

Merkin Concert Hall

Wednesday, March 28, 2012 at 7:30 pm

Kaufman Center

presents

Ecstatic Music Festival™ 2012

Music From Copland House and Music From China

Derek Bermel, *clarinet*; Michael Boriskin, *piano*; Paul Lustig Dunkel, *conductor*;

Harumi Rhodes, *violin*; Wilhelmina Smith, *cello*;

Sun Li, *pipa*; Wang Guowei, *erhu*; Ann Yao and Du Yun, *zheng*

BRIGHT SHENG

(b. 1955)

Four Movements for Piano Trio (1988)

eighth = 54

quarter = 66

quarter = 112

Nostalgia, eighth = 66

LEUNG KEI-CHUEK (Gaybird)

(b. 1972)

Contradicting Unison (2012) World Premiere

for clarinet, cello, erhu, zheng, video, and electronics

Video by THOMAS YIP

DEREK BERMEL

(b. 1967)

Dragon Blue (2012) World Premiere

for clarinet, violin, cello, piano, erhu, pipa, and zheng

Intermission

DU YUN

(b. 1977)

The Hidden Face (2012) World Premiere

for clarinet, violin, cello, erhu, pipa, and zheng

SAMSON YOUNG

(b. 1979)

The Third Pixel (2012) World Premiere

for clarinet, violin, cello, piano, pipa, video,
and electronics

Space Invader

That Summer, Those Silent Apple Trees

Signal to Noise

Video by ADRIAN YEUNG and SAMSON YOUNG

About the Ecstatic Music Festival™

The Ecstatic Music Festival was inaugurated in 2011 by Kaufman Center (kaufman-center.org). Deeply committed to music education and performance that incorporate the ideas and trends of the 21st century, the Center sought to put truly modern music on its stage—redefining music for the post-classical generation, and serving it up to new audiences. Until now, the blurry lines between the classical and pop genres were typically crossed in downtown clubs and alternative spaces. The

Ecstatic Music Festival has brought that new stuff into a more traditional concert hall setting, where a relaxed atmosphere meets up with the exquisite acoustics that the artists and the music deserve.

Under the inspired direction of curator Judd Greenstein, the Ecstatic Music Festival's programs give true meaning to the notion of "Ecstatic Music" as a joyful and adventurous collaboration between composers and performers from the indie/pop and classical realms.

This year's Ecstatic Music Festival includes three New Sounds® Live concerts hosted by WNYC's John Schaefer, which are webcast live on Q2 Music and taped for future broadcast on WNYC. Q2 Music is the festival's digital venue and the center for on-demand artist interviews and concert audio. The festival is presented in association with New Amsterdam Presents.

Judd Greenstein, Ecstatic Music Festival Curator

Composer Judd Greenstein was born and raised in New York City. A passionate advocate for the indie classical community in NYC, much of Mr. Greenstein's work is written for its virtuosic ensembles and solo performers. Mr. Greenstein received degrees from Williams College and Yale School of Music, has been a Fellow at Tanglewood Music Center and the Bang on a Can Summer Institute of Music, and is completing his Ph.D. dissertation at Princeton University. Recent commissions include a 30-minute work for the Minnesota Orchestra, a string quartet/analog synthesizer work for ETHEL and a string trio for Gibbs & Main. Mr. Greenstein is also active as a promoter of new music. He is the managing director of NOW Ensemble, the composer/performer collective that has quickly established itself as one of the most prominent and promising sounds in 21st century chamber music. He is also the co-director of New Amsterdam Records/New Amsterdam Presents, a record label and artists' service organization.



About the Program

Four Movements for Piano Trio

Bright Sheng

The folkloric style of the prelude-like first movement of the *Four Movements for Piano Trio* is constructed heterophonically, and is characterized by overlapping and independent melodic lines of the instruments, typical of the music of China. The second movement is based on a humorous and joyful Se-Tsuan folk song. In the third movement, a savage dance, the melody grows through a series of "Chinese sequences" (in which the duration and range of the initial motive are increased each time it is repeated). The last movement evokes a solitary nostalgia.

During the Cultural Revolution, Shanghai-born **Bright Sheng** worked as a pianist and percussionist in a folk music and dance troupe in Qinghai Province near the Tibetan border, where he also studied and collected folk music. When China universities reopened in the late 1970s, he was among the first students accepted by the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, where he earned his undergraduate degree in music composition. After moving to New York in 1982, he graduated from Columbia University and the City University of New York's Queens College. He describes his own music as embodying "a mixture not only of Eastern and Western influences but of Tibetan and Chinese within the Eastern," and seeking to reflect his appreciation of both cultures in his work. A MacArthur Foundation Fellow and two-time runner-up for the Pulitzer Prize in Music, his many honors include awards from the Guggenheim Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts and AT&T Foundation. His music has been commissioned and performed by major orchestras and opera companies throughout America, Japan, Russia, Britain and Germany, and recorded on SONY Classical, BIS, Delos, and Koch International. He has been artist-in-residence of the Washington Performing Arts Society, co-artistic director of the Pacific Music Festival and composer-in residence at the Seattle Symphony, and is Professor of Music at the University of Michigan.

Contradicting Unison

Leung Kei-chuek (Gaybird)

The composer has written: "*Contradicting Unison* is about the unity and harmony between two different kinds of elements. The inspiration of the piece comes from a combination of Chinese instruments (erhu and zheng) and Western instruments (clarinet

and cello). These two groups of instruments have very different characters and sonorities. Instead of forcing them to harmonize, I use their contradicting characteristics to create a chaotic and abnormal concord. Symbolic objects are used in the computer graphics, such as the relationship of the red and blue balls as a metaphor to visualize the idea. The electronic music parts are synchronized with computer graphics to create more exciting and dynamic sound to enhance the music, and also give the musicians a cue to performing with the computer graphics."

Leung Kei-chuek (Gaybird) was born in Hong Kong, and since 1996 has worked in the music industry there as music director, composer and producer for over 100 music productions, concerts and TV commercials. His many honors include the Hong Kong Film Award, CASH Golden Sail Music Award, Taiwan Golden House Film Award and TVB Music Award. His concert works have been performed at Sweden's World New Music Days by the International Society for Contemporary Music, the Asian Music Festival in Taiwan and Japan by Asian Composers League, Musicarama in Hong Kong and many other international festivals. He is a graduate of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, specializing in music composition and electro-acoustic music. He also received the Research Scholarship to complete his graduate studies at Hong Kong City University, where he concentrated on human control interface design, new media art and the interactivity of live music performance with application of media technology. At the same time, he collaborated with a team of media artists and created the new media music performance, *Digital Hug*, and recorded an album with the same title.

Dragon Blue

Derek Bermel

The composer has written: "several years ago, I performed my clarinet concerto at the Beijing New Music Festival, and was struck by how the orchestral musicians found their way into bluesy inflections through invoking the emotional terrain of Peking Opera. I get inspired by such unexpected intersections as Chinese traditional music and the blues. Most notably, both utilize the pentatonic scale melodically, and both employ slides (glissandi) to build and release tension. I sketched some clarinet licks that might just as easily be played by an erhu, invoking the Slow Drag, which, like other early blues dances (the Mooche, Squat, Funky Butt, Snake Hips, Gut Stomp, Mule Walk and Fish Tail), originated in the American South. Three days before the 2012 Chinese New Year, the singer Etta James passed away, and Dragon Blue was born in her wake."

Currently serving as Artist-in-Residence at the Institute for Advanced Study and Creative Advisor to the American Composers Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, **Derek Bermel** has received commissions from the Pittsburgh, National, Saint Louis, New Jersey and Pacific Symphonies, Los Angeles and Westchester Philharmonics, the New York Youth Symphony, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, WNYC Radio, eighth blackbird, the Guarneri String Quartet, Music from Copland House and Music from China, De Erepijs (Netherlands), Jazz Xchange (U.K.), Figura (Denmark), violinist Midori, electric guitarist Wiek Hijmans, cellist Fred Sherry and pianists Christopher Taylor and Andrew Russo, among others. His many honors include the Alpert Award in the Arts, Rome Prize, Guggenheim and Fulbright Fellowships, American Music Center's Trailblazer Award and Academy Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters; commissions from the Koussevitzky and Fromm Foundations, Meet the Composer, and Cary Trust; and residencies at Yaddo, Tanglewood, Aspen, Banff, Bellagio, Copland House, Sacatar and Civitella Ranieri.

The Hidden Face

Du Yun

The Chinese title of *The Hidden Face*, Mian Da Xu, is a type of aria often heard at the end of a Kun opera, in the key of Yue. The content of this aria is about waking up from a dream. "Once upon a time." "In the end." "As if we witnessed it all." In the space of one short season, this moment has become as elongated as an eternity, as refreshing as folklore retold. In *The Hidden Face*, the composer has explained that by merging with similar resonances all the instruments, rather than separating them, and, in addition, by using the zheng as a resonator for audio playback, every sound is blended into an integral whole. The face that is hidden, is unveiled, masked, tinkered, whisked, hinted, provoked, and subsumed, again and again. The composer gives special thanks to the Kun Opera singer Qian Yi, who sang the Mian Da Xu aria from *Peony Pavilion*.

Born and raised in Shanghai, **Du Yun** has received commissions from the Detroit Symphony, Philadelphia's Mann Center for the Performing Arts, Carnegie Hall Professional Workshops, Whitney Museum Live, Switzerland's Festivals für Neue Musik and aktuelle Kultur, Chamber Music America, Meet the Composer, and the Rockefeller, Fromm, Jerome and Shanghai New Music Foundations. She has had recent premieres in Switzerland, Canada, Argentina, the Netherlands and China, and at

Finland's Musica Nova, France's Festival d'Avignon, Norway's Ultima, Germany's Darmstadt Summer Music Festival and Mexico's Cervantino Festival. Her opera, *Zolle*, was featured at New York City Opera's VOX Showcase. As a performer, she has performed internationally in different genres, using the amplified/processed zheng, piano, laptop and her own voice. She is a graduate of the Shanghai Conservatory, Oberlin Conservatory and Harvard University, and is on the composition faculty at SUNY Purchase.

The Third Pixel

Samson Young

"In *The Third Pixel*," the composer has explained, "I was very interested in how cultures melt away in the virtual world. When you play an online game, everyone is either an elf or a dwarf or something; nobody cares if you are Chinese or American. For the longest time I resisted writing for 'Chinese' instruments, or appropriating 'Chinese' subject matter (quotation marks intended). I grew up in a box on the 23rd floor in colonial Hong Kong, playing video games made by the Japanese and the Americans, and I only heard Kunqu for the first time in a world music class during my undergraduate years in Sydney, Australia. This is not to say that I don't think of myself as Chinese in some way, but I probably don't believe in, and certainly do not want to play any part in, reaffirming the notion of a singular, unproblematic 'China proper.' A non-Chinese speaking friend who'd lived in Hong Kong for many years once told me that his lack of language skills allows him to live in the city 'in privacy,' while still maintaining an intimate relation to his surroundings. I think the fact that I knew very little about the pipa before composing *The Third Pixel* also allowed me to experience its sounds with a level of abstraction."

With formal training in music composition, an eye for visuals, and a keen interest in emergent technologies, composer and sound and new media artist **Samson Young** creates uniquely inter-media experiences. His works are informed by an engagement with new cultural-technological paradigms, while being deeply grounded in the classical music tradition. His creative output ranges widely, and includes compositions for orchestra, gameboys, amusement ride-turned-sound installations, ensembles of ipads and iphones, and multimedia music theatre. CNN's global portal CNNgo named him one of the top "20 people to Watch in Hong Kong" in 2009, and he was the first person from Hong Kong to receive the Bloomberg Emerging Artist Award (2007) for his audio-visual project, *The Happiest Hour*. His work has been presented at the Canberra, Sydney Springs, and Bowdoin International Music Festivals, ISCM World Music Days, Bang on a Can Summer Music Institute, Darmstadt International Music Institute, Iceland's Dark Music Days, Kuala Lumpur Contemporary Music Festival and Hong Kong Arts Festival, and performed by the New Jersey Symphony, London's NASH Ensemble, Network for New Music, the New Millennium Ensemble, SO Percussion and many others. Since serving as the Hong Kong Sinfonietta's Artist Associate in 2008-09, he has maintained a close relationship with the orchestra, working as composer-director for various multimedia productions. He is a Ph.D Fellow at Princeton University, and an assistant professor in Critical Intermedia Art at the School of Creative Media, City University of Hong Kong.

About the Artists

Music From Copland House is the acclaimed resident ensemble at Aaron Copland's National Historic Landmark home in New York's lower Hudson Valley, an award-winning creative center for American music (www.coplandhouse.org). Since its triumphant New York debut at the Opening Night of Merkin Concert Hall's 1999-2000 season, Music from Copland House has come to occupy a special place on the U.S. musical scene as perhaps this country's only wide-ranging American repertory ensemble, journeying across 150 years of our nation's rich musical landscape. MCH has been engaged by Carnegie Hall, the Library of Congress, Monday Evening Concerts in Los Angeles, Columbia University's Miller Theatre, the Caramoor, Cape Cod and Bard Music Festivals, and other leading concert presenters, and has collaborated with NPR and Euro-Radio on a special concert broadcast in over 20 countries. The ensemble is also regularly featured throughout the season on Copland House's popular new main-stage concert series at the majestic Merestead estate in Mount Kisco, NY. MCH has commissioned compositions by Richard Danielpour, Chen Yi, Tamar Muskal, Pierre Jalbert, Derek Bermel and Sebastian Currier (whose Copland House work, *Static*, won the prestigious 2007 Grawemeyer Award), and has made several widely-praised recordings on the Arabesque and Koch International labels. Inspired by Copland's peerless, lifelong advocacy of American composers, MCH also presents a wide variety of educational and community outreach activities. MCH concerts feature the ensemble's

much-admired Founding Artists – clarinetist-composer Derek Bemel, pianist Michael Boriskin, flutist Paul Lustig Dunkel, violinist Nicholas Kitchen, and cellist Wilhelmina Smith – and an array of stellar guest performers.

Established in 1984, **Music From China** performs Chinese classical and folk masterpieces, as well as new music by living composers. The ensemble has performed extensively at the Library of Congress, Boston Early Music Festival, Tisch Center for the Arts at New York's 92nd Street Y, Freer and Sackler Galleries of Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Maine's American Folk Festival, BBC in England, Eastman School of Music and Chautauqua Institution, as well as many colleges and universities including Princeton, Duke, Pittsburgh, Williams, Rhode Island, Dayton, Indiana, Bucknell, Colgate, Vermont, Middlebury, Yale, Wesleyan, Vassar, Lafayette, St. Bonaventure and Illinois/Urbana-Champaign. Winner of a Chamber Music America/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming, Music From China produces an annual Premiere Works concert series featuring commissioned and new works by Chen Yi, Zhou Long, Dorothy Chang, Vivian Fung, Bun-Ching Lam, James Mobberley and numerous emerging composers.

Pianist and Copland House Artistic and Executive Director **Michael Boriskin** has been engaged at the foremost venues in over 30 countries, including Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, BBC, Berlin Radio and Vienna's Arnold Schoenberg Center, as well as the Polish National and Munich Radio Orchestras, Mexico City's UNAM Philharmonic, American Composers Orchestra, and the San Francisco, Seattle and Utah Symphonies. His innovative NPR series, *Centuryview*, was heard for three seasons nationwide, and he has recorded extensively on BMG, Harmonia Mundi, New World, Albany, Bridge and SONY Classical, which recently re-released in Europe his acclaimed recording of Gershwin's complete piano and orchestra works.

Conductor **Paul Lustig Dunkel** has performed internationally at the Aspen, Spoleto, Stratford, Casals, Marlboro and many other major festivals. He was an original member of Speculum Musicae and a member of the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble. A Grammy nominee, he has recorded extensively on New World, CRI, Summit, Bridge and other labels, and may be heard on all Music from Copland House albums for Arabesque and Koch International Records. He has expanded the flute repertory through many commissions and premieres, most notably including Melinda Wagner's Flute Concerto, which received the 1999 Pulitzer Prize. He was the founder and, for 25 years, Music Director of the Westchester Philharmonic, which he built into a nationally-acclaimed, award-winning orchestra, and was co-founder and longtime Resident Conductor of the American Composers Orchestra at Carnegie Hall.

Violinist **Harumi Rhodes** is a founder of the 2009 Naumburg Award-winning Trio Cavatina. The ensemble performed with Musicians from Marlboro, and recently made debuts in Philadelphia, Boston, San Francisco and Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, as well as its European debut in Lithuania. Having completed her residency with Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center Two, she recently became an Artist Member of the Boston Chamber Music Society and joined Juilliard's assistant violin faculty. She recorded Milton Babbitt's *String Quartet No. 6* for Tzadik, recently premiered a new Richard Danielpour trio, and is the dedicatee of Benjamin Lees' solo violin sonata.

Cellist **Wilhelmina Smith** made her solo debut with the Philadelphia Orchestra while a student at the Curtis Institute of Music, and has since forged a versatile musical career. She recently appeared as soloist with SinfoniettaNYC (in Esa-Pekka Salonen's cello concerto, *Mania*), Guatemala's Millenium Orchestra, Russia's Ural Philharmonic in Russi, and many others. As a chamber musician, she has performed with Yo-Yo Ma, Joshua Bell, Pamela Frank, Dawn Upshaw, Benita Valente and members of the Guarneri, Juilliard, Brentano, Miami, Borromeo, and Galimir Quartets in major venues across the U.S. and Europe. She has also been a guest artist with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and Boston Chamber Music Society. She is a member of the Mannes Trio and Artistic Director of Maine's Salt Bay Chamberfest and Florida's Classicfest.

Sun Li graduated from the Shenyang Music Conservatory, where she studied pipa. She was a member of the Central Song and Dance Ensemble in Beijing before joining Music From China in 2002.

Wang Guowei has the dual role of erhu performer and composer. He studied at the Shanghai Conservatory and was concertmaster and soloist with the Shanghai Traditional Orchestra. He has combined his instrumental skills and mastery of

idiomatic expression to compose a body of works that have been performed by important artists and ensembles around the U. S. and abroad. As Artistic Director of Music From China since 1996, and also as an active soloist, he has performed with the Shanghai Quartet, Amelia Piano Trio, Four Nations Ensemble, Virginia Symphony, Post Classical Symphony, DaCamera of Houston, Continuum, Ornette Coleman, Butch Morris, Kenny Garrett, Yo-Yo Ma and other leading artists and ensembles.

Shanghai-born **Ann Yao** inherited her musical family tradition by studying the pipa and zheng. After graduating the Shanghai Conservatory in 1983, she immediately joined Beijing's prestigious Central Traditional Music Ensemble as principal zheng player. She moved to the U.S. two years later, and has since worked with many renowned music groups, artists and composers including Yo-Yo Ma, Tan Dun, John Zorn, Zhou Long, Chen Yi, Music From China, the Brooklyn Philharmonic and the New Music Consort. She was twice named a Florida Folklife Apprenticeship Master, and received the Florida Folk Heritage Award. In 2011, she represented the State of Florida in performances at the Library of Congress and Kennedy Center.