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AURAL EXPLORATIONS: FARRIN, FURE, AND MESSIAEN



THURSDAY, MAY 28, 2020 • 7-8:30PM

FEATURING SUZANNE FARRIN, AND ASHLEY FURE.

INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY ENSEMBLE DELIVERS AN INTERACTIVE, DIGITAL CONCERT ON YOUTUBE AND ZOOM.

WORLD PREMIERE *NACHT*: A DREAMY ATMOSPHERE FEATURING THE ONDES MARTENOT, HARP, PERCUSSION, BASS, AND VOICE.

WORLD PREMIERE *INTERIOR LISTENING PROTOCOL 1*: CREATED SPECIFICALLY FOR AND IN THIS TIME OF SOCIAL DISTANCING, THE PIECE IS A FULL-BODY LISTENING EXPERIENCE, ONLY MADE POSSIBLE BY AUDIENCE MEMBERS PARTICIPATING FROM THEIR HOME.

**TUNE IN TO INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY
ENSEMBLE YOUTUBE ON MAY 28**

“LOBBY” EXPERIENCE AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

AUREL EXPLORATIONS: FARRIN, FURE, AND MESSIAEN

Hosted by Terrance McKnight

[International Contemporary Ensemble](#)

Co-Presented by the [Library of Congress](#) and [Portland Ovation](#)s

May 28, 2020 | 7pm EDT | YouTube Live

Collaborative Home

SUZANNE FARRIN
PORTRAIT DOCUMENTARY

Interior Listening Protocol 1
[World Premiere]

ASHLEY FURE

Polvere et Ombra (2008)

SUZANNE FARRIN

Nacht [World Premiere,
co-commissioned by the Carolyn Royall
Just Fund in the Library of Congress
and ICE]

SUZANNE FARRIN

“Louange à l’Éternité de Jésus” from
Quatuor pour la fin du temps (1941)

OLIVER MESSIAEN

PERFORMERS

Suzanne Farrin, ondes Martenot

Alice Teyssier, voice

Ross Karre, percussion

Randall Zigler, bass

Nuiko Wadden, harp

Jacob Greenberg, piano

Ryan Streber, sound engineer

Terrance McKnight, host

Suzanne Farrin: *Polvere et Ombra* (2008)

There are at least two physical bodies at work in every piece of instrumental music. One is the hard, tense and drawn body of the instrument itself. Its form is determined by the collective hands that mold a sound over centuries. The instrument is passed, changed and somehow remembers its ancestry. The second body is that of the performer who is a magician over the otherwise silent object.

The physicality of both bodies is a dramatic relationship that I find to be a rich source. *Polvere et Ombra* magnifies the physical relationship of the player to the instrument. The arms must move to their fullest range of motion, the fingers grab into the strings and the polite beauty of the harp is replaced by raw action.

The form of the work and the title are derived from Petrarch. Sonnet no. 23 provided the syllabic rhythmical grid for the piece. The poem is an impassioned declamation to a night sky. Number 294 includes the line “Veramente siam noi polvere et ombra” (In truth we are but shadows, only dust).

--Suzanne Farrin

Suzanne Farrin: *Nacht* (2020)

Nacht is a movement from *Your Hearts Are Columns* and is a setting of texts by Dschalal Ud-Din Rumi (d. 1273) and Hafiz (1390) translated to German by the poet Cyrus Atabay. Cyrus Atabay was an Iranian poet who traveled to Berlin to attend school starting at age 8 and stayed through WWII. After periods of living in Iran, Europe, and the UK, he settled permanently in Germany in 1983 until his death in 1996. During his university days, he began to publish original poetry as well as translations of classical Persian poetry, two of which are featured in *Nacht*.

When I first came across his work, I was struck by how special the language sounded. It resonated like no other German poetry that I had ever read. I thought perhaps it was from an ancient German mystic that I had not heard of, but it turns out it was Rumi! Rumi's language was well-worn for me in English translation, but the German hummed with a special aura that brought me back to its beauty and profundity.

--Suzanne Farrin

Nachts ist unser Auge
vom Monde leer,
doch tags
vom Mond erfüllt.
-Rumi (d.1273), translated by Cyrus Atabay (d. 1996)

At night our eye is
empty of the moon,
but during the day
filled with the moon.
-Rumi

Ich kam vor diese Tür
nicht um Gunst und Rag zu buhlen,

I came to this door
not to court favor and rank

....
Ich bin der Wanderer,
unterwegs zum Haus der Liebe,
von der Grenze des Nichts
bis zum Reich des Seins
führte mich mein Weg!

....
I am the wanderer
en route to the house of love,
from the limit of nothing
to the realm of being
my path led me!

...
von eines Königs Tür

...
from a king's door

...
den Gabriel bewachte!

...
that Gabriel was guarding!

...
O Wolke, wasche noch einmal die Tränen

...
O cloud, wash the tears again

...
Hafiz, befreie dich von dieser Kutte

...
Hafiz, free yourself from this cowl.

...
-Hafiz (d. 1390), translated by Cyrus Atabay (d. 1996)

...
-Hafiz

Ashley Fure: *interior listening protocol 1* (2020)

“This is a listening score. To perform it, please find two mason jars or two large glasses,” is how Ashley Fure’s *interior listening protocol 1* begins. Created specifically for and in this time of social distancing, the piece is a full-body listening experience, only made possible by audience members participating from their homes. As Fure leads a slowly evolving physical choreography, the jars produce a magically immersive soundscape in the privacy of each listeners’ own ears.

Olivier Messiaen: “Louange à l’Éternité de Jésus” from *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* (1941)

V: Louange à l’Éternité de Jésus (Praise to the Eternity of Jesus) – Both this and the complementary eighth movement (“Praise to the Immortality of Jesus”) were adaptations from prior works. The finale fundamentally adds a sustained, insistent piano accompaniment to the melody of the second part of Messiaen’s 1929 *Diptyque* for organ (now given to the violin) – a suitably sustained meditation which he subtitled an essay on blessed eternity. But the source of the fifth movement is far more surprising – the 1936 *Fêtes des Belles Eaux* (Festival of the Lovely Waters), written for six ondes Martenot (an electronic organ forebear that could sound single notes with a single timbre but with broad oscillation) to accompany an open-air spectacle of “dancing” water spouts on the Seine. While much of the flamboyant half-hour *Fêtes* would barely seem out of place at the garish Las Vegas Bellagio fountain display, here Messiaen recasts only its sweet, meditative fourth movement into a majestic melody for the cello at the very top of its range, accompanied by a steady pulse of slowly evolving triadic piano chords. Pople suggests that the source evoked the memory of the “pre-War Parisian scene, with its intermingling refractions of light,” so very far from the spiritual wilderness of Stalag VIIIA. In that light, it may have served as a psychological bridge between the carefree fourth movement and the more serious business yet ahead. Griffiths notes that while the specified tempo is *Infiniment lent, extatique* (Infinitely slow, ecstatic [in the sense of a state of eternal bliss]) the music solves a difficult perceptual problem, presenting a convincing image of eternity not by holding sounds for uncomfortable lengths but rather by giving an impression of changelessness through a protracted process of gradual change, which Griffiths credits as providing a foothold intelligible to minds existing in the present world.

– written by Peter Gutman, www.classicalnotes.net/classics6/quatuor.html

In this program, we will hear a re-translation: the version for cello and piano performed on ondes Martenot and piano.

Suzanne Farrin is a composer who explores the interior worlds of instruments and the visceral potentialities of sound. Her music has been performed by some of the great musicians of today on stages across Europe and North and South America.

Earlier works have concentrated on establishing an intensity and personal language through careful study of solo instruments along with the interpretive personalities that come with them. Those works include pieces for solo strings (*corpo di terra, for cello; Time is a Cage for violin and uscirmi di braccia, for viola and piano or bass drum*). Though they have now been played by many interpreters, they were expressly written for people close to Suzanne (Julia Lichten, cello; Cal Wiersma, violin and Antoine Tamestit and Markus Hadulla, viola and piano). That intimacy is a productive space for her: it is as if exploring the very personal habits, sounds and physicality of each brings her closer to a more universal expressivity. This search for transcendence has more recently been applied to vocal music. In *dolce la morte*, Suzanne felt she was expressing the inherent conflicts, contractions and corporal strife that exists in the great master's love poetry. The piece is her own, but the "mask" of Michelangelo provided a productive mouthpiece from which she could project her own sound world.

In addition to composing, Suzanne is a performer of the ondes Martenot, an early electronic instrument created by the engineer Maurice Martenot in France in the 1920s as a response to the simultaneous destruction and technological advances of WWI. She is the Frayda B. Lindemann Professor of Music and Chair at Hunter College and The CUNY Graduate Center, where she teaches composition, and holds a doctorate from Yale University. *Corpo di Terra* (New Focus Recordings) is her debut album and *Dolce la morte* (Tundra), her second release, came out in November 2018. Her work may also be heard on VAI, Signum Classics and Albany Records labels. She was the 2017 Frederic A. Juilliard/Walter Damrosch Rome Prize winner in Composition and she is currently a Guggenheim Fellow in Music Composition.

Ashley Fure (b.1982) is an American composer and sound artist. Called "raw, elemental," and "richly satisfying" by *The New York Times*, her work explores the kinetic source of sound, bringing focus to the muscular act of music making and the chaotic behaviors of raw acoustic matter.

She holds a PhD in Music Composition from Harvard University and joined the Dartmouth College Music Department as Assistant Professor in 2015. A finalist for the 2016 Pulitzer Prize in Music, Fure also won a 2018 DAAD Artists-in-Berlin Prize, a 2017 Rome Prize in Music Composition, a 2017 Guggenheim Fellowship, a 2016 Foundation for Contemporary Arts Grant for Artists, a 2015 Siemens Foundation Commission Grant, the 2014

Her work has been commissioned by major ensembles throughout Europe and the United States including The New York Philharmonic, The Los Angeles Philharmonic, Klangforum Wien, Ensemble Modern, the Diotima Quartet, International Contemporary Ensemble, Talea, San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, and Dal Niente. Notable recent projects include *The Force of Things: An Opera for Objects*, an immersive intermedia opera called “staggeringly original” and “the most purely visceral music-theatre outing of the year” by Alex Ross in *The New Yorker*; and *Bound to the Bow*, for Orchestra and Electronics, named “boldly individual” by *The New York Times* and “the most arresting of the world premieres” at the 2016 New York Phil Biennial in *The New Yorker*.

Terrance McKnight a proud voice resounding from the middle of the Road and is the evening host on WQXR. When Terrance McKnight moved to New York City, his 96-year-old grandmother offered him a few words of wisdom: “If you’ve got something to say, get out there in the middle of the road and say it; don’t go hiding behind no bush.” From a long line of passionate citizens — his maternal family founded a branch of the NAACP in Mississippi and his father the pastor of a church in Cleveland — Terrance and his siblings were expected to contribute to their community while growing up. Early on, Terrance decided he would take the musician’s journey. As a teenager, he played trumpet in the school orchestra and played piano for various congregations around Cleveland. At Morehouse College and Georgia State University he performed with the college Glee Club and New Music Ensemble respectively and subsequently joined the music faculty at Morehouse. While in Georgia he brought his love of music and performing to the field of broadcasting.

Terrance is an Artistic Advisor for the Harlem Chamber Players and serves on the board of the Bagby Foundation and the MacDowell Colony. He’s frequently sought out by major cultural organizations for his insight into the cultivation of diverse perspectives and voices in the cultural sphere. He regularly curates concerts and talks at Merkin Concert Hall, the Billie Holiday Theatre, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and the Museum of Modern Art.

Concerts from the Library of Congress

Since 1925, the Library of Congress has presented one of the world’s most distinguished concert series, with an extraordinary history of more than 3,600 events presented free of charge in its acoustically superb Coolidge Auditorium, the gift of philanthropist Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. *Concerts from the Library of Congress* offers concerts, lectures and symposia, conversations with artists and composers, film screenings, educational programs and displays of treasures from the rich collections of the Library’s Music Division, numbering over 26 million items.

Chamber music, jazz, American music theater and pop are on offer each season, and commissioning is an important mandate. The roster of commissions—over 600 to date—includes an illustrious and wide-ranging group of composers. Early commissions from figures like Maurice Ravel, Béla Bartók, and Aaron Copland, whose 1944 ballet *Appalachian Spring* is now an American icon, have become milestones in music history. Today, Suzanne Farrin's *Nacht* joins an expansive list of recent commissions that includes notable works by Elliott Carter, Sofia Gubaidulina, Roberto Sierra, Chaya Czernowin, Anthony Braxton, Bright Sheng, György Kurtág, Rebecca Saunders, Steve Reich, Luca Francesconi, Maria Schneider, and Esperanza Spalding.

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Portland Ovation is a non-profit performing arts organization in Maine connecting artists and audiences through diverse arts experiences. Connections happen both onstage and off as we strive to make performing arts, theater, music, and dance an integral part of our community. Our unique mix of live performances and more intimate workshops, lectures, masterclasses, and School-Time Performances have delighted, inspired, and educated since 1931. Our venues span historic and modern theaters, galleries, and classrooms to ensure the best possible experience for both you and the artists. Ovation's mission is to contribute to the cultural, social, and economic wellbeing of our community by presenting an array of high quality performing artists from around the world and creating diverse educational experiences that bring the enjoyment, energy and enrichment of the arts to all.

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The International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE) 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.

A recipient of the American Music Center's Trailblazer Award and the Chamber Music America/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming, the International Contemporary Ensemble was also named the 2014 Musical America Ensemble of the Year. The group currently serves as artists-in-residence at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts' Mostly Mozart Festival, and previously led a five-year residency at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. The International Contemporary Ensemble was featured at the Ojai Music Festival from 2015 to 2017, and at recent festivals abroad such as gmem-CNCM-marseille and Vértice at Cultura UNAM, Mexico City. Other performance stages have included the Park Avenue Armory, The Stone, ice floes at Greenland's Diskotek Sessions, and boats on the Amazon River.

OpenICE, made possible with lead funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, offers free concerts and interactive, educational programming wherever the Ensemble performs. As the Ensemble in Residence of the Nokia Bell Labs Experiments in Art and Technology, the International Contemporary Ensemble advances music technology and digital communications as an empowering tool for artists from all backgrounds. Curricular activities include a residency and coursework at the New School College of Performing Arts, along with a summer intensive program, called Ensemble Evolution, where topics of equity, diversity, and inclusion build new bridges and pathways for the future of creative sound practices. Yamaha Artist Services New York is the exclusive piano provider for the Ensemble. Read more at www.iceorg.org and watch over 350 videos of live performances and documentaries at www.digitice.org.

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Suzanne Farrin's *Nacht* is co-commissioned by the Carolyn Royall Just Fund in the Library of Congress and the International Contemporary Ensemble.

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