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45th season | 373rd event

Sunday December 6, 2015

Betty Oliphant Theatre, 404 Jarvis Street, Toronto

New Music Concerts presents: **A Portrait of**

PHILIPPE LEROUX

Alexander Dobson Baritone

New Music Concerts Ensemble

Robert Aitken direction



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Philippe Leroux | Related Events

Strange Luminescence

Richard Bradshaw Amphitheatre, Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts
Tues. December 8, 2015 12 – 1 p.m. | Free Noon Hour Recital
Artists of The Glenn Gould School New Music Ensemble | Brian Current, conductor

Alice Ho (Canada) - *Strange Luminescence* (2015), for solo piano and 15 instruments
(Word Premiere, commissioned through the Ontario Arts Council)
Philippe Leroux (France): *TotalSOlo* (2014) for 28 musicians – North American Premiere
Chris Paul Harman (Canada) - *Album for the Young* (2015) for 6 musicians

Under the direction of Brian Current, the talented young artists of The Glenn Gould School New Music Ensemble present a program that showcases their expertise in performing landmark 20th- and 21st-century repertoire, including the world premiere of a new piano concerto composed by Chinese-Canadian composer Alice Ho, *Strange Luminescence*, commissioned for the Ensemble and GGS star alumna pianist Claudia Chan. The ensemble will also have the privilege of giving the first North American performance of Philippe Leroux's *TotalSOlo* which was premiered by the Ensemble InterContemporain in Paris last year under Bruno Montovani's direction.

Co-presented by Toronto New Music Projects and The Music Gallery:

Philippe Leroux (Michael and Sonja Koerner Distinguished Visitor in Composition)
Tuesday December 8 | The Music Gallery, 197 John St. Doors: 7pm | Concert: 8pm
Tickets: \$20 Regular/Advance at musicgallery.org | \$15 members, seniors | \$10 students

All works by Philippe Leroux:

M (1997) for two pianos, two percussionists, and electronics
De L'Épaisseur (1998) for accordion, violin, and violoncello
De la Texture (2007) for ensemble
(flute, clarinet, guitar, percussion, piano, violin, viola, violoncello)
Phyton, Phyton (2010) for two sopranos (TBC)
Veni Sancte (1987) for three sopranos (TBC)

French composer Philippe Leroux is an icon of the post-spectral movement in composition. For years a researcher and professor at IRCAM in Paris, he has lectured at Berkeley (CA), Columbia (NY), and Harvard, and is commissioned by organizations internationally. He is currently Professor of Composition at the Schulich School of Music of McGill University. This concert of his work features the gamUT Ensemble and a group of DMA students from the University of Toronto, co-presented with Toronto New Music Projects and The Music Gallery.



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New Music Concerts presents: **A Portrait of**

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Alexander Dobson Baritone
New Music Concerts Ensemble
Robert Aitken direction

Programme:

Elliott Carter (USA 1908–2012)

Canon for Three Equal Instruments (1971)

Robert Aitken, Dianne Aitken, Les Allt flutes

Philippe Leroux (France 1959)

AAA (1996)

Dianne Aitken flute Max Christie clarinet Rick Sacks percussion Gregory Oh piano
Lynn Kuo violin Carolyn Blackwell viola David Hetherington cello Robert Aitken direction

Scott Rubín (USA 1989)

less than equals three (2015) (World Premiere)

Dianne Aitken flute Wallace Halladay saxophone Ian Cowie trombone Erica Goodman harp Gregory Oh piano
Corey Gemmell violin Carolyn Blackwell viola David Hetherington cello Robert Aitken direction

— *Intermission* —

Gérard Grisey (France 1946–1998)

Talea (1986)

Dianne Aitken flute Max Christie clarinet Gregory Oh piano Lynn Kuo violin David Hetherington cello

Philippe Leroux

Ailes (2012)

Alexander Dobson baritone Dianne Aitken flute Graham Mackenzie oboe Max Christie clarinet
Michele Verheul bass clarinet Jerry Robinson contrabassoon Christopher Gongos horn
Robert Venables trumpet Ian Cowie trombone Rick Sacks percussion Gregory Oh piano
Lynn Kuo, Corey Gemmell violins Carolyn Blackwell viola David Hetherington cello Adam Scime contrabass
Robert Aitken direction

*Please join us in the lobby following the concert for a wine and cheese
reception with the artists courtesy of New Music Concerts' Board of Directors.*

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From 2001 to 2006 he was a teacher in composition at the IRCAM "Cursus d'Informatique Musicale." In 2005 and 2006 he was professor at McGill University (Fondation Langlois programme). From 2007 to 2009 he was composer-in-residence at Metz Arsenal and at Orchestre National de Lorraine, then from 2009 to 2011, invited professor at Université de Montréal (UdeM). Since September 2011 he is Associate Professor in composition at the Schulich School of Music, McGill University. He is currently composer-in-residence of Ensemble MEITAR in Tel-Aviv.

— lerouxcomposition.com

Philippe Leroux (France 1959) – *AAA* (1996)

Written in 1996 for flute, clarinet, violin, viola, cello, piano and percussion, this piece is originally an instrumentation of *Image à Rameau*, composed for four wind MIDI controllers (electronic instruments). The idea is to transpose musical behaviours from the world of electronic sounds to the instrumental field while strictly respecting the initial partition. But, as in any project of this kind, there is obviously overflowing in a way that the piece acquires a new autonomy. Indeed, the instrumental techniques induce musicality that is not contained in the electronic model. I wanted, among others things, to find some familiar sounds from my teenage years when I was playing jazz. If the shape and overall structure of the piece remain the same, it is not the same musical language. In one case, the ear focuses on timbres, on the dynamic morphology and on the harmonic colors. In another case, the traditional sounds of the flute, the clarinet, the violin... and the predominance of pitches emphasize the syntactic aspect. In both pieces, it is indeed the same music, but does not express the same thing. The initial pattern, developed throughout the work, is extracted from the harpsichord piece *La Poule* by Jean-Philippe Rameau. *AAA* was commissioned by Ars Mobilis and premiered by l'Ensemble Ictus, conducted by Georges-Elie Octors, on January 16, 1998 at the Hippodrome in Douai, France.

— *Philippe Leroux*

Philippe Leroux – *Ailes* (2012)

Ailes (Wings), composed in 2011-2012, was commissioned by the French state. I wrote this piece as an imaginary musical letter to my brother who died in September 2010.

Alexander has sung the title role in *Don Giovanni*, "Guillaume" in the French version of *Così fan tutte*, "The Count" in *Le nozze di Figaro*, "Marcello" in *La Bohème*, "Silvio" in *Pagliacci*, "Mercutio" in *Roméo et Juliette*, "Harlequin" in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, "Sonora" in *La fanciulla del West*, "Aeneas" in *Dido and Aeneas*, "De Retz" in *Les Huguenots* and "Moralès" in *Carmen*. Alexander made his London debut at the Linbury Theatre with Royal Opera House Covent Garden in the premiere of *The Midnight Court* by Ana Sokolovic. Other recent performances of contemporary works include "The Pilot" in Soundstreams' production of *Airline Icarus*, a new opera by Brian Current.

On the concert stage, Alexander has appeared with Orchestre Métropolitain, the National Arts Centre Orchestra, Toronto's Aldeburgh Connection, the Vancouver New Music Festival and the Philadelphia Orchestra among many others. Mr. Dobson is also a dedicated recital artist. Derek Holman composed the song cycle *Daybreak and a Candle End* especially for Alexander and the Talisker Players. Mr. Dobson has also performed *Dichterliebe* with Talisker Players and Schubert's *Winterreise* to great acclaim in Montréal, Victoria, England, Paris, and, with Yannick Nézet-Séguin at the piano, in Toronto.

Our next event:



JACK QUARTET

Thursday January 14, 2016 at Jane Mallett Theatre

Co-production with Music Toronto | Concert 8:00^{PM}

Jane Mallett Theatre, 27 Front St. E. (St. Lawrence Centre)

Programme:

John Luther Adams (USA 1953) - *The Wind in High Places* (2012)

John Zorn (USA 1953) - *The Remedy of Fortune* (2015)

Christopher Otto (USA 1983) - *Rodericus, Angelorum Psalat* (2012)

Iannis Xenakis (Greece/France 1922-2001) - *Tetras* (1983)

for reservations and single ticket prices call 416.366.7723

Elliott Carter (December 11, 1908 - November 5, 2012) is internationally recognized as one of the most influential American voices in classical music, and a leading figure of modernism in the 20th and 21st centuries. He was hailed as "America's great musical poet" by Andrew Porter and noted as "one of America's most distinguished creative artists in any field" by his friend Aaron Copland. Carter's prolific career spanned over 75 years, with more than 150 pieces, ranging from chamber music to orchestral works to opera, often marked with a sense of wit and humour. He received numerous honours and accolades, including the Pulitzer Prize on two occasions: in 1960 for his String Quartet No. 2 and in 1973 for his String Quartet No. 3. Born in New York City, Elliott Carter was encouraged towards a career in classical music by his friend and mentor Charles Ives. He studied under composers Walter Piston and Gustav Holst while attending Harvard University, and later traveled to Paris, studying with Nadia Boulanger. Following his studies in France, he returned to New York and devoted his time to composing and teaching, holding posts over the years at St. John's College, the Peabody Conservatory, Yale University, Cornell University, and The Juilliard School, among others.

Carter's early works, such as his Symphony No. 1 (1942) and *Holiday Overture* (1944), are written in a neoclassical style — influenced by his contemporaries Copland, Hindemith, and Stravinsky. After the Second World War, in works such as his Cello Sonata (1948) and String Quartet No. 1 (1950-51) he began to develop a signature rhythmic and harmonic language, which he continued to refine to the very end of his life. Igor Stravinsky hailed his Double Concerto for harpsichord, piano, and two chamber orchestras (1961) and Piano Concerto (1967) as "masterpieces." A creative burst of imagination began in earnest during the 1980s with works such as *Night Fantasies* (1980), *Triple Duo* (1982-83), *Penthode* (1985), and major orchestral essays such as his Oboe Concerto (1986-87), *Three Occasions for Orchestra* (1989), Violin Concerto (1990), and *Symphonia: sum fluxae pretium spei* (1993-96). Carter's only opera, *What Next?* (1997-98), with a libretto by Paul Griffiths, was introduced by Daniel Barenboim, a champion of the composer's music, in Berlin in 1999. Carter composed more than sixty works after the age of ninety including his Cello Concerto (2000), *Of Rewaking* (2002), *Dialogues* (2003), *Three Illusions for Orchestra* (2004), *Mosaic* (2004), and *In the Distances of Sleep* (2006). In his final years, Carter continued to complete works with astounding frequency, including *Interventions* for piano and orchestra (2007), Flute Concerto (2008), *What are Years* (2009), Concertino for Bass Clarinet and Chamber Orchestra (2009) [first performed by New

Philippe Leroux was born in Boulogne Billancourt (France) on September 24th, 1959. In 1978 he entered the Paris Conservatory (Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique), studied with Ivo Malec, Claude Ballif, Pierre Schaeffer and Guy Reibel and obtained three first prizes. Meanwhile, he followed classes with Olivier Messiaen, Franco Donatoni, Betsy Jolas, Jean-Claude Eloy and Iannis Xenakis. In 1993 he was selected to enter the Villa Medici in Rome for two years, where he remained until 1995. His compositional output (about seventy works to date) includes symphonic, vocal, electronic, acousmatic and chamber music. His works are the result of various commissioners, with among them the French Ministry of Culture, Radio-France Philharmonic Orchestra, Südwestfunk Baden Baden, IRCAM, Percussions de Strasbourg, Ensemble InterContemporain, Ensemble Court-Circuit, the Nouvel Ensemble Moderne de Montreal, Avanta Ensemble, Ensemble 2e2m, Ensemble Sillages, Ensemble Orchestral Contemporain, INA-GRM, Sixtrum, Ensemble Ictus, Festival Musica, Ensemble BIT 20, Koussevitsky Foundation, San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, Ensemble Athelas, Orchestre National de Lorraine, Orchestre Philharmonique de Nice, CIRM, INTEGRA, and several other institutions of international renown.

His music is widely performed in various European festivals and International orchestras such as Donaueschingen, Radio-France Présences (Paris), Agora (Paris), Venice Biennale, Bath Festival, Festival Musica (Strasbourg), Stockholm ISCM, Barcelona Festival, Musiques en Scènes (Lyon), Festival Manca (Nice), Bergen Festival, Ultima (Oslo) Festival, Tage für Neue Musik (Zürich), BBC Symphony Orchestra (London), Tonhalle Orchester Zürich, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra (Glasgow), Philharmonia Orchestra (London), Czech Philharmonic etc. He has received many prizes and awards: Prix Hervé Dugardin, SACEM Prize, André Caplet and Nadia and Lili Boulanger Prizes from the Academy of Fine Arts (Institut de France), Salabert Prize and Arthur Honegger Prize (Fondation de France). In addition, Philippe Leroux writes articles on contemporary music, gives lectures and teaches composition at Berkeley University (California), Harvard, Grieg Academy (Bergen), Columbia University (New York), Royal Conservatory of Copenhagen, University of Toronto, Fondation Royaumont, IRCAM, American Conservatoire at Fontainebleau, Paris and Lyon Conservatoires Nationaux Supérieurs, Domaine Forget (Quebec), Georgia Institute of Technology at Atlanta and the Tchaïkovsky Conservatory at Moscow among others.

pulsed walking in a kind of “skewered” format. If the monophonic strand dominates early in the work it is polyphony which gradually takes the upper hand to suggest the density and vital saturation that infuses the being who does not wish to die. This work is dedicated to my brother Jean-Claude.

— Philippe Leroux (Translation: Daniel Foley)

Gérard Grisey was born in Belfort on June 17th, 1946. He studied at the Trossingen Conservatory in Germany from 1963 to 1965 before entering the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique in Paris. Here he won prizes for piano accompaniment, harmony, counterpoint, fugue and composition (Olivier Messiaen’s class from 1968 to 1972). During this period, he also attended Henri Dutilleux’s classes at the Ecole Normale de Musique (1968), as well as summer schools at the Accademia Chigiana in Siena (1969), and in Darmstadt with Ligeti, Stockhausen and Xenakis in 1972.

He was granted a scholarship by the Villa Medici in Rome from 1972 to 1974, and in 1973 founded a group called L’Itinéraire with Tristan Murail, Roger Tessier and Michael Levinas, later to be joined by Hugues Dufourt. *Dérives*, *Périodes* and *Partiels* were among the first pieces of spectral music. In 1974-75, he studied acoustics with Emile Leipp at the Paris VI University, and in 1980 became a trainee at IRCAM. In the same year he went to Berlin as a guest of the DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst), and afterwards left for Berkeley, where he was appointed professor of theory and composition at the University of California (1982-1986). After returning to Europe, he taught composition at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique in Paris from 1987, and held numerous composition seminars in France (Centre Acanthes, Lyon, Paris) and abroad (Darmstadt, Freiburg, Milan, Reggio Emilia, Oslo, Helsinki, Malmö, Göteborg, Los Angeles, Stanford, London, Moscow, Madrid, etc.). Gérard Grisey died in Paris on 11 November 1998.

Grisey’s music is often considered to belong to the genre of spectral music, which he is credited with founding along with fellow composer Tristan Murail, although he later disowned the label in interviews and writings. Nonetheless, he spent much of his career exploring the spectrum of tone colour between harmonic overtones and noise. In addition, he was fascinated by musical processes which unfold slowly, and he made musical time a major element of many of his pieces. He expressed the opinion that: “We are musicians and our model is sound not literature, sound not

mathematics, sound not theatre, visual arts, quantum physics, geology, astrology or acupuncture”.

Gérard Grisey (France 1946-1998) – *Talea*

TALEA or The machine and the rank weeds

“Talea,” in Latin, means cutting. In medieval music this term designates a reiterated rhythmic pattern to which a configuration of pitches called “color”, likewise reiterated and coinciding or not with the first, is grafted. In the twentieth century we have rediscovered this dissociation between pitches and durations. The idea of a “cutting” of the initial idea, of putting the various rhythmic structures in phase and out of phase, as well of a structure in two parts in which the second could easily be termed “color”, have suggested the title of this quintet to me. In *Talea* I tackle two aspects of musical discourse from which my research on instrumental synthesis, on microphonics and on contiguous transformations had estranged me, that is, speed and contrast.

Talea consists of two parts linked together without interruption which express two aspects or, more precisely, two auditory angles of a single phenomenon. Thus this single gesture (fast, fortissimo, ascending — slow, pianissimo, descending) is presented in the first part by durations of medium length and gradually eroded to the point of leveling off the contrasts. In the second part, it expresses the overall form and the succession of sequences. It is polyphonic in the first part and homophonic in the second. From the perceptual point of view, the first part seems to me like an inexorable process, a veritable machine for forging the freedom which will emerge in the second part. The course of the latter is in fact pierced by more or less irrational emergences, kinds of recollections from the first part, which gradually assume the colour of the new context until they become unrecognizable. These wild flowers, these rank weeds pushing up in the interstices of the machine, grow in importance and then overflow until they give the sections into which they have wormed their way like parasites an entirely unexpected colouration. — Gérard Grisey

The music of American composer **Scott Rubin** (b.1989) stems from negotiating relationships between the physical energy and movement required in sound production, peculiarities of auditory cognition and perception, and the discourse found when traversing different modes of music listening. He works in both acoustic and electroacoustic mediums. Rubin's music has been played in the United States, Canada, France, Hong Kong, and Colombia by numerous ensembles and independent musicians. Currently, Rubin is a PhD student at the University of California at Berkeley where he studies with Franck Bedrossian, Edmund Campion, Cindy Cox and Ken Ueno. He is an active researcher at the Center for New Music and Audio Technologies. He recently earned his Masters degree studying with Philippe Leroux at McGill University in Montréal, Canada. Previously, he earned a Bachelor of Music in music composition and a Bachelor of Science in psychology at the University of Illinois. At McGill, Rubin worked as a composer for the Auditory Cognitive Neuroscience Lab under Robert Zatorre, where he composed music to be used in music cognition experiments. Rubin has also studied music cognition at the Institute for Music and Brain Science. Rubin is co-founder and co-organizer for the Montréal Contemporary Music Lab. He also performs improvised guitar with Speakeasy Electro Swing Montreal.

— scottrubinmusic.com

Scott Rubin (USA 1989) – *less than equals three* (2015)

After a cool spring and summer of slow and even ripening, the harvest brought days of heat. The vines responded to the heat as native desert flowers to moisture with a rush of development. The grapes had a long life on the vines because of the cool spring, while the late heat brought them to glorious fruition. This produced sensations with complex, internal development of fruit overlaid with supple, fleshy texture. — *Scott Rubin*

Alexander Dobson, baritone

British-Canadian baritone **Alexander Dobson** is renowned on opera and concert stages for his artistry. His portrayal of Wozzeck, conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin with Théâtre du Nouveau Monde and Orchestre Métropolitain du Grand Montréal, was praised by *Journal Voir* as a “gripping embodiment of Wozzeck.”

It evokes questions of life and death. A slow pulse is repeated many times, a sort of soundwalk, sometimes indecisive, evoking the homelessness that is the path we follow in our lives. This wandering is like that of convicts or gladiators, those who know they will die — *Morituri te salutant*. This walk is also like breathing, which accompanies us every day of our lives and then switches off one day in a desperate entropy, but also leads us towards an eternity without limits or end.

The harmony in this work comes from two sources. The first is that of a spectral analysis of a type of bell very common in Quebec, especially in Trois-Rivières, Rimouski and Quebec: the Mears bell. The second is derived from an analysis, this time from a frequency modulation by sound synthesis. The idea is not to generate frequency modulation arrangements, but to analyze complex sounds obtained by the same method. The difference may seem subtle, but it is noticeable. It's the same as I have utilised in my other works: the difference between the four pitches of a formation of four sounds and the formation derived from the results of the analysis of the resulting harmony sung by four voices in a particular acoustic. In the latter case, the harmonics generated by the voice interfere so as to create a more complex and living sound. A harmonic dialectic is formed throughout the work between the natural harmony of the bell and the more sophisticated sound of the frequency modulation. Towards the end, the bell itself is modulated, thereby establishing a possible continuity between the two harmonic universes.

The work is a kind of vocal lament that speaks of suffering, but also hope. It traverses through often aborted solos which speak of the impossibility of passing through the portal of death victoriously. These solos lead to saturated harmonic timbres that express the anger and violence of the rebellion before death, that of others but also our own. These moments of great density and excessive, extreme frequencies mark, in the multiplicity of solos, a vision of death shattering all limits, but also the equally disturbing aspects of life, its violence and its hardness.

The form of the work is a braid with two strands: one a rather monophonic type and the other more polyphonic, which intertwine and are traversed by the aforementioned

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Music Concerts with clarinetist Virgil Blackwell] and *The American Sublime* (2011). Carter's last completed orchestral work, *Instances* (2012), was premiered by the Seattle Symphony in February 2013. His final work, *Epigrams* (2012) for piano trio [performed by New Music Concerts on December 11, 2014], was premiered at the Aldeburgh Festival in June 2013.

— Courtesy of The Amphion Foundation

Elliott Carter (USA 1908-2012) – Canon for Three Equal Instruments (1971)

In response to the composer's death on April 6, 1971, the British music journal *Tempo* devoted one entire issue and part of another to tributes of various sorts to Stravinsky. In addition to the photographs reminiscences, and musical analyses, several composers, including Carter, contributed to a series of "Canons and Epitaphs," which appeared in the summer and autumn issues. Lasting under two minutes, Carter's *Canon for 3* is one of the most concise, spare, and focused works in the collection. It calls for an ensemble of three equal and unspecified instruments, all playing in the same range. The first voice begins the canon, stating the five-bar theme all alone. The second voice enters with a presentation of the canonic material inverted, and transposed up a tritone. The third voice then enters with a line identical to the one that started the piece, against counterpoint in voices one and two. At the conclusion of player three's statement, the canon takes an interesting and sonically striking twist. The canon subject appears again, but only as a composite of tones appearing across all three lines. While the attacks of the notes outline the exact shape of the canon subject, the original durations are not observed. This creates a startling variation on familiar material, as if the ink used to pen the subject was beginning to run across the page, causing the constituent voices of the canon to be subsumed into the subject itself — perhaps a lingering symbol of Stravinsky's passage into immortality.

— Jeremy Grimshaw, *allmusic.com*

Tonight's performance of the *Canon for Three Equal Instruments* will be presented in a special arrangement that Carter made in Avignon, France for Robert Aitken which has never been heard in North America.

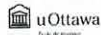
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