



The Department of Music presents  
*Fugitive Resonance: the Piano  
in the Early Twentieth Century*

Program I  
**Claude Debussy on the Blüthner piano**

BARNES HALL  
CORNELL UNIVERSITY  
Friday, January 25, 2019 – 8:00 PM

- from *Préludes, Book I* (1909-1910)  
...*Les collines d'Anacapri* ["The hills of Anacapri"]  
Joshua Sadinsky
- Ballade* (1890)  
Nina Knight
- from *Préludes, Book I*  
...*Voiles* ["Veils / Sails"]  
Sophia Roshal
- Images, Book II* (1907)  
*Cloches à travers les feuilles* ["Bells through the leaves"]  
*Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut* ["And the moon descends on the ruined temple"]  
*Poissons d'or* ["Goldfish"]  
Thomas Reeves
- Intermission*—
- Cinq poèmes de Charles Baudelaire* (1889)  
*Le Balcon*  
*Harmonie du soir*  
*Le jet d'eau*  
*Recueillement*  
*La mort des amants*  
Lucy Fitz Gibbon, soprano  
Roger Moseley, piano
- Nocturne* (1892)  
Jasper Liang
- L'Isle joyeuse* (1904)  
Michael Heyang

## Program notes

The sound of wind, even as it roars through trees in the valley and is forced up and over hills, can nevertheless be stilling. To stand atop a mountain, or even just tall hills, and be lapped in violently alternating currents of cool and warm wind is both serene and trepidatious. This is what I imagine Debussy's recurring visits to the **hills of Anacapri**, a small town on an island off the coast of Italy, sounded and felt like. In this prelude, we hear the contrast between still and turbulent, all the while basking in colors of sunlight, rhythm, ocean waves, and harmony. - Joshua Sadinsky

Unlike some of Debussy's later piano works, *Ballade*—also known as *Ballade slave*—retains many of the melodic and harmonic qualities of Late Romanticism. The main melody is quite lyrical; it weaves throughout the piece in an almost obsessive way, surfacing each time above a new accompaniment. In these moments of change, the atmosphere shifts like a translucent curtain moving with the wind—revealing a clear image in one moment and hiding it in the next. This juxtaposition—real vs. unreal, memories vs. present experience—is what inspires my interpretation of the piece. - Nina Knight

*Voiles*, which features an unconventional use of only two harmonies, begins with a whole tone scale - a scale which is not centered around any particular note. Yet the resulting sound is not static, as Debussy opts to use texture rather than harmony to create movement. The initial motif without accompaniment slowly becomes an intricate medley of voices. This transitions to a short interlude whose use of a new scale, the pentatonic scale, creates a much more open sound. The glissandi-like scales of the interlude remain to embellish the return of one of the original voices but also eventually fade, leaving the one voice of the beginning to conclude the piece. - Sophia Roshal

*Images*, Book II of 1907 shares its compositional gestation with *Images*, Book I (1901-5) and *Images pour orchestre* (1905-12). The frequency of "images" in Debussy's output speaks to his special ability to paint a natural scene in music through imaginative tone colors and harmonic stillness. In *Cloches à travers les feuilles* ("Bells through the leaves"), sustained tones and melodies sound through an undulating surface. Debussy exploits the natural resonance of the piano throughout.

The next two pieces display Asian influences, often traced to Debussy's encounter with the Indonesian gamelan at the World's Fair in Paris in 1889. *Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut* ("And the moon descends on the temple that was") begins with an open sonority based on fifths - timeless, yet also part of a new context. The Asian influence might be in the choice of imagery and the remarkable sense of stasis, as well as the texture of the gamelan in certain sections. *Poissons d'or* ("Goldfish") refers to a motif in East Asian lacquerware. The playfully ornamented pentatonic scales help make this piece the most whimsical of the set. - Thomas Reeves

In 1861, **Charles Baudelaire** was transported by Richard Wagner's *Tannhäuser* at the Paris Opéra. The experience left him at an uncharacteristic (albeit eloquently expressed) loss for words: "The shades of meaning in a dictionary would not suffice to express this *constantly renewed increase in heat and whiteness*. Then I conceived plain the idea of a soul in a luminous medium, of an ecstasy *formed out of sensuality and consciousness*, and hovering far above the natural world." As Stephen Walsh points out, "La mort des amants," published in Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal* (1857), "is an uncanny pre-echo of the as yet unwritten *Liebestod* in *Tristan und Isolde*." For Baudelaire, Wagner's music fully realized states of feeling and being that the poet had been able only to invoke through the medium of the alphabet.

When the twenty-five-year-old Debussy encountered "La mort des amants," the notion of setting it to music was thus heavily freighted with significance, opportunity, and danger. Having fallen under the spell of *Tristan*, like so many of his contemporaries and compatriots, Debussy could hardly ignore Wagner. But he felt the acute need to establish his own compositional voice, and moreover to formulate

a response to the German that went beyond the *wagnérisme* of acolytes such as Vincent d'Indy. By immersing himself in Baudelaire's verse, Debussy was drawing close to Wagner's spirit while continuing to explore the declamatory, sensual, and spiritual potential of *mélodie*, a voyage that would ultimately result in the composition of his only opera, *Pelléas et Mélisande*.

Having set "La mort des amants," which responds to Baudelaire's effusions tenderly if somewhat clumsily, Debussy eventually arranged four other poems from *Les Fleurs du mal* in a sequence that outlines the progress of a love affair, from the ardor of initial infatuation to the ceremonial enshrining of its dying embers. This formed a large canvas, posing the challenge of devising a suitable musical structure while respecting that of the poetry, which is tautly conceived in spite of its extravagant imagery. In order to acknowledge Baudelaire's strategic repetition of themes and images that are nonetheless in constant flux, Debussy adapted the Wagnerian technique of leitmotif: small melodic and rhythmic mottos recur throughout "Le balcon," but they are constantly refracted by churning harmonic motion.

These techniques are refined in "Harmonie du soir." The poem adapts the Malay tradition of the *pantun*, also known as the pantoum, in which interlocking lines are repeated from stanza to stanza. The same images thus accrue new meanings as they are restated and recontextualized, and Debussy found ingenious ways of echoing and intensifying this effect, which is particularly striking when Baudelaire draws on the musical imagery of a "melancholy waltz" and a quivering violin.

"Le jet d'eau" supplements Wagnerian chromaticism with the deployment of whole tones in a manner that would become synonymous with its composer. Here, again, Debussy respects Baudelaire's textual patterning, this time creating a threefold refrain that is at once the same and different each time it returns. As befits the languorous imagery of the poem, Debussy luxuriates in sonorities for their own sake, prolonging what would normally be passed over and expanding the established limits of consonance.

If "Recueillement" invokes Wagner most directly—going so far as to cite the infamous *Tristan* chord—it also performs something akin to an exorcism. As in "Le jet d'eau," nominally dissonant harmonies are normalized by dint of sheer repetition, although in this case the mood is agitated and uneasy. But the song ends with a time-honored litany of triads that emerge from the harmonic haze, carefully voiced in accordance with the harmonic series, evincing a sensibility that is very much Debussy's own.

Taken as a whole, the *Cinq poèmes de Baudelaire* are wonderfully subtle in mood and rich in nuance. Perhaps both despite and owing to their veiled beauties, they failed to find a large audience when first published, and it must be admitted that their dynamic and emotive range is somewhat narrow: Debussy's vocal writing is often low while the piano must render quasi-orchestral textures at a maximum of *mezzo piano*. Perhaps this reflects the circumstances under which the songs came into being, which seem to have reflected Debussy's internal state rather than his concern for a broader public. The artist Jacques-Émile Blanche opined that "one had to have seen [Debussy at the piano] to appreciate its magic. No words could describe the mysterious enchantment of his playing, or of his way of humming while he recited his settings of poetry." He was said by Marguerite Long to have played "mostly in half-tint," "floating over the keys with a curiously penetrating gentleness." For Émile Vuillermoz, this sensitivity mitigated the shock of Debussy's harmonic innovations: "I have never heard more supple, elegant or velvety playing. He obtained sonorities from the piano which softened the angles and asperities generated by his forward-looking inspiration."

While we cannot recreate the historical moment and cultural environment in which Debussy's music induced the *frisson* of the new, we hope that our aliquot-strung Blüthner might convey the merest trace of the pianistic qualities that were so treasured by his contemporaries. And so we invite you to join us on an intimate voyage through the landscapes conjured by these unfamiliar yet fascinating songs.

- Roger Moseley

*Nocturne* was composed by Debussy in 1892 and being one of his earlier works, it does not fully explore the Impressionist style that is found in his later piano compositions. Still, it contains rich harmonies that clearly mark his style and perhaps evoke hints of Liszt and Fauré. The piece opens mysteriously with a delicate main theme and then goes through lighthearted and romantic sections, eventually returning to its opening theme, more impactful and passionate this time. *Nocturne* is one of Debussy's lesser known works, yet contains a surprising amount of brightness in its romantic outpourings.

- Jasper Liang

Aptly titled, *Debussy's L'Isle joyeuse* brings listeners to an island of aural delight. Throughout the piece, various musical elements mimic the experience of such travels. The cadenza-like opening, with its extended trills and chromatic gestures, creates an aura of suspense and intrigue, much like an island shrouded in mist. Later, in the *ondoyant et expressif* section, the gentle rolling of waves can be clearly heard in the undulating pattern of the left hand, while the right sings a rich and sweeping melody, not unlike a warm, seaside breeze. These motifs, along with numerous others, are woven together into a rousing and frenzied finale – the perfect postcard to send home!

- Michael Heyang

### *Cinq poèmes de Baudelaire*

Text & Translations

from *Les Fleurs du Mal* by Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867)

#### I. Le balcon

Mère des souvenirs, maîtresse des maîtresses,  
Ô toi, tous mes plaisirs! ô toi, tous mes devoirs!  
Tu te rappelleras la beauté des caresses,  
La douceur du foyer et le charme des soirs,  
Mère des souvenirs, maîtresse des maîtresses!

Les soirs illuminés par l'ardeur du charbon,  
Et les soirs au balcon, voilés de vapeur rose.  
Que ton sein m'était doux ! que ton cœur m'était bon!  
Nous avons dit souvent d'impérissables choses  
Les soirs illuminés par l'ardeur du charbon.  
Que les soleils sont beaux par les chaudes soirées!

Que l'espace est profond! que le cœur est puissant!  
En me penchant vers toi, reine des adorées,  
Je croyais respirer le parfum de ton sang.  
Que les soleils sont beaux par les chaudes soirées!

La nuit s'épaississait ainsi qu'une cloison,  
Et mes yeux dans le noir devinaient tes prunelles,  
Et je buvais ton souffle, ô douceur! ô poison!  
Et tes pieds s'endormaient dans mes mains fraternelles.

La nuit s'épaississait ainsi qu'une cloison.  
Je sais l'art d'évoquer les minutes heureuses,  
Et revis mon passé blotti dans tes genoux.  
Car à quoi bon chercher tes beautés langoureuses  
Ailleurs qu'en ton cher corps et qu'en ton cœur si doux?

Je sais l'art d'évoquer les minutes heureuses!  
Ces serments, ces parfums, ces baisers infinis,  
Renaîtront-ils d'un gouffre interdit à nos sondes,  
Comme montent au ciel les soleils rajeunis  
Après s'être lavés au fond des mers profondes?  
— Ô serments! ô parfums! ô baisers infinis!

#### I. The Balcony

Mother of memories, mistress of mistresses  
Oh you, all my pleasures! Oh you, all my obligations!  
You remember the beauty of caresses,  
The sweetness of home and the charm of evenings,  
Mother of memories, mistress of mistresses.

The nights illuminated by the ardor of coal,  
And the nights on the balcony, veiled with a rosy vapor.  
How dear was your breast to me! How good your heart!  
We had often said enduring things  
The nights illuminated by the ardor of coal.  
How suns are beautified by warm evenings!

How vast is space! How powerful the heart!  
In inclining towards you, queen of the adored,  
I believed I breathed in the perfume of your blood.  
How suns are beautified by warm evenings!

The night thickened like a partition,  
And my eyes in the blackness divined your pupils,  
And I drank your breath. Oh sweetness, oh poison!  
And your feet slept in my brotherly hands.

The night thickened like a partition.  
I know the art of evoking happy moments,  
And relive my past nestled amid your knees.  
Because to what end should I search for your languorous  
Beauty except in your dear body and in your heart so sweet?

I know the art of evoking happy moments!  
These promises, these perfumes, these infinite kisses,  
Are they reborn from an abyss impossible to plumb,  
As rejuvenated suns climb to heaven  
After washing themselves in the deepest depths of the seas?  
— Oh promises! Oh perfumes! Oh infinite kisses!

## II. Harmonie du soir

Voici venir les temps où vibrant sur sa tige  
Chaque fleur s'évapore ainsi qu'un encensoir;  
Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir;  
Valse mélancolique et langoureux vertige!

Chaque fleur s'évapore ainsi qu'un encensoir;  
Le violon frémit comme un cœur qu'on afflige;  
Valse mélancolique et langoureux vertige!  
Le ciel est triste et beau comme un grand reposoir.

Le violon frémit comme un cœur qu'on afflige,  
Un cœur tendre, qui hait le néant vaste et noir!  
Le ciel est triste et beau comme un grand reposoir;  
Le soleil s'est noyé dans son sang qui se fige.

Un cœur tendre, qui hait le néant vaste et noir,  
Du passé lumineux recueille tout vestige!  
Le soleil s'est noyé dans son sang qui se fige...  
Ton souvenir en moi luit comme un ostensor!

## III. Le jet d'eau

Tes beaux yeux sont las, pauvre amante!  
Reste longtemps, sans les rouvrir,  
Dans cette pose nonchalante  
Où t'a surprise le plaisir.  
Dans la cour le jet d'eau qui jase  
Et ne se tait ni nuit ni jour,  
Entretient doucement l'extase  
Où ce soir m'a plongé l'amour.

La gerbe d'eau qui berce  
Ses mille fleurs,  
Que la lune traverse  
De ses pâleurs,  
Tombe comme une averse  
De larges pleurs.

Ainsi ton âme qu'incendie  
L'éclair brûlant des voluptés  
S'élançait, rapide et hardie,  
Vers les vastes cieux enchantés.  
Puis, elle s'épanche, mourante,  
En un flot de triste langueur,  
Qui par une invisible pente  
Descend jusqu'au fond de mon cœur.

Ô toi, que la nuit rend si belle,  
Qu'il m'est doux, penché vers tes seins,  
D'écouter la plainte éternelle  
Qui sanglote dans les bassins!  
Lune, eau sonore, nuit bénie,  
Arbres qui frissonnez autour,  
Votre pure mélancolie  
Est le miroir de mon amour.

## II. Harmony of Evening

The season arrives when, vibrating on its stalk,  
Each flower dissipates itself like a censer,  
The sounds and the perfumes rotate in the air of evening  
Melancholy waltz and languorous vertigo!

Each flower dissipates itself, like a censer;  
The violin shivers like a heart in torment;  
Melancholy waltz and languorous vertigo!  
The sky is sad and beautiful, like a great mortuary.

The violin shivers like a heart in torment,  
A tender heart, which hates the vast, black void!  
The sky is sad and beautiful, like a great mortuary;  
The sun is drowned in its clotting blood.

A tender heart, which hates the vast, black void,  
Gather all vestiges of the luminous past!  
The sun is drowned in its clotting blood...  
In me, your memory glows like a monst'rance!

## III. The Fountain

Your beautiful eyes are empty, poor lover!  
Remain for a long time, without opening them,  
In this nonchalant pose  
Where pleasure has surprised you.  
And in the courtyard, the fountain which babbles  
And is never silent, night and day,  
Sweetly maintains ecstasy  
Where this evening has plunged me into love.

The spray of water which beguiles  
Its thousand flowers,  
Which the moon traverses  
With its paleness,  
Falls like a shower  
Of giant tears.

Thus your soul, which kindles  
With the burning light of pleasure  
Is launched, rapidly and swiftly  
Across the vast, enchanted skies.  
Then, it overflows, dying  
In a flood of sad languor,  
Which by an invisible slope  
Descends unto the depths of my heart.

Oh you, who the night renders so beautiful,  
Who is so sweet, as I incline myself towards your breasts  
To listen to the eternal cry  
Which sobs in these pools!  
Moon, sonorous water, blessed night,  
Trees which tremble around us,  
Your pure melancholy  
Is the mirror of my love.

#### IV. Recueillement

Sois sage, ô ma Douleur, et tiens-toi plus tranquille;  
Tu réclamaï le Soir: il descend, le voici:  
Une atmosphère obscure enveloppe la ville,  
Aux uns portant la paix, aux autres le souci.

Pendant que des mortels la multitude vile,  
Sous le fouet du Plaisir, ce bourreau sans merci,  
Va cueillir des remords dans la fête servile,  
Ma Douleur, donne-moi la main; viens par ici,

Loin d'eux. Vois se pencher les défunes Années,  
Sur les balcons du ciel, en robes surannées.  
Surgir du fond des eaux le Regret souriant;

Le Soleil moribond s'endormir sous une arche;  
Et, comme un long linceul traînant à l'Orient,  
Entends, ma chère, entends la douce Nuit qui marche.

#### V. La mort des amants

Nous aurons des lits pleins d'odeurs légères,  
Des divans profonds comme des tombeaux,  
Et d'étranges fleurs sur des étagères,  
Éclores pour nous sous des cieux plus beaux.

Usant à l'envi leurs chaleurs dernières,  
Nos deux cœurs seront deux vastes flambeaux,  
Qui réfléchiront leurs doubles lumières  
Dans nos deux esprits, ces miroirs jumeaux.

Un soir fait de rose et de bleu mystique,  
Nous échangerons un éclair unique,  
Comme un long sanglot tout chargé d'adieux ;

Et plus tard un ange, entr'ouvrant les portes,  
Viendra ranimer, fidèle et joyeux,  
Les miroirs ternis et les flammes mortes.

#### IV. Recollection

Be wise, oh my Sadness, and remain calm;  
You cried out for Evening: it descends, behold:  
A gloomy atmosphere envelops the city,  
To some bringing peace, to others worry.

While the vile multitude of mortals  
Under the lash of Pleasure, that merciless hangman,  
Go to collect remorse in this servile celebration,  
My Sadness, give me your hand; come this way,

Far from them. See the long-dead years stretch out  
On the balconies of heaven, in outmoded dress.  
Smiling Regret emerges from the depths of the water;

The dying Sun goes to sleep beneath an archway;  
And, like a long shroud trailing to the Orient,  
Listen, my beloved, hear gentle Night, who approaches.

#### V. The Death of the Lovers

We will have beds full of delicate odors,  
Deep couches, like tombs,  
And strange flowers on ledges,  
Blooming for us under the most beautiful skies.

Exhausting forever their last warmth,  
Our two hearts will be two vast flames,  
Which will reflect their double lights  
In our two souls, these twin mirrors.

One evening, made of rose and mystic blue,  
We will exchange a single flash of lightning,  
Like a long sob fully laden with goodbyes;

And later an angel, opening the gates,  
Will come to reanimate, faithful and joyous,  
The tarnished mirrors and the dead flames.

- Translations by Lucy Fitz Gibbon

Some of our *Fugitive Resonance* student performers participated in masterclasses with Mike and Wayne Lee earlier this week:

[Barnes Hall]

**Wednesday, January 23rd, 5-6:30 p.m.**

Webern, Op. 7 - Sarah Lim and Cathy Lu, on violin and piano

Webern, Op. 11 - Theo Lee-Gannon and Thomas Reeves, on cello and piano

**Thursday, January 24th, 7-9 p.m.**

Berg Sonata - Andy Sheng

*Ondine* from Ravel's *Gaspard de la Nuit* - Aditya Deshpande

Debussy *Ballade* - Nina Knight

Debussy *Voiles* - Sophia Roshal



The Department of Music presents

*Fugitive Resonance*, Program II

***Debussy the Romantic Pianist:***  
an interpretation according to the 1912 piano rolls

***Jocelyn Ho*, UCLA**

BARNES HALL

CORNELL UNIVERSITY

Saturday, January 26, 2019 – 11:00 AM

Claude Debussy (1862–1918) is often regarded as a post-Romantic composer who moved away from Romantic idioms. Yet, the 19th-century piano tradition of Franz Liszt and Frédéric Chopin was very much part of Debussy's milieu. While Debussy's compositional style was certainly radical, was this true of his pianism?

Written texts about Debussy's performances and his supposed preferences are often inadequate or even contradictory. In the first half of the lecture-recital, I turn to Debussy's own playing in his 1912 piano rolls to paint a fuller picture of his pianistic style. Four categories will be used for the rolls' analysis: dislocation between hands, unnotated arpeggiation of chords, metrical rubato and rhythmic alteration, and tempo modification. I will compare his playing to other turn-of-the-20th-century pianists in terms of manner of execution and effect.

The piano rolls reveal that Debussy firmly upheld late-19th-century performing traditions. His performing practices significantly impact musical meaning, which at times is surprisingly different to that implied by the score. The ways in which Debussy deviated from the notation varied drastically according to the works' affect and mood. In particular, works that allude to humorous characters, those that are brisk and capricious, and those that pertain to exoticism each have their own peculiar playing style. These insights from the piano rolls serve as a basis for an interpretation of contrasting works from *Préludes*, book II in the second half of the lecture-recital.

An interpretation based on the piano rolls repositions Debussy's playing as a continuation of, rather than a severing from, 19th-century pianism. It challenges the current narrow scope of Debussyian pianistic practice as necessarily restrained and subtle, expanding it to include an unexpectedly rich array of expressions that are missing from the notation.



The Department of Music presents  
*Fugitive Resonance*, Program III  
**Wayne Lee, violin**  
**Mike Lee, piano**

BARNES HALL  
CORNELL UNIVERSITY  
Saturday, January 26, 2019 – 8:00 PM

*Four Pieces for violin and piano*, Op. 7 (1910)

Anton Webern  
(1883-1945)

Sehr langsam  
Rasch  
Sehr langsam  
Bewegt

*Variations for piano*, Op. 27 (1935-36)

Webern

Sehr mäßig  
Sehr schnell  
Ruhig fließend

*Phantasy for Violin with piano accompaniment*, Op. 47 (1949)

Arnold Schoenberg  
(1874-1951)

—Pause—

From *Préludes*, Book I (1909-10)

Claude Debussy  
(1862-1918)

VI. *Des pas sur la neige*  
XI. *La danse de Puck*  
XII. *Minstrels*

*Sonata for Violin and Piano* (1916-17)

Debussy

Allegro vivo  
Intermède: *Fantasque et léger*  
Finale: *Très animé*





The Department of Music presents

*Fugitive Resonance*, Program IV

**Schoenberg's Verein:  
Vienna at the start of the Twentieth Century**

BARNES HALL  
CORNELL UNIVERSITY  
Sunday, January 27, 2019 – 3:00 PM

*Fantasies on Poems of Richard Dehmel*, Op. 9 (1900)

*Stimme des Abends*  
*Waldseligkeit*  
*Liebe*  
*Käferlied*

Alexander Zemlinsky  
(1871-1942)

Xak Bjerken

*Deux Poèmes*, Op. 32 (1903)

*Andante cantabile*  
*Allegro. Con eleganza. Con fiducia.*

Alexander Scriabin  
(1871-1915)

Richard Valitutto

*Four Pieces for Violin and Piano*, Op. 7 (1910)

*Sehr Langsam*  
*Rasch*  
*Sehr Langsam*  
*Bewegt*

Anton Webern  
(1883-1945)

Sarah Lim, violin  
Cathy Lu, piano

*Piano Sonata*, Op. 1 (1908-1909)

Alban Berg  
(1885-1935)

Andy Sheng

*Three Little Pieces*, Op. 11 (1914)

*Mässige Achtel*  
*Sehr Bewegt*  
*Äusserst Ruhig*

Webern

Theo Lee-Gannon, cello  
Thomas Reeves, piano

*Gaspard de la Nuit* (1908)

*Ondine*  
*Le Gibet*  
*Scarbo*

Maurice Ravel  
(1875-1935)

Aditya Deshpande

## Program notes

Between 1918 and 1921, **Arnold Schoenberg** established and directed the *Verein für musikalische Privataufführungen in Wien*, or Viennese Society for Private Musical Performances. The Society presented a widely eclectic group of works almost weekly, including some of the seminal works of the twentieth century. In the wake of World War I, and in response to the scandals that simultaneously marred and defined the reception of Schoenberg's works, the composer, along with his students and friends, created an alternative context for musical performance that shielded avant-garde composers from the attacks of traditionally oriented Viennese critics and concert-goers. This community included many of the leading artists of the day, and they were unusually supportive of each other in promoting the activities and goals of the *Verein*. In many ways, the concert programs presented there are source documents of what has ever since been known as "new music"; to explore them today is to excavate the roots of modernism.

Schoenberg's idea of forming a society dedicated to new music can be traced back to 1904, when he—alongside his counterpoint teacher **Alexander Zemlinsky** and under the sympathetic (if somewhat bemused) oversight of honorary president Gustav Mahler—established the *Vereinigung der schaffenden Tonkünstler*, or Society of Creative Musicians. In its manifesto, Schoenberg not only called for more performances of contemporary music, but also insisted that their quality must be of the highest standard if the music was to be properly understood: "Numerous, repeated performances of the first order are needed. . . . Such performances need the kind of preparation that is exceptionally exacting and completely in compliance with the composer's intent." Schoenberg was at pains to deny any partisan tendencies, claiming that "in the choice of scores to be performed, no specific school or stylistic genre will be given preference." As it turned out, the *Vereinigung* mounted only five concerts, but the seeds of the *Verein für musikalische Privataufführungen in Wien* had been sown.

The manifesto drafted by Schoenberg's pupil **Alban Berg** and belatedly issued during the third season of the *Verein* in 1921 made clear where its focus lay. Through meticulous rehearsal, the *Verein* would achieve "the very best performances at the very place where most of the good music was written—in Vienna. We shall reach this goal and the world will become cognizant of it." But despite this commitment to Vienna's musical legacy, the *Verein* introduced new principles and rules that reflected Schoenberg's rejection of the musical etiquette that characterized traditional Viennese concert life. Non-members of the *Verein* were barred from attending its concerts, and reviews and publicity were expressly forbidden; moreover, all "expressions of approval, of displeasure, and of gratitude" were impermissible. The question of whether the audience "liked" the music was subordinated to the degree to which the composer's intention could be crystallized, a process in which the listener had to play an active and self-effacing role. In Schoenberg's words, "an artistic impression is substantially the resultant of two components. One what the work of art gives the onlooker—the other, what he is capable of giving to the work of art."

For much of the twentieth century, Schoenberg's Second Viennese School was considered the leading compositional school of modernism, but the musical influences from which it sprang are far more diverse than its legacy and reputation might imply. Schoenberg was keenly interested in music written in vastly differing harmonic, stylistic, and nationalistic languages from his own; he went so far as to withhold his own compositions from being performed during the Society's first year. In this sense, the Society brought Viennese musicians and interested concert-goers up to date with new music written elsewhere in war-torn Europe. The Society's very first concert, for example, featured works by two foreign composers, Claude Debussy and **Alexander Scriabin**, as well as a performance of Mahler's Seventh Symphony (arranged for piano duet!). **Maurice Ravel** visited the *Verein* in 1920: in the spirit of post-war reconciliation, a three-hour concert was staged in his honor.

As for the performers, they were called upon to dedicate their talents to the service of the work, rather than vice versa: virtuosity for its own sake was abjured, and a nominated *Vortragsmeister*, or coach, supervised the detailed preparations for each concert. Schoenberg and his most famous pupils, Berg and **Anton Webern**, initially assumed this role; they were followed by trusted performers such as the pianist Eduard Steuermann (who performed **Ravel's *Gaspard de la nuit*** at the concert in 1920) and the nine-fingered violinist Rudolf Kolisch. Webern in particular was greatly enamored with the function of the *Vortragsmeister*, which he deemed "unlimited in purity, clarity, and self-denial," going so far as to suggest that the relationship between *Vortragsmeister* and performance ensembles be taken as a model for the *modus operandi* of the nascent League of Nations.

The activities of the *Verein* constructed a paradoxical relationship between composers, performers, and audience, many of whose roles overlapped. The involvement of Webern and the other *Vortragsmeister* was predicated on the conviction that the higher the standard of performance, the more easily the audience would accept the music; and yet the degree of the audience's comprehension was rendered indecipherable by Schoenberg's injunction against feedback of any kind. Thus the whole endeavor resembled an act of faith: the composers' painstakingly crafted messages were conscientiously bottled only to be cast into inscrutable waters.

Schoenberg hardly mellowed with age. As late as 1946, he summed up his disdain for the judgment of the musical public with a notorious aphorism: "If it is art, it is not for all, and if it is for all, it is not art." His uncompromising brand of modernism might still sit uneasily with today's audiences, but the type of musical engagement advocated by the *Verein* can be understood as an appeal to open-mindedness and a warning against the rush to judgment. In ways that both followed and diverged from Schoenberg's example, the influence of the *Verein* resonated throughout US concert life over the second half of the twentieth century. The experience of playing, hearing, and contemplating this music in twenty-first-century Ithaca might thus be approached in the spirit of Schoenberg's *Verein* even as it departs from the letter of the laws that he established.

- Xak Bjerken and Roger Moseley

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## Festival Participants

~ in order of appearance ~

**Joshua Sadinsky** - College of Arts and Sciences 2019 in Music, German, and Sound Studies

**Nina Knight** - College of Arts and Sciences 2020 in Music and Biology

**Sophia Roshal** - College of Arts and Sciences 2022 in Computer Science

**Thomas Reeves** - Ph.D. program in the Center for Applied Math

**Lucy Fitz Gibbon** - A graduate of Yale University, Lucy also holds an artist diploma from The Glenn Gould School of the Royal Conservatory (Toronto) and a master's degree from Bard College Conservatory's Vocal Arts Program. Her projects range from song to opera and beyond, with repertoire encompassing the Renaissance to the present. Lucy is a Visiting Lecturer at Cornell.

**Roger Moseley** - Associate Professor of Music at Cornell University, and director of the new Cornell Center for Historical Keyboards.

**Jasper Liang** - College of Arts and Sciences 2022 in Computer Science

**Michael Heyang** - College of Engineering 2019 in Biological Engineering

**Jocelyn Ho** - Internationally-acclaimed pianist, historical keyboardist, artistic director, composer, and music scholar, whose concert programs have taken her to both traditional and unconventional performance spaces around the world. Jocelyn Ho has published and presented in the area of performance analysis, embodiment theory, Debussy studies, and mathematics and music. She received her DMA from Stony Brook University, where her teachers include Gilbert Kalish (piano) and Arthur Haas (historical keyboards). Jocelyn is Assistant Professor of Performance Studies at UCLA.

**Wayne Lee** - Member of the Formosa Quartet and Manhattan Piano Trio, and co-artistic director of the Piedmont Chamber Music Festival in the Bay Area. Wayne is a graduate of the Juilliard School, from which he holds both bachelor's and master's degrees, and serves as Lecturer of Violin at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

**Mike Lee** - Lecturer at the Australian National University School of Music, and Director of the ANU Keyboard Institute – the largest collection of historical pianos in the southern hemisphere. Mike holds a Ph.D. in musicology from Cornell, where he won the Donald J. Grout Memorial Dissertation Prize. His teachers have included Malcolm Bilson, Boris Berman, and James Webster.

**Xak Bjerken** - Professor of Music at Cornell University and co-director of Mayfest.

**Richard Valitutto** - D.M.A. program in Keyboard Studies, with a focus on contemporary keyboard performance – including repertoire for organ and harpsichord – and exploring the extended palette of piano techniques.

**Sarah Lim** - Ph.D. program in Marketing, at the Johnson School of Management

**Cathy Lu** - Ph.D. program in Management & Organizations, at the Johnson School

**Andy Sheng** - College of Arts and Sciences 2020 in Physics and Mathematics

**Theo Lee-Gannon** - College of Human Ecology 2020 in Human Biology, Health and Society

**Aditya Deshpande** - College of Arts and Sciences 2022 in Computer Science

*Special thanks to James and Margaret Webster.*

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