

WORLDWIDE

The Sound of a New World



Sunday, December 3 · 4pm
TRINITY CHURCH

TRINITY CHURCH
WALL STREET

RENEWAL

The Sound of a New World

NOVUS NY

Featuring Sandbox Percussion

Jonny Allen

Victor Caccese

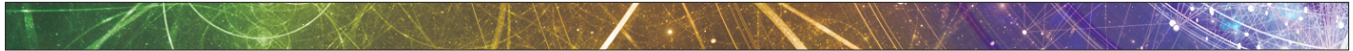
Ian Rosenbaum

Terry Sweeney

December 3, 2023

4pm

Trinity Church



PROGRAM

A Passage Between Earth and Sky (New York Premiere)

Jessica Meyer

- I. Sown Seeds
- II. Zen Branches
- III. Dissevered
- IV. Reverie of Renewal

A Forest Unfolding

Featuring Margaret Carpenter Haigh, soprano;
Thomas Meglioranza, baritone; and Neil Netherly, narrator

I. No voices and no shade

1. *Native Trees*
2. *From The Book of Job*

Eric Moe

David Kirkland Garner

II. They have stood round my sleep

3. *Eternal Rhythm*
4. *Woodswoman Etude*
5. *Trees*

Stephen Jaffe

David Kirkland Garner

Stephen Jaffe

III. A dreamer, dreaming

6. *From Thoreau's Notebooks*
7. *In a Country Once Forested*

David Kirkland Garner

Melinda Wagner

IV. Everything in the forest

8. *Variation-Deciso*
9. *Eternal Song*

Stephen Jaffe

David Kirkland Garner

Re(new)al

Viet Cuong

- I. Hydro
- II. Wind
- III. Solar

PROGRAM NOTES

A Passage Between Earth and Sky

Nature has played a role in many of my significant memories so far. In fact, my first memory ever is posing for a photo when I was three years old standing next to the maple tree that served as the centerpiece of my backyard. I remember touching the bark, the super-70s corduroy pants and homemade macrame poncho I was wearing, and even the dappled light coming through the leaves. Fast-forward to my late-in-life composition career where it has become a regular part of my practice to get into nature before starting any piece, and then it seems that nature and specific places in the world are a direct inspiration for a good portion of the material I come up with. Therefore, after meeting Michael and Erica and finding out about the life and death of their Italian umbrella pine “Igor,” I had to find a way to write about it.

Igor was a glorious tree that provided shade and sanctuary for both humans and birds. One day PGE cut him down out of fear that he would somehow be uprooted from the soil and fly into the power lines. I can’t understand how even a diseased tree could fly away like that, yet I am also constantly reminded of the many destructive things we humans do out of fear. In this piece, I wanted to weave together sounds that are evocative of a tree extending his roots into the earth, the birds who rest on his branches, the traumatic dismembering of Igor, and the fantasy of a supernatural force somehow allowing him to magically reassemble and fly up into the sky in order to find a new home.

The Overstory by Richard Powers was a book that Erica recommended I read to get into the mind-set of how trees exist on the planet, how they grow, and how they can communicate with each other. Early on in the book, a quote immediately grabbed my attention—about how a tree can “be a passage between earth and sky.” I cannot think of a better title for this piece.

My deep thanks to Michael Hostetler and Erica Pascal for commissioning this work for me to play with the Hausmann Quartet. I hope I have done your beloved tree justice.

Jessica Meyer

A Forest Unfolding

A Forest Unfolding is a collaborative work inspired by recent scientific research into the rich communication and subterranean connectivity between trees. Four writers—the environmentalists Bill McKibben and Joan Maloof, along with the novelists Richard Powers and Kim Stanley Robinson—selected prose passages and poems on the relations among people and trees. They presented these selections to four composers—Eric Moe, Melinda Wagner, Stephen Jaffe, and David Kirkland Garner—who set these words into a linked sequence of recitatives and arias. The resulting whole traces a narrative arc from human estrangement from nature to a glimpse of the endless cooperation that knits a forest together.

The composers themselves communicated and cooperated with one another throughout the process, sharing thoughts on the relations between the texts, exchanging material and musical ideas, and shaping the structure of the larger piece. Together they settled on a shared musical intertext, the final section of the last song in Gustav Mahler’s *Das Lied von der Erde*, to lend connective tissue to the whole. In this way, a collective process of many makers yielded a work in the cantata tradition about the need for human reintegration with the rest of the deeply collaborative living world.

A Forest Unfolding was conceived by Richard Powers, Laura Gilbert, and Jonathan Bagg. It was commissioned by Electric Earth Concerts for premieres on August 12, 2018 in Peterborough, New Hampshire, and August 18 at the Portland Chamber Music Festival in Maine.

Richard Powers

Re(new)al

I have tremendous respect for renewable energy initiatives and the commitment to creating a new, better reality for us all. *Re(new)al* is a percussion quartet concerto that is similarly devoted to finding unexpected ways to breathe new life into traditional ideas, and the solo quartet therefore performs on several “found” instruments, including crystal glasses and compressed air cans. And while the piece also features more traditional instruments, such as snare drum and vibraphone, I looked for ways to alter their sounds or for new ways to play them. For instance, a single snare drum is played by all four members of the quartet, and certain notes of the vibraphone are prepared with aluminum foil to recreate sounds found in electronic music. The entire piece was conceived this way, and it was a blast to discover all of these unique sounds with the members of Sandbox Percussion.

Cooperation and synergy are also core themes of the piece, as I believe we all have to work together to move forward. All of the music played by the solo quartet is composed of single musical ideas that are evenly distributed among the four soloists (for those interested, the fancy musical term for this is a *hocket*). The music would therefore be dysfunctional without the presence and dedication of all four members. For example, the quartet divvies up lightning-fast drum set beats in the second movement and later shares one glockenspiel in the last movement. But perhaps my favorite example of synergy in the piece is in the very opening, where the four soloist toast crystal glasses. We always toast glasses in the presence of others, and oftentimes to celebrate new beginnings. This is my simple way of celebrating everyone who is working together to create a cleaner, more efficient world.

Re(new)al is constructed of three continuous movements, each inspired by the transcendent power of hydro, wind, and solar energies. The hydro movement transforms tuned crystal glasses into ringing handbells, the second movement turns each member of the quartet into a blade of a dizzying wind turbine, and the closing movement evokes the brilliance of sunlight with metallic percussion instruments. This piece was commissioned for the 2017 American Music Festival by David Alan Miller and the Albany Symphony in partnership with GE Renewable Energy and is dedicated to Sandbox Percussion.

Viet Cuong



A Forest Unfolding

1. Native Trees

Text by W. S. Merwin

Neither my father nor my mother knew the names of
the trees
where I was born
what is that
I asked and my
father and mother did not
hear they did not look where I pointed surfaces of
furniture held
the attention of their fingers
and across the room they could watch walls they had
forgotten
where there were no questions
no voices and no shade
Were there trees
where they were children
where I had not been
I asked
were there trees in those places
where my father and my mother were born
and in that time did
my father and my mother see them
and when they said yes it meant
they did not remember
What were they I asked what were they
but both my father and my mother
said they never knew

“Native Trees” by W. S. Merwin, collected in *The Rain in the Trees*.
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Agency LLC.

2. From The Book of Job

Text from *The Book of Job*, translated
by Stephen Mitchell

Who is this whose ignorant words
smear my design with darkness?
Stand up now like a man;
I will question you: please, instruct me.

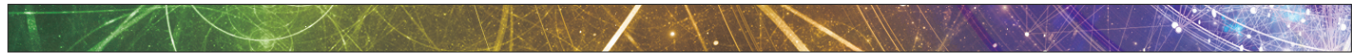
Where were you when I planned the earth?
Tell me, if you are so wise.
Do you know who took its dimensions,
measuring its length with a cord?
What were its pillars built on?
Who laid down its cornerstone,
while the morning stars burst out singing
and the angels shouted for joy!

Have you ever commanded morning
or guided dawn to its place—
to hold the corners of the sky
and shake off the last few stars?
All things are touched with color;
the whole world is changed.

Have you seen where the snow is stored
or visited the storehouse of hail,
which I keep for the day of terror,
the final hours of the world?
Where is the west wind released
and the east wind sent down to earth?

Who cuts a path for the thunderstorm
and carves a road for the rain—
to water the desolate wasteland,
the land where no man lives;
to make the wilderness blossom
and cover the desert with grass?

Copyright © 1987 by Stephen Mitchell. Used by permission
of Michael Katz, literary agent.



4. Woodswoman Etude

Text by Anne LaBastille

Sometimes at night when a problem has me turning and twisting in the silent sleeping loft, I get up, wake the dog, and glide onto the lake in my guideboat. Slipping over the star-strewn surface of Black Bear Lake, I'm gradually imbued with the ordered goodness of our earth.... This seeps into my soul as surely as sphagnum moss absorbs water....

True, some trees get blown over by storms; some stars burn out; some people encounter crippling misfortunes of health or finances. But the forest remains; the skies keep twinkling; and human beings keep striving. Drifting about under the night heavens, I think and hope that I can weather the storms which will blow my way.

And that these trials will give me depth and stature so that in old age I can be like my big white pines—dignified, lending beauty to the surroundings, and lifting their heads with strength and serenity to both sun and storms, snowflakes and swallows.

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5. Trees

Text by W. S. Merwin

I am looking at trees
they may be one of the things I will miss
most from the earth
though many of the ones I have seen
already I cannot remember
and though I seldom embrace the ones I see
and have never been able to speak
with one
I listen to them tenderly
their names have never touched them
they have stood round my sleep
and when it was forbidden to climb them
they have carried me in their branches

"Trees," collected in *The Moon Before Morning*. Copyright © 2014 W. S. Merwin, used by permission of the Wylie Agency LLC.

6. From Thoreau's Notebooks

Text by Henry David Thoreau

My heart leaps into my mouth at the sound of the wind in the woods....
Slate-colored snowbirds flit before me in the path, feeding on the seeds on the snow.
I love and could embrace the shrub oak rising above the snow, lowly whispering to me, akin to winter thoughts, and sunsets, and to all virtue. Covert which the hare and the partridge seek, and I too seek.

What cousin of mine is the shrub oak? How can any man suffer long?
For a sense of want is a prayer, and all prayers are answered.
Rigid as iron, clean as the atmosphere, hardy as virtue, innocent and sweet as a maiden is the shrub oak. In proportion as I know and love it, I am natural and sound as a partridge.
I felt a positive yearning toward one bush this afternoon.
There was a match found for me at last. I fell in love with a shrub oak.

7. In a Country Once Forested

Text by Wendell Berry

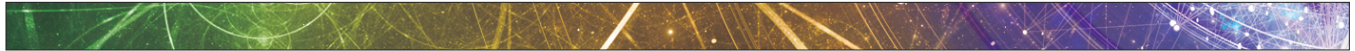
The young woodland remembers
the old, a dreamer dreaming

of an old holy book,
an old set of instructions,

and the soil under the grass
is dreaming of a young forest,

and under the pavement the soil
is dreaming of grass.

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9. *Eternal Song*

Text from *The Overstory*, by Richard Powers

Networked together underground by countless thousand miles of living threads, her trees feed and heal each other, keep their young and sick alive, pool their resources and metabolites. . . .

Her trees are far more social than anyone suspects. There are no individuals. There aren't even separate species. Everything in the forest is the forest. Trees fight no more than do the leaves on a single tree.

Nature isn't red in tooth and claw. If trees share their storehouses, then every drop of red must float on a sea of green.

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NOVUS NY



Trinity Church Wall Street's new music orchestra, NOVUS NY, is a key player on the contemporary music scene. These "expert and versatile musicians" (*The New Yorker*) perform new music from all corners of the repertoire, meeting "every challenge with an impressive combination of discipline and imagination" (*New York Classical Review*). The orchestra's Carnegie Hall debut, made with a formidable pairing of Ives and Ginastera, prompted *The New York Times* to declare that "adventure and ambition go hand in hand at Trinity Wall Street."

With the ensemble's annual appearances at the PROTOTYPE Festival, New York's premier celebration of contemporary opera, NOVUS NY and Trinity Church Wall Street have partnered in the development of several major new works. These include Emma O'Halloran's newest opera pairing *Trade* and *Mary Motorhead*; Du Yun's *Angel's Bone*, winner of the 2017 Pulitzer Prize for Music; and Missy Mazzoli and Royce Vavrek's *Breaking the Waves*, named "Best New Opera for 2016" by the Music Critics Association of North America.

NOVUS NY recorded and performed in the East Coast premiere of Ellen Reid and librettist Roxie Perkins's

prism, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 2019. Additional PROTOTYPE highlights include the ensemble's East Coast premiere of Ellen Reid's *Dreams of the New World* and the world premiere of David T. Little's revised version of *Am I Born*, which was recorded with NOVUS NY and The Choir of Trinity Wall Street.

NOVUS NY has forged strong links with many of today's leading composers, collaborating with Paola Prestini, Sarah Kirkland Snider, Daniel Felsenfeld, and Jonathan Newman on Trinity's "Mass Reimaginings" commissioning project, and giving world premiere performances of Laura Schwendinger's opera *Artemisia* and Paula Prestini's interdisciplinary *The Hubble Cantata*, which drew an open-air audience of thousands to Brooklyn's Prospect Park.

The ensemble's recent recordings include the GRAMMY®-nominated LUNA PEARL WOOLF: *Fire and Flood*, Paola Prestini's *The Hubble Cantata*, Du Yun's *Angel's Bone*, Trevor Weston *Choral Works*, *Elena Ruehr: Averno*, the new opera *Anna Christie* by Edward Thomas, Ellen Reid's *prism*, and Philip Glass's *Symphony No. 5*.

NOVUS NY

VIOLIN

Katie Hyun
Alex Fortes

VIOLA

Dana Kelley
Jessica Meyer

CELLO

Michael Nicolas

BASS

Nathaniel Chase

FLUTE

Melissa Baker

OBOE

Stuart Breczinski

CLARINET

Benjamin Fingland

BASSOON

Nanci Belmont

SOPRANO SAXOPHONE

Geoffrey Landman

BARITONE SAXOPHONE

Zach Herchen

TRUMPET

ChangHyun Cha

HORN

Liana Hoffman

TROMBONE

Julie Dombroski

PIANO

Erika Dohi

SOPRANO

Margaret Carpenter Haigh

BARITONE

Thomas Meglioranza

NARRATOR

Neil Netherly

SANDBOX PERCUSSION



Described as “exhilarating” (*The New York Times*) and “utterly mesmerizing” (*The Guardian*), GRAMMY®-nominated ensemble Sandbox Percussion is dedicated to artistry in contemporary chamber music. The ensemble was brought together in 2011 by a love of chamber music and the simple joy of playing together; today, Sandbox Percussion captivates worldwide audiences with visually and aurally stunning performances.

Sandbox Percussion’s 2021 album *Seven Pillars* was nominated for two GRAMMY® awards — Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance and Best Contemporary Classical Composition. The ensemble performed the piece more than 15 times throughout the United States and Europe last season, including at the Théâtre du Châtelet, in Paris.

In the 2023–24 season, Sandbox Percussion performs *Seven Pillars* at the VIVO Music Festival (Columbus, OH); the New School (New York); Aperio, Music of the Americas (Houston); the Frost School of Music (Miami); Brown University (Providence, RI); and the Peace Center (Greenville, SC), among other venues.

This season, Sandbox Percussion also releases its fourth album, *Wilderness*, featuring the piece of the same name by experimental composer Jerome Begin.

Other season highlights include two performances at the Park Avenue Armory (New York), featuring premieres by Chris Cerrone and Viet Cuong; a performance at the 92nd Street Y with pianist and new music champion Conor Hanick, featuring the New York premiere of two works composed for Sandbox Percussion by Christopher Cerrone and by Tyshawn Sorey; and an appearance at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Sandbox Percussion will also continue to champion Viet Cuong’s acclaimed concerto for percussion quartet, *Re(new)al*, including performances with the Des Moines Symphony and with the Albany Symphony, which commissioned the piece.

Besides maintaining an international performance schedule, Sandbox Percussion holds the position of ensemble-in-residence and percussion faculty at the University of Missouri–Kansas City and The New School’s College of Performing Arts. In 2016, Sandbox Percussion founded the Sandbox Percussion Seminar, introducing percussion students to the leading percussion chamber music of the day.

Sandbox Percussion endorses Pearl/Adams musical instruments, Zildjian cymbals, Vic Firth sticks and mallets, Remo drumheads, and Black Swamp accessories.

TRINITY CHURCH WALL STREET MUSIC STAFF

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Melissa Baker, *Director, Artistic Planning*

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Stephen Sands, *Downtown Voices Conductor*

Avi Stein, *Organist & Chorusmaster*

Brittany Thomas, *Artistic Administrative Assistant*

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