



**TUES@7: From Scratch**  
**December 8, 2020 | 7pm EST**

International Contemporary Ensemble has a long history of commissioning and developing works, cultivating relationships with composers that grow out of larger projects for the group. Kyle Armbrust (viola), Jacob Greenberg (piano), Daniel Lippel (guitar), and Wendy Richman (viola) present an evening featuring works originally written for them, highlighting the collaborative process behind works by Vijay Iyer, Phyllis Chen, Sérgio Kafejian, and Arlene Sierra.

**Program**

Sérgio Kafejian: *From Scratch* (2017) for guitar and electronics

Arlene Sierra: *Cricket-Viol* (2010) for solo viola/voice

Phyllis Chen: *SumiTones* (2019) for solo piano

Vijay Iyer: *Song for Flint* (2019) for solo viola

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**Sérgio Kafejian: *From Scratch* (2017) for guitar and electronics**

São Paulo based Sergio Kafejian's *From Scratch* places the live performer in a protagonist role within an environment that is at times immersive and at others responsorial. The sonic textures of the electronic part are directly drawn from a rarefied vocabulary of extended techniques on the guitar including scratches, percussive sounds, and slides, and the extensive use of a plastic ruler grinding along the strings, and the pitched material is gestural and establishes fields of activity across different registers. The work ends with an improvised coda played on a guitar prepared with knitting needles, intoning ritualistic music. *From Scratch* was written in New York

while Kafejian was in a year-long residence in 2017 with the NYU electronic music department.  
— Daniel Lippel

**Arlene Sierra: *Cricket-Viol* (2010) for solo viola/voice**

*Cricket-Viol* (2010) unifies two distant sonorities: cricket calls from nature and the sound of the viola da gamba, or viol, from Renaissance and Baroque music. The point of commonality is the human voice. *Cricket-Viol* is dedicated with admiration to Wendy Richman, who commissioned the work in 2010. — Arlene Sierra

**Phyllis Chen: *SumiTones* (2019) for solo piano**

This piece was written for Jacob Greenberg and is dedicated to my grandfather, a lifetime calligrapher. My grandfather wrote under the pen-name Nong-san which translates to mean “mountain full of green trees.” The Japanese word “sumi” means “black ink” and refers to a particular style of ink wash paintings. Gradations of black are created by mixing water with ink. As I view my grandfather’s old calligraphy paintings, I ponder each stroke imprinted on the page, recognizing each line as a captured moment of a choreographed gesture. — Phyllis Chen

**Vijay Iyer: *Song for Flint* (2019) for solo viola**

Judith Butler defines “precarity” as the unequal distribution of precariousness. These are precarious times, in which access to safe clean water is an endangered human right, increasingly under siege by the damage to the planet brought about by humankind’s excesses. But this is also an epoch of systemic inequality, in which corporations, municipalities, and nation-states can and do inflict incremental or drastic harm on entire vulnerable populations, through war, deregulated pollution, and the differential withholding of basic life needs. Jasbir Puar has called out this cruel, largely unchecked capacity of the powerful, which she critically labels “the right to maim.” The people of Flint, Michigan became a historic example of a living population subjected to this kind of violence, in the form of environmental racism. In this Year of Water, I offer this piece, and my commission, to the children of Flint. — Vijay Iyer

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**Artist Bios**

**Kyle Armbrust**

Since giving his New York solo debut with Kurt Masur and the Juilliard Orchestra in Avery Fisher Hall, Kyle Armbrust has created a multi-dimensional career performing and recording a wide range of music. *The New York Times* has described him as “assured, brilliant, and stylish...” and the *New York Post* called him “musically mature, technically sound...” As soloist, Kyle has performed with The Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, St. Petersburg Philharmonic, Lake George Chamber Orchestra, Maple City Chamber Orchestra, and Woodstock Festival Orchestra. An active proponent of contemporary music, Kyle has worked with Elliot Carter, Mario Davidovsky, Osvaldo Golijov, Steve Reich, Charles Wuorinen, and others. In addition to his other activities, Kyle is currently the assistant principal viola of the New Jersey Symphony, principal viola of the Westchester Philharmonic, and a founding member of the Knights Chamber Orchestra. He is a substitute member of the Mahler Chamber Orchestra, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, and Philadelphia Orchestra. Kyle’s dedication to

chamber music has led to festival appearances at Aix en Provence, Caramoor, Charlottesville, La Jolla Summerfest, Marlboro, Monadnock, Moritzburg, Ravinia, Schleswig Holstein, Stillwater, and Verbier. He has also worked with Herbie Hancock, Lauryn Hill, Mya, Sufjan Stevens, Sting, and made an appearance on the show "30 Rock." Kyle received his BM, MM, and Artist Diploma from The Juilliard School where he studied with Heidi Castleman, Misha Amory, and Michael Tree. <https://www.iceorg.org/kyle-armbrust>

### **Phyllis Chen**

Described by *The New York Times* as "spellbinding" and "delightfully quirky matched with interpretive sensitivity," Phyllis Chen is a composer, keyboardist, and creative force whose music draws from tactile exploration of objects and sound. Her interests include interdisciplinary work and finding ways music connects with other art forms and community. Chen is a founding member of the International Contemporary Ensemble and the director-founder of the UnCaged Toy Piano, a composition competition and festival for toy piano. She has received grants and commissions from New Music USA, Fromm Foundation, NYSCA, Far Cry Orchestra, Opera Cabal, Claire Chase's Density project, Singapore Festival of the Arts and others. Most recently, Chen was named one of the 2019 Cage Cunningham Fellows by Baryshnikov Arts Center. With an interest in Japanese music, Phyllis also plays and studies the shakuhachi flute.

<http://www.phyllischen.net/>

### **Jacob Greenberg**

Pianist Jacob Greenberg's work as a soloist and chamber musician has earned worldwide acclaim. He is a longtime member of the International Contemporary Ensemble, with whom he has performed throughout the Americas and Europe. Mr. Greenberg's solo concert series, Music at Close Range, shows his equal commitment to classics of the repertoire. In addition to his solo discs on New Focus Recordings, which include works by over a dozen composers, he has recorded for the Nonesuch, Bridge, Mode, Kairos, Centaur, Tzadik, and New Amsterdam labels. Recent highlights include a guest performance of works of György Kurtág at the International Summer Courses in Darmstadt, Germany, under the composer's guidance; a recital tour with flutist Claire Chase; works by Boulez at the Ojai Festival; and solo and concerto appearances with International Contemporary Ensemble at Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival. Mr. Greenberg is on the faculty of the Tanglewood Music Center, and has taught at Hunter College, City University of New York, The Juilliard School, and the State University of New York at Buffalo. As a composer, he makes recorded works with spoken and sung texts.

<https://www.jacobgreenberg.net/>

### **Vijay Iyer**

Vijay Iyer's wide-ranging creative work and research has spanned the arts, the humanities, and the sciences. An active pianist, recording artist, bandleader, composer, improviser, and scholar, he has released twenty-three albums of his original music on ECM Records, ACT Records, Sunnyside Records, Savoy Music, Pi Recordings, Artist House, and Asian Improv Records. His writings have appeared in *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, *Wire*, *Music Perception*, *JazzTimes*, *Journal of the Society for American Music*, *Critical Studies in Improvisation*, and in the anthologies *Arcana IV*, *Sound Unbound*, *Uptown Conversation*, *The Best Writing on*

*Mathematics: 2010*, and *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies*. His concert works are published by Schott Music. His recent honors include the Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, a MacArthur Fellowship, a United States Artist Fellowship, the Alpert Award in the Arts, and the Downbeat Critics' Poll award for Jazz Artist of the Year in 2016, 2015, and 2012. He has served as Director of The Banff Centre's International Workshop in Jazz and Creative Music since 2013. He was the 2015-16 Artist-in-Residence at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, 2017 Jazz Artist in Residence at Wigmore Hall in London, and Musical Director for the 2017 Ojai Festival in Southern California. In 2014 Iyer joined the Harvard faculty as the Franklin D. and Florence Rosenblatt Professor of the Arts in the Department of Music, where he founded its doctoral program in Cross-Disciplinary Music Studies and offers courses in critical studies and creative music-making. <https://vijay-iyer.com/>

### **Sérgio Kafejian**

Sergio Kafejian obtained his Master Degree from Brunel University (London), PhD from UNESP and is currently developing continued Postdoctoral Research at São Paulo State University (USP). He is the recipient of several composition prizes including the Bourges International Electroacoustical Music Contest (1998 and 2008), Concurso Ritmo e Som (1994 and 1998), Gilberto Mendes Contest for Orchestra (2008) and FUNARTE Classical Composition Prizes (2008 and 2014). His professional output consists of instrumental and electroacoustic compositions as well as pedagogic projects involving contemporary improvisation, composition and performance.

### **Daniel Lippel**

Guitarist Dan Lippel, called a "modern guitar polymath (Guitar Review)" and an "exciting soloist" (NY Times) is active as a soloist, chamber musician, and recording artist. He has been the guitarist for the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE) since 2005 and new music quartet Flexible Music since 2003. Recent performance highlights include recitals at Sinus Ton Festival (Germany), University of Texas at San Antonio, MOCA Cleveland, Center for New Music in San Francisco, and chamber performances at the Macau Music Festival (China), Sibelius Academy (Finland), Cologne's Acht Brücken Festival (Germany), and the Mostly Mozart Festival at Lincoln Center. He has appeared as a guest with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and New York New Music Ensemble, among others, and recorded for Kairos, Bridge, Albany, Starkland, Centaur, and Fat Cat. <http://www.danlippel.com>

### **Wendy Richman**

Wendy Richman has been celebrated internationally for her compelling sound and imaginative interpretations. As a soloist and chamber musician, she has performed at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center Festival, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Miller Theater, Mostly Mozart Festival, Park Avenue Armory, Phillips Collection, and international festivals in Berlin, Darmstadt, Helsinki, Hong Kong, Karlsruhe, Morelia, and Vienna. Former violist of The Rhythm Method string quartet, Wendy is a founding member of the International Contemporary Ensemble. Hailed by *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* for her "absorbing," "fresh and idiomatic" performances with "a brawny vitality," Wendy collaborates closely with a wide range of composers. She presented the U.S. premieres of Kaija Saariaho's *Vent nocturne*, Roberto

Sierra's *Viola Concerto*, and a fully-staged version of Luciano Berio's *Naturale*. She regularly performs with NYC's Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and has collaborated with fortepianist Malcolm Bilson, the Claremont and Prometheus Trios, and members of the Cleveland, Juilliard, and Takács Quartets. She has also been a frequent guest with the viola sections of the Atlanta Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, and St. Louis Symphony. Wendy is on the string faculty of New York University (NYU Steinhardt), where she teaches viola, chamber music, and a class on extended string techniques. Wendy earned degrees from Oberlin Conservatory (BM), New England Conservatory (MM), and Eastman School of Music (DMA). Her debut solo album, [vox/viola](https://www.wendyrichmanviola.com/), was released in 2019 on New Focus Recording's TUNDRA imprint. <https://www.wendyrichmanviola.com/>

### **About International Contemporary Ensemble**

The International Contemporary Ensemble is an artist collective that is transforming the way music is created and experienced. As performer, curator, and educator, the Ensemble explores how new music intersects with communities across the world. The Ensemble's 36 members are featured as soloists, chamber musicians, commissioners, and collaborators with the foremost musical artists of our time. Works by emerging composers have anchored the Ensemble's programming since its founding in 2001, and the group's recordings and digital platforms highlight the many voices that weave music's present.

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### **Credits**

Sérgio Kafejian: *From Scratch* (2017) for guitar and electronics  
Commissioned by Daniel Lippel  
Research supported by FAPESP proc. 2016/15484-1

Arlene Sierra: *Cricket-Viol* (2010) for solo viola/voice  
Commissioned by Wendy Richman  
Video/Audio by Tim Feeney

Phyllis Chen: *SumiTones* (2019) for solo piano  
Commissioned by Jacob Greenberg  
From Neo/Classic. Released November 15, 2019  
Produced by Jacob Greenberg  
Recording Engineer, Ryan Streber

Vijay Iyer: *Song for Flint* (2019) for solo viola  
Commissioned by Miller Theatre at Columbia University for the Year of Water 2019-20  
Audio & Video by Chris Chen  
Recorded at Pyramid Sound Studios in Ithaca, NY

Video & Sound by Ross Karre & Maciej Lewandowski

Editing by Isabel Frye

Special thanks to:

We are grateful for the support of the NYC COVID-19 Response and Impact Fund in The New York Community Trust in making this program possible.

Performances and commissioning activities during the 2020-21 concert season are made possible by the generous support of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Howard Gilman Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, A.N. and Pearl G. Barnett Family Foundation, Jerome Foundation, Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Aaron Copland Fund for Music Inc., Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, Francis Goelet Charitable Lead Trusts, Amphion Foundation, Ernst von Siemens Musikstiftung, The Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation, Pacific Harmony Foundation, Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation, Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University, The Casement Fund, BMI Foundation, as well as public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, the New York State Council for the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and the Illinois Arts Council Agency. The International Contemporary Ensemble is the Ensemble in Residence of the Nokia Bell Labs Experiments in Art and Technology. Yamaha Artist Services New York is the exclusive piano provider for the International Contemporary Ensemble.