Increase” was one possibility, as the word is “full of determination and optimism.” Dr. Lang goes on to say, “It’s what you wish for as a future, for a child, for a community, or, for that matter, for a new performing ensemble.” Although the word was not used as their child’s name, a piece with the title *Increase* was written for the inaugural performance of the contemporary classical music ensemble, Alarm Will Sound. Composed as both a gift for the ensemble and as a wedding gift for two friends, David Lang’s title choice serves as a wish for the newly formed group, as well as anyone embarking on a new venture.

*Increase* has a sense of forward motion throughout. With a pulsating opening, an overall positive mood is set as new instrumental layers are added. While at times the melodic interactions seem playful, the composer’s use of foreboding pedals and driving rhythms add a sense of wonder as to what is coming. A path towards the unknown carries the listener to the conclusion when a climactic moment leads to silence—and perhaps the notion that the adventure has just begun.

David Lang is a Pulitzer Prize-winning composer as well as the co-founder and co-director of the New York music ensemble, Bang on a Can. He has “solidified his standing as an American master” (*The New Yorker*) and is one of the country’s most performed composers. David Lang’s music defies style and musical convention. While his background is of classical training, he is a champion of musical innovation. David Lang is an adjunct professor of composition at Yale University, where he earned his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in 1989.

— program notes by Ben Pouncey

## ABOUT THE ENSEMBLE

**THE NEW MUSIC ENSEMBLE** at Colorado State University explores contemporary and avant garde composition techniques for mixed vocal and instrumental ensembles as well as presents performances of groundbreaking pieces that redefined “music” during their time. Performers study not only standard classical techniques used in arrhythmic, aleatoric, or electronically modified settings but also push the boundaries of traditional tone production through sounds such as multiphonics, percussive articulation effects, pitch bending, and many other creative and innovative approaches to playing and notating music. The goal of each semester of academic study and each performance is for participants and audiences alike to reflect upon their placement of the line where tradition becomes contemporary, chaos becomes order, and sound becomes music.

**DR. CAYLA BELLAMY** currently serves as Assistant Professor of Bassoon at Colorado State University, where she directs the New Music Ensemble in addition to teaching applied bassoon, chamber music, and instrumental and virtual pedagogy. As a bassoonist and advocate for new music, she most recently embarked on a performance series presenting modern concerti by Joan Tower, Libby Larsen, James Stephenson, and Mathieu Lussier. This series continues into the upcoming concert season with a premiere performance of John Steinmetz’ newest concerto, *The Illusion of Separateness* for bassoon and string orchestra. Cayla’s contemporary music ventures extend beyond large ensemble works, including an upcoming live premiere of CSU colleague Kevin Poelking’s *There and Back* for bassoon and piano, recent commission and premiere of Denzel Washington’s *A Moment on the Coastal Plains* for unaccompanied bassoon, and recording premiere of Amy Beth Kirsten’s *World Under Glass* for five bassoons. She is also in the process of commissioning three new works by Ashley Floyd (for bassoon ensemble), Jay Hurst (for electric bassoon), and Frank Horvat (for flute and bassoon). Offstage, Cayla is an amateur endurance athlete with academic research focusing on coaching methodologies, burnout, and the intersections of artistic and athletic training. Find her online at [www.caylabellamy.com](http://www.caylabellamy.com).



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