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2022 – 2023
CONCERT SEASON

GS2:

STANDING WAVE : EX MACHINA

OCTOBER 18, 2022
7:30PM

MURIEL RICHARDSON AUDITORIUM, **WINNIPEG ART GALLERY**

GroundSwell

Standing Wave: Ex Machina

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Acknowledgement

GroundSwell acknowledges that it operates on Treaty 1 land, the original territories of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples and on the homeland of the Métis Nation.

Gender Parity

Arts organizations all over the world are acknowledging that programming must fairly represent gender diversity. GroundSwell has joined this growing movement by pledging to achieve and maintain gender parity in its programming and commissioning by 2022-23. You can help GroundSwell reach that goal. See gswell.ca for more details.

Programme

single Red flower (2022) *   Bekah Simms
    i. a few warbles for the little dead
    ii. the big alive, feeling small

Biosphere (2022) ***   Rebeka Schroeder

Beams of Light (2022) ***   Kiara Nathaniel

Atalanta's Arrow (2022) *   Mari Alice Conrad

in an archipelago (2020) **   James O'Callaghan
    i. a repeating island
    ii. ultima Thule

Deus ex Machina: Gordon Fitzell
The Nine Lives of
Schrödinger's Cat (2019) **

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* World premiere
** Manitoba premiere
*** Manitoba premiere and GroundSwell
30th Anniversary Commission

There is no intermission in tonight's concert.

Programme Notes

Bekah Simms, *single Red flower*

Single Red Flower was written shortly before, during, and after the death of my two rats Parsley and Sage. They were my pandemic companions, providing much love and friendship during two awful years of lockdown in a small Toronto basement apartment. The two movements are threaded with residual emotion from their passing.

Having never dealt with losing a pet before—let alone two in quick succession—I was mystified, touched, and overwhelmed with the rituals of their little deaths: laying them in the cage for their cagemates to process their death; picking out a flowerpot, soil, and seeds in which to bury them; and laying them to rest in a backyard rental which we would soon be leaving. Only one plant bloomed from the planter, a beautiful red flower of a species I have never seen before.

While I often try to keep my emotions out of my music, this piece inadvertently became strange, small, and ritualistic, reflecting these experiences. Little, quiet sounds are brought to the forefront and amplified to fill the space in the same way that little things can fill our hearts beyond bearing.

Rebeka Schroeder, *Biosphere*

Rebeka Schroeder's *Biosphere* is a meditative soundscape inspired by the constant growth and decay of the natural world. The piece was commissioned by Standing Wave and was written in 2022 for Bb clarinet, vibraphone and violin, taking advantage of the varying colours and timbres offered by these instruments. *Biosphere* unfolds slowly and softly, never raising louder than mezzo-piano, as it is written for calm introspection, for both the performers and the listeners. Inspired by the ever-changing state of life, it dies as quietly and calmly as it is born, utilizing held notes and gentle tremolos.

Kiara Nathaniel, *Beams of Light*

Beams of Light was composed for members of the Vancouver new music ensemble Standing Wave in 2022, for flute, cello and piano. The piece consists of two major sections, the first having an airy, spacious quality with long notes in the piano and flute part, and

sparse pizzicato notes in the cello. The piano provides the foundation for the ensemble, as the cello and flute parts are sparser and freer. The title "Beams of Light" was chosen because the textures seemed reminiscent of sunlight shining through the trees, or light reflecting in water.

The piano slowly brings in a somber melody, gradually introducing more structure as the piece transitions to the second section. It becomes more rhythmic, process-based, and more emotionally intense than the previous section. The flute and cello begin to play segments of the melodies that were introduced by the piano part, rhythmically offset to create longer loops and a mesmerizing texture for the listener to get lost in. A sudden, soaring melody in the piano begins, only to fall away just as suddenly, ending with low but intense staccato phrases in the cello and piano.

Mari Alice Conrad, *Atalanta's Arrow*
(inspired by Violet Archer's cantata *The Bell*)

Atalanta's Arrow is the second work in a collection of chamber pieces exploring my fascination with the mythology surrounding the Greek goddess Atalanta. A daughter of a king, Atalanta was abandoned at birth in a forest because she was not a male heir. Despite her odds, she grew into a strong and prolific huntress and bravely carved out her own way.

Violet Archer (1913-2000) was a composer and music professor at the University of Alberta from 1962-1978 who worked to carve her own way in the composition world. As evident in her 1972 cantata, *The Bell*, music was her religion, and she gave everything to her art. Her focus was bold, direct, and as sharp as an arrow. She courageously and unapologetically shared her own distinct musical voice.

Violet and Atalanta exemplify the courage and independence of women in a world where others more powerful or privileged assume the target or trajectory of life arrows. As a current graduate student at the University of Alberta, I often think of Violet while walking the hallways of the Fine Arts Building and imagine she is passing on her sharp, arrow-like focus to all of those who share a similar aim in life: an aim steadied with strength, passion, and courage to boldly defy societal expectations in efforts to achieve their ambitions.

James O'Callaghan, *in an archipelago*

in an archipelago is a work for sextet and electronics, or any combination of its constituent parts, from solos, various possible duos and trios, and so on, all the way up to the full band, for a total of 127 possible combinations. The work was composed during the COVID-19 pandemic, where an uncertain future led to the idea of affording the extracting of solos from the commission of a chamber piece-to-be. Each instrument's part was composed one-by-one, first as a mockup assembled from recordings of my past pieces, among other sources. I listened to each of these parts in different combinations and fine-tuned them as I went in order to compose in such a way that they could exist on their own or in this variable company. I then transcribed the parts into a notated chamber score. Each instrument has a phoneme attached to it, drawn from the title, and the title of each performance becomes an assemblage of its parts.

Antonio Benítez-Rojo's 1985 essay *The Repeating Island* set out a way of thinking borne of the postcolonial conditions of the Caribbean that challenges the binary ontologies of Analytical and Continental Thinking. An Archipelagic Thinking is one of multiplicity and polyrhythm which conceptualizes through fragmentary interrelations rather than a system or a totality. In composing this piece, I was thinking about connectivity through isolation, and the idea that repetition necessarily brings a difference and a deferral. The kind of densely modular repetition I experiment with, where every moment is densely recontextualizable, is one that I hope offers an opportunity to collapse binary listening.

in an archipelago was commissioned by Standing Wave.

Gordon Fitzell, *Deus ex Machina: The Nine Lives of Schrödinger's Cat*

I have recently taken to basing aspects of my work on the unlikely pairing of seemingly unrelated concepts, with the aim of discovering curious commonalities. In my 2018 flute concerto *Techno Messiah: Zoom | Richter | Langsam | Pop,* for example, I examine the abstract paintings of Gerhard Richter alongside the synth-pop music of Kraftwerk and other West German bands of 1970s and 80s. In *Deus ex Machina: The Nine Lives of Schrödinger's Cat*, I explore two equally dissimilar concepts—an improbable plot device and a preposterous thought experiment.

The term *deus ex machina* is Latin for 'god from the machine'. It refers to a convention of Greek tragedy wherein a machine was used to hoist actors playing gods onto the stage, as a means of resolving a seemingly impossible predicament. Schrödinger's cat, on the other hand, is a paradox that highlights the seemingly nonsensical implications of a fundamental principle of quantum physics known as *quantum superposition*. In short, the scenario presents a cat that may be considered to be both alive and dead because it is linked to a random subatomic event that may or may not occur. In terms of readily perceivable musical elements, the inherent concept of wave-particle duality is reflected in the extensive use of orchestrational pairing of instruments throughout the piece.

The "nine lives" component stems from a little-known master's thesis in which nine interpretations of quantum mechanics are addressed. These nine interpretations correspond to the opening nine sections of my musical composition. A tenth and final section of the composition acknowledges more recent (and even more bizarre) interpretations of the Schrödinger's cat experiment. This final section also represents the "Deus ex Machina" of the title.

Deus ex Machina: The Nine Lives of Schrödinger's Cat was commissioned by Standing Wave with the support of Dr. Mark Halpern.

Standing Wave Ensemble:

AK Coope, clarinets
Christie Reside, flutes
Rebecca Whitling, violin
Cristian Markos, cello
Allen Stiles, piano
Vern Griffiths, percussion

JUNO-nominated contemporary chamber ensemble Standing Wave ventures with passion and assurance into a panoply of musical worlds. Modern classics by Xenakis, Murail, Glass, and Vivier are staples of the ensemble's repertoire, along with commissioned works by pioneering Canadian composers such as James O'Callaghan, Nicole Lizée, Jocelyn Morlock, Giorgio Magnanensi, and Jordan Nobles.

In its 30-year history, Standing Wave has commissioned and premiered well over 100 works. The ensemble regularly presents

an annual season of concerts in Vancouver, and has toured across Canada and collaborated with luminary artists such as Kokoro Dance, Ballet BC, Mina Shum, Peter Anderson, Talking Pictures, Veda Hille, and the Git Hayetsk Dancers. Standing Wave's latest album, *20C Remix* (2021), received a JUNO nomination for Classical Album of the Year (small ensemble). In 2017, Standing Wave was named Artist/Ensemble of the Year at the West Coast Music Awards.

Celebrated on stages across Canada, Standing Wave has been featured as part of the PuSh International Performing Arts Festival, the Modulus Festival, the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra New Music Festival, the Victoria Symphony's New Currents Festival, the Vancouver International Jazz Festival, the Montreal New Music Festival, and Ottawa's Chamberfest. 2022 will see the ensemble performing on Winnipeg's venerable Groundswell Concert Series as well as New Music Concerts in Toronto.

Dedicated to fostering the next generation of Canadian composers, Standing Wave created Compocon. Founded in 2019, Compocon is an intensive summer program for emerging composers. Mentor composers join ensemble members during a week-long program that culminates in the development of new works by the Compocon participants. Standing Wave has also been an ensemble in residence at the University of British Columbia School of Music since 2004.

Composer Biographies

Composer **Bekah Simms** hails from St. John's, Newfoundland and is currently based in Glasgow, following nine years living and working in Toronto. Her varied musical output has been heralded as "cacophonous, jarring, oppressive — and totally engrossing!" (CBC Music) and lauded for its "sheer range of ingenious material, expressive range and sonic complexity" (The Journal of Music). Propelled equally by fascination and terror toward the universe, her work is often filtered through the personal lens of her anxiety, resulting in nervous, messy, and frequently heavy electroacoustic musical landscapes. Recent interests in just intonation and virtual instruments have resulted in increasingly lush and strange harmonic environments.

Bekah's music has been widely performed across North America and Europe. She has worked with some of the top interpreters of contemporary music internationally, including Crash Ensemble, Riot Ensemble, Eighth Blackbird, and l'Ensemble contemporain de Montréal. Bekah has also been the recipient of over 35 awards, competitive selections, and prizes, including the 2019 Barlow Prize. The resulting work, *metamold*, was nominated for the 2022 Gaudeamus Award. Works from her debut album "impurity chains" were nominated in both 2019 and 2020 for the JUNO Award for Classical Composition of the Year. Her music has thrice been included in the Canadian Section's official submission to World Music Days (2016, 2019, 2021), and in 2016 the CBC included her among their annual 30 hot classical musicians under 30.

As of September 2022, Bekah is a Lecturer at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, following previous academic positions at the University of Toronto and University of Western Ontario. Her principal teachers during academic studies were Gary Kulesha and Andrew Staniland, alongside significant private study with Clara Iannotta and Martin Bédard.

Rebeka Schroeder is a Canadian composer and pianist living in Winnipeg. She studied piano with Professor Charles Horton at the University of Manitoba and graduated with a degree in general music. She is currently finishing a master's degree in composition, studying with Professor Gordon Fitzell, and having also studied with Professors Örjan Sandred and David Litke in previous years.

Schroeder writes in a variety of styles, utilizing clusters and sound-walls typical of the 1960s, modal textures originating in the Middle Ages, and softer, more introspective sounds. Her approach to composition often entails structured improvisation, either on voice or on various other instruments.

Kiara Nathaniel is an Indo-Canadian composer and pianist based in Winnipeg. She studied piano performance at the University of Manitoba from 2016–2020 with Dr. David Moroz, completing her bachelor's degree in piano performance. During her undergraduate degree she began studying composition from 2018–2021 with Dr. Gordon Fitzell. She is currently working to complete her master's degree in composition, now studying with Örjan Sandred and expected to graduate in May 2023.

Nathaniel's compositions aim to explore emotions, the natural world, and human connection. She takes inspiration from a variety of musical genres such as pop, electronic, and minimalist music. She often incorporates extramusical themes and narratives during her compositional process, perhaps originating from her passion for film scores and lyric-based songwriting.

This past year Nathaniel wrote for percussion ensemble, cello ensemble, orchestra, and voice. She had her orchestral debut with the premiere of her piece *Rupture | Repair* in April 2022. In September 2022 her composition *Void | I only sleep in daylight* for voice and electronics premiered in Toronto as part of "Fair Use", a concert of voice commissions put on by Slow Rise Music. She also released a self-produced EP of original songs this past June. She is currently working on a concerto for cello and wind ensemble, as well as a new piece for percussion quartet commissioned for Cameron Denby's Fresh Blood 3 concert, slated for November of this year.

Mari Alice Conrad is an award-winning composer currently living in Alberta. Her works have been performed by various ensembles across Canada, the United States, and Europe. Mari Alice specializes in writing concert works for chamber ensembles, choirs, soloists, and large ensembles in a variety of genres. Her music has been performed at Ottawa Chamberfest, Vancouver's Allegra Chamber Orchestra FestivELLE, Été musical de Barachois in New Brunswick, in the Žofín Palace for the World Wind Music Festival and WASBE Conference in Prague, Czech Republic, Toronto's East Chamber Music Festival, the Banff Centre for the Arts and Creativity

EvoFest, New Music Edmonton Summer Solstice Festival, and the Toronto 2022 Choral Canada's Podium Conference (as the recipient of the Stephen Chatman Student Award in Choral Composition). Mari Alice's compositional practice shines a penetrating light on the human condition and fosters curiosity, authenticity, connection and collaboration, creating a compelling experience for performers and audience members alike.

James O'Callaghan is a composer and sound artist based in Montréal praised for his "mastery of materials and musical form." (Electromania, Radio France) His music has been described as "very personal… with its own colour anchored in the unpredictable." (Goethe-Institut) Never having studied an instrument, he came to music first through making industrial electronic dance music. His work intersects acoustic and electroacoustic media, employing field recordings, amplified found objects, computer-assisted transcription of environmental sounds, and unique performance conditions.

His artistic output, spanning chamber, orchestral, live electronic and acousmatic idioms, audio installations, and site-specific performances, has been performed in 26 countries and variously commissioned by the Groupe de Recherches Musicales (INA-GRM), Gaudeamus Muziekweek, the National Youth Orchestra of Canada, Esprit Orchestra, and many others. His album Espaces tautologiques, released by empreintes DIGITALes, won a Prix Opus, and was listed by 5:4 as one of the "best albums of 2016". His extended collaboration with Ensemble Paramirabo resulted in a portrait album of his works in 2019, entitled *Alone and unalone*. It was released on Ravello Records and was nominated for a JUNO award.

His music has been the recipient of nearly 40 national and international prizes and nominations, including the ISCM Young Composer Award (2017), the Salvatore Martirano Award (2016), and the Robert Fleming Prize (2015). Significant nominations include those for the Gaudeamus Award (2016), prix Métamorphoses (2018), and two JUNO Awards (2014, 2020)—the first at 26 as the youngest nominee in the history of the category Classical Composition of the Year.

Active as an arts organiser and advocate for reform and increased access to and equity in music infrastructures, he co-founded the Montréal Contemporary Music Lab, served on the artistic committee of Codes d'accès, and as a national councillor of the Canadian League of Composers. He also presents at conferences and publishes regularly on compositional topics including instrumental transcription of

environmental sound, cross-media transcription, soundscape music, and electroacoustic diffusion through instruments *(Organised Sound, Twentieth-Century Music, eContact!, Electroacoustic Music Studies)*. He is an associate composer of the Canadian Music Centre.

Gordon Fitzell is a Canadian composer, improviser, and sound artist. His music, described as "eerie, throbbing and trancelike" (*New York Times*), tends to explore peculiar points of connection between classical and popular elements of culture, freely inhabiting acoustic, electroacoustic, and interdisciplinary performance environments.

He has worked with a wide range of artists including BIT20 Ensemble (Norway), eighth blackbird (USA), ensemble mosaik (Germany), Ensemble Orchestral Contemporain (France), and PianOrquestra (Brazil), as well as Canada's Ensemble contemporain de Montréal and Trio Fibonacci. His music has been conducted by Robert Aitken, Daniel Kawka, Véronique Lacroix, Reinbert de Leeuw and Bramwell Tovey, and performed at international festivals including the Darmstädter Ferienkurse (Germany), the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival (England), the Pan Music Festival (South Korea), the Tanglewood Music Festival (USA), and the Winnipeg New Music Festival (Canada).

His music is featured on various albums, including GRAMMY-winning, Opus Award-winning, JUNO-nominated, and West Coast Music Award-nominated recordings. In addition to concert music, he has presented sound installations in North America and Europe and produced recordings for other artists. He is an associate composer of the Canadian Music Centre and a professor of composition at the University of Manitoba Desautels Faculty of Music, where he co-directs the eXperimental Improv Ensemble (XIE).

GS3:

WINNIPEG ART GALLERY, MURIEL RICHARDSON AUDITORIUM NOV. 17, 2022 | 7:30 PM

Four interactive multimedia works reimagine the piano and pianist's artistic expression through new technologies, and transform the listener's concert to an immersive, emotional and cinematic experience.

PIANO GAMES by Keith Hamel is the first live video game controlled by the pianist and piano, transporting the listener to new worlds of beauty, fire and peace. **ORPHEUS (1)** by T. Patrick Carrabré and poetry by Margaret Atwood challenges the Orpheus myth as a love story, empowering Eurydice to decide her own fate. **DŌSHITE? どうして?** by Bob Pritchard honours over 21,000 Japanese Canadians sent to internment camps during WW2. **AI WEIWEI: ON POETRY** by Gordon Fitzell presents an inspirational text by Chinese artist and activist Ai Weiwei in an uncompromisingly raw sonic and choreographic environment for transcendent thinking.

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