

NEW MUSIC FOR, ABOUT, AND WITH STRING QUARTET

Friday, November 12, 2021, 7:30 p.m. EST
Tenri Cultural Institute
43 A West 13th Street, New York

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ueVtWfUSPD0>

PROGRAM

Longfei Li *Eclipse* (2021)
Ya-Lan Chan *Sand aSH* (2021)
Sunbin Kim *Station (palimpsest)* (2021)

Intermission

Yu-Chun Chien *Duo* (2021, partial premiere)
Turkar Gasimzada String Quartet 1: *stillness between two waves of the sea* (2021)
Reiko Fütting *Chorale ("those driven out will come")* (2021)

QUARTET121:

Julia Jung Un Suh, Molly Germer, violins
Lena Vidulich, viola
Thea Mesirow, cello

Quartet121 is **Julia Jung Un Suh** (violin), **Molly Germer** (violin), **Lena Vidulich** (viola), and **Thea Mesirov** (cello). Described as “a magnet for world premieres” (New York Music Daily), Quartet121 is passionate about working with emerging composers, promoting equity, and expanding its stylistic range to reach wider audiences. They have performed at venues throughout NYC such as Tenri Cultural Institute, Manhattan School of Music, Central Park Summerstage, and Brooklyn Steel, among others. Recently, they visited Columbia University and Manhattan School of Music to workshop music with young composers, and traveled to Alberta, Canada as part of the Banff Centre’s Evolution of the String Quartet summer festival. In 2020 they held their first Call for Scores and received submissions from countries around the world. The three pieces chosen as winners were recorded and released as an EP with accompanying video in summer ‘21. Quartet121 is supported by the Alice M. Ditson Fund and Chamber Music America’s Ensemble Forward Grant. As part of New Music on the Point’s alumni grant program, they were selected to curate a concert in NYC in spring ‘22.

www.quartet121.com

Longfei Li

Eclipse (2021)

NYC-based composer **Longfei Li** is originally from China. His music has been performed worldwide in North America, Asia, and Europe. He has worked with influential ensembles such as longleash, Yarn/Wire, and loadbang. Li is searching for a way to create a better connection between mechanism and organism in his music. Noticeable works include new media chamber opera *Simulacrum*, *Catalyz* for orchestra, *Aurora* for piano trio, and *Passacaglia* for one percussionist and electronics. In 2016, his piano and electronic piece Ripples has won Samadis’ Records & International Composition Competition, and his Legacy Quartet has won the Manhattan Prize in the same year. In 2020, his Noisses. for one cellist won the first prize of the International Composition Competition by Academia Musica Wien. He also attended many new music festivals such as the 2017 Loretto Project, the 2018 HighScore festival, the 2020 St. Petersburg International New Music Festival “reMusik.org”, the 2020 Vienna Summer Music Festival, and the 2021 Yarn/Wire International Institute. As the co-founder and the artistic director of Path New Music, he is organizing opera productions that combines contemporary music, new media arts, and dance.

Longfei Li is currently pursuing his Doctor of Musical Arts degree at Manhattan School of Music with Dr. Reiko Fütting. He is also teaching musicianship and theory at MSM.

www.longfeili.com

Program Note:

“Look again at that dot. That's here. That's home. That's us. On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives. The aggregate of our joy and suffering, thousands of confident religions, ideologies, and economic doctrines, every hunter and forager, every hero and coward, every creator and destroyer of civilization, every king and peasant, every young couple in love, every mother and father, hopeful child, inventor and explorer, every teacher of morals, every corrupt politician, every "superstar," every "supreme leader," every saint and sinner in the history of our species lived there--on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam.” — Carl Sagan, *Pale Blue Dot*, 1994

Ya-Lan Chan

Sand aSH (2021)

Born in Taichung, Taiwan, **Ya-Lan Chan** is currently based in New York, pursuing her doctoral study in composition with Dr. Reiko Fütting. She holds a bachelor's degree from Taipei National University of the arts and a master's degree from Manhattan School of Music. She has actively participated in many new music festivals and workshops, such as Etchings festival, Darmstadt music festival, Yarn/Wire institute, and Unheard-of CCI. Ya-Lan is interested in the creative process of music-making, especially to explore the relationship between technology and humans and how these two shaped each other during the time. She also collaborated with various artistic mediums and had done so with animation, poetry, dancing, and lighting design. Her next project is a multimedia piece exploring scent and memory, in collaboration with cellist Issei Herr.

Program Note:

Sand aSH was composed during the summer of 2021 when excessive heat struck all over the world. This phenomenon reminded me of entropy, a scientific measurement for the level of chaos. The limitation of our ability only allows us to perceive time moving forward based on the changes in the environment. As entropy increase when time moves forward, the universe is constantly moving from organized to unorganized. This piece reflects the process of entropy, desertification, and the unpredictability of the wind and what it brings; the endless possibilities of shapes made by sand. All will return to the land and eventually die.

<https://yalanchan.wixsite.com/mysite>

Sunbin Kim

Station (palimpsest) (2021)

Sunbin Kim is a Korean-born composer based in New York. Sunbin Kim's compositions have been performed in concerts and festivals such as the Aspen Summer Music Festival and School, the Zodiac Music Festival (France) Charlotte New Music Festival, BUTI Tanglewood Summer Music Festival, the Uzmah/Upbeat International Summer Music Festival (Croatia), and Copland House CULTIVATE. An accomplished pianist, Sunbin performed his own "Fantasy Concerto" with the American Symphony Orchestra under Leon Botstein. His ensemble works have been performed widely in the United States and Europe, receiving commissions from the New Juilliard Chamber Ensemble, Quartet Indigo, Iktus Percussion Ensemble, Smash Ensemble, the Da Capo Chamber Players, and Longleash Ensemble. He has received numerous awards including the American Academy of Arts and Letters Charles Ives Scholarship (2018), the Gina Rapp String Quartet Competition (Juilliard 2017), the New Juilliard Chamber Ensemble Competition (2017), seven ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Awards and the North/ South Consonance Award and commission.

Sunbin was awarded Bachelor's degrees in music composition and physics from Bard College and his Master of Musical Arts degree in composition from The Juilliard School. He is currently studying for his DMA with Reiko Fütting at the Manhattan School of Music.

Program Note:

A palimpsest is a manuscript with traces of an older text, partially erased and overwritten with another text. The “station” refers to the Port Authority Bus Terminal in New York City – the ambience from Port Authority, slowed-down to a fifth speed, and its overhead intercom playing tinny classical music is the dominant foreground. Underneath this are the remains of a conceptual, polystylistic sketch that originally would have been this piece: hazy “familiar-sounding” convolutions, wispy harmonic tremolos, occasional bursts of emotion. But the ambience of the station always overwrites these ideas, as does the radio, playing its beautiful Beethoven and Sibelius string quartets – for its real purpose as audible “hostile architecture”. It is the awareness of a world outside the privileged levels of a concert hall, and of “art music”, that overwrites a piece for string quartet.

Yu-Chun Chien

Duo (2021)

Yu-Chun Chien, a Taiwanese composer based in the United States and Taiwan. Her compositions and arrangements have been published and performed in Taiwan, the United States, Germany, France, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, and Canada. She has appeared at various festivals, conferences, and residencies around the world, and has collaborated with some of the world’s prestigious orchestras, ensembles, and musicians, including the Radio-Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart des SWR, Arditti Quartet, loadbang, among others.

Yu-Chun Chien received her Doctor of Musical Arts and Master of Music degrees from Manhattan School of Music in New York, and her Bachelor of Music degree from Taipei National University of the Arts in Taiwan. Some of her most influential teachers have been Reiko Fütting, Susan Botti, and Chung-Kun Hung.

Yu-Chun Chien is currently a Teaching Assistant Professor at West Virginia University. Previously, she was appointed coordinator of aural skills and coordinator of the theory tutoring program at Manhattan School of Music, where she served as a teaching fellow in the college theory department and a faculty member in the pre-college division.

As a composer, Yu-Chun Chien constantly searches for new means of expression, which can be transformed in personal and intimate ways.

Yu-Chun Chien was awarded grants by the National Culture and Arts Foundation in Taiwan to compose her string quartet piece.

<http://www.yuchunchien.com>

Program Note:

In 2018, I wrote a string quartet titled *Trio*, which was inspired by the nature of the instrumental combination in a string and centered on the number “three.” This time, the composition was initiated from the idea of “duo.” The musical content develops from the number “two,” which, on one hand, suggests polarities and extremes; on the other hand, balances and complements coexist. Additionally, amicable numbers, perfect numbers, and twin primes structure the musical form. The composition *Duo* is dedicated to the Quartet121.

Turkar Gasimzada String Quartet 1: *stillness between two waves of the sea* (2021)

Originally from Azerbaijan, the music of **Turkar Gasimzada** won numerous awards in international competitions and performed in many festivals and conferences of contemporary music. Most recent features include performances in International Computer Music Conference (Chile), Saint-Petersburg New Music Festival (Russia), Music Biennale Zagreb (Croatia), SCI National Online Conference (USA), Bang on a Can Summer Festival (USA), Örebro Contemporary Music Festival (Sweden), Unerhörte Musik Festival (Germany), Charlotte New Music Festival (USA), Etchings Festival (France).

Recent collaborations and commissions have included works for ECCE Ensemble (USA/France), Ensemble Courage (Germany), Contemporary Music Ensemble of Boston University (USA), Ecoute Ensemble (Switzerland), Frontiers New Music Ensemble (Oklahoma, USA), CNM Ensemble (Iowa, USA), Noise-Bridge duo (Stuttgart, Germany), Allen Otte (OH), Avital Cohen (Switzerland), Erica Dicker (NY), Sergej Tchirkov (Russia), Daniel Vaczi (Hungary).

Gasimzada holds a Doctorate in composition from the University of Cincinnati, where he studied with Mara Helmuth and Michael Fiday. He also holds a Masters degree in composition from the Manhattan School of Music, where he studied with Reiko Fütting.

A committed teacher, Gasimzada has taught in such universities as the American University of the Middle East (Kuwait), the University of Cincinnati (USA), and the National Conservatory of Azerbaijan. Gasimzada's scores are published by Babel Scores (France).

www.turkargasimzada.com

Program Note:

Composed especially for the Quartet121, *String Quartet# 1: stillness between two waves of the sea* is an attempt to musically reflect on the "Four Quartets" by T.S. Eliot. The line in title of the piece, poetically referring to the structure and dialectics of this composition is borrowed from the "Little Gidding", the fourth of the "Quartets".

Reiko Fütting *Chorale ("those driven out will come")* (2021)

Reiko Fütting was born in 1970 in Königs Wusterhausen of the German Democratic Republic. He studied composition and piano at the Hochschule für Musik "Carl Maria von Weber" in Dresden, at Rice University in Houston, at Manhattan School of Music in New York, and at Seoul National University. Some of his most influential teachers have been the composers Jörg Herchet and Nils Vigeland, and the pianist Winfried Apel.

Reiko joined the theory faculty at the Manhattan School of Music in 2000. Five years later, he became a member of the composition faculty and was appointed chair of the theory department. In 2020, he was also appointed chair of the composition department. He has taught vocal accompanying at the Conservatory of Music and Theater in Rostock, Germany, and appeared as guest faculty and lecturer at universities and conservatories in China, Colombia, Germany, Italy, Russia, South Korea, and the United States.

As a composer, Reiko has received numerous prizes, awards, scholarships, grants, and commissions. His music has been performed in several countries in Europe, the Americas, and Asia. It is published by Edition Gravis in Berlin, Germany; most of his recordings have been released on the New Focus label in New York. He has collaborated with a wide range of musicians, ensembles, and orchestras, with a particular interest in vocal ensembles and ensembles performing on period instruments. He is currently working on an opera on the life of the mystic nun Mechthild von Magdeburg, which will be premiered at the reopening of the concert hall in Magdeburg, Germany in 2022.

www.reikofueting.com

“With my music, I aim to explore the psychological nature of memory, as it is projected onto the compositional device of musical quotation. By realizing this device in the entire musical spectrum of assimilation, integration, dissimulation, disintegration, and segregation, while moving freely between clear borders and gradual transitions, quotation and memory may function as a means to reflect upon contemporary artistic, cultural, social, and political phenomena.”

Program Note:

Chorale (“*those driven out will come*”), for string quartet (2021), was written for Quartet121. The title refers to the composition’s musical reference (the third movement of the String Quartet op. 132 by Ludwig van Beethoven, “*Heiliger Dankesang*”) as well as its literal references (two quotes from the New and Old Testament):

“...standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree...” (Revelations)

“...and there shall be no nation to which those driven out will not come...” (Jeremiah)

These two quotes connect the number “four” with the reality of migration. Migration as such was discussed by the philosopher Vilém Flusser in his collection of essays “*The Freedom of the Migrant: Objections to Nationalism*”.

As a reference to John Cage, this is a “string quartet in four parts”. The formal approach was inspired by a short story by Jorge Luis Borges, “*The Garden of Forking Paths*”:

- I. Gardens of Forking Paths
- II. Gardens of a Forking Path
- III. A Garden of Forking Paths
- IV. A Garden of a Forking Path

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Quartet121 for their dedication and commitment.