

2012/13 CONCERT SERIES



**SOUND
STREAMS**

Lawrence Cherney,
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

NEW DIRECTIONS IN MUSIC



#soundstreams30



THREE FACES OF JERUSALEM



SOUNDSTREAMS

An International Centre for New Directions in Music

Led by Artistic Director Lawrence Cherney and Executive Director Chris Lorway, Soundstreams is a Toronto-based music presenter that commissions, develops, and showcases the work of contemporary Canadian composers and their international counterparts.

These innovative collaborations are performed by the finest artists from Canada and around the world, and are presented in an annual concert series at Koerner Hall, in national and international tours, and through a variety of education and outreach activities. To mark our 30th anniversary season in 2012–13, Soundstreams will also launch SoundMakers, an innovative website and iPad app that will invite music lovers to explore Soundstreams' commissioned works, create new works of their own, and share them with the SoundMakers community.

Over the past three decades, Soundstreams commissions have added more than 150 works to the musical repertoire worldwide, reflecting a diverse variety of genres and cultural traditions. Projects have included festivals and conferences such as the Northern Encounters Festival, University Voices, Toronto Fanfare Project, and the Cool Drumming percussion festival and conference, as well as award-winning operas including Thomson Highway and Melissa Hui's Cree opera *Pimootewin: The Journey* and R. Murray Schafer's site-specific opera *The Children's Crusade*.

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ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

The Three Faces of Jerusalem poses questions. The first two: Why this program? Why now?

I can't remember during my lifetime when the Middle East wasn't on fire, at least metaphorically. Fire can be positive – providing light in the darkness and warmth in the cold, both spiritual and physical – but it can also be incredibly destructive, consuming all in its path.

Jerusalem is the symbol of that paradox, the centre of gravity for the great traditions and heritages of Islam, Judaism and Christianity. One point of view is that its long and ancient history is one nearly continuous fight for domination. This is an unsettling conclusion, implying that as long as there are Muslims, Jews and Christians, a perpetual state of war will be the norm. It flies in the face of the fact that these heritages, culturally and musically, are joined at the hip, and that there have been times when they co-existed peacefully.

So the third question is: Is there an alternative to endless violence and strife? This program features artists whose heritages encompass Morocco, Israel, Palestine, Syria, Iran, France, Canada and the United States. While it is significant that these artists bring inspiration from many cultures, each has a history of crossing cultural and geographic boundaries to make music. It is not possible to sing or play music from another culture unless you understand it.

I hope *The Three Faces of Jerusalem* will leave you asking questions. Events of the last two years in the Middle-East make projects like this more relevant and urgent than ever. We don't create art to change the world. But can it make a difference?

Lawrence Cherney

2012-2013 CONCERT SERIES

Fujii Percussion and Voices
Tuesday, March 5, 2013
at 8:00 pm

Piano Ecstasy
Friday, April 26, 2013
at 8:00 pm

Music for China
Tuesday, May 14, 2013
at 8:00 pm

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THE THREE FACES OF JERUSALEM

Françoise Atlan, vocalist
Yair Dalal, oud/violin
Ben Grossman, percussion, hurdy gurdy
Michael Ibrahim, nay, mizmar
Paul Jenkins, portative organ
Roula Said, vocalist
Kiya Tabassian, setar
Pierre-Yves Martel, viola de gamba

David Fallis, conductor

Vocal Ensemble:

Dawn Bailey, soprano
Laura Pudwell, mezzo
Zachary Finkelstein, tenor
David Roth, baritone

Poetry readings by Diego Matamoros, Françoise Atlan and Roula Said.

Peter Moss, dramatic consultant

Sunday, January 27, 2013
at 3:00 pm

Koerner Hall,
TELUS Centre for
Performance and Learning

273 Bloor St. West

PROGRAM

The music in this concert is inspired by the traditions of Judaism, Islam and Christianity and will incorporate both improvised and composed music.

CONTEXT & PROGRAM NOTES

Jerusalem

The city of Jerusalem bears more significance to the three Abrahamic faiths than any other. As the location of the First Temple built by Solomon in the tenth century BCE, the city is the political and spiritual nexus of Judaism. As the site of Jesus Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, the city's hallowed ground hosts the principal sacred narratives of Christianity. In medieval times Christians thought Jerusalem was the center of the world and it was represented as so on world maps. For Muslims, the city was the destination of Muhammad's night journey and ascension (Isra and Mi'raj), in addition to its strong association with the prophets Islam shares with the other Abrahamic faiths, the first Muslims directed their prayer toward the city, which remains Islam's third holiest place after Mecca and Medina.

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Ceramic evidence indicates occupation of the City of David, within present-day Jerusalem, as far back as the Copper Age (c. 4th millennium BCE), with evidence of a permanent settlement during the early Bronze Age (c. 3000–2800 BCE). Some archaeologists believe Jerusalem as a city was founded by Northwest Semitic people with organized settlements from around 2600 BCE.

Jewish & Sephardic Music

The history of religious Jewish music spans the evolution of cantorial, synagogal, and Temple melodies from Biblical to Modern times. The earliest synagogal music was based on the same system used in the Temple in Jerusalem. According to the Mishnah, the regular Temple orchestra consisted of twelve instruments, and a choir of twelve male singers. Originally, it was with the *piyyutim* (liturgical poems) in which Jewish music began to crystallize into definite form. The cantor sang the *piyyutim* to melodies selected by their writer or by himself, thus introducing fixed melodies into synagogal music. Sephardic music is the unique music of the Sephardic Jews. Sephardic music was born in medieval Spain, with *canciones* being performed at the royal courts. Since then, it has picked up influences from across Spain, Morocco, Argentina, Turkey, Greece and various popular tunes from Spain and further abroad. There are three types of Sephardic songs: topical and entertainment songs, romance songs and spiritual or ceremonial songs. Lyrics can be in several languages, including Hebrew for religious songs, and Ladino.

Arabic Music

The term Arab Music is a broad classification that encompasses music with a tremendous amount of cultural, geographic and religious diversity. The music of the Arab world has historical roots in antiquity, although its overall character owes much to the court traditions and theoretical legacy of medieval Islam. In Arabic music, a *maqam* (plural *maqamat*) is a set of notes and traditions that define relationships between them, habitual patterns, and their melodic development. The designation *maqam* appeared for the first time in the treatises written in the fourteenth century by al-Sheikh al-Safadi and Abdulqadir al-Maraghi, and has since then been used as a technical term in Arabic music. The *maqam* is a modal structure that characterizes the art of music of countries in North Africa, the Near East and Central Asia. In this area we can distinguish three main musical cultures which all belong to the *maqam* modal family, Arabic, Persian, and Turkish.

The Arabic scales which this music is built on are not equal-tempered, unlike the chromatic scale used in Western classical music. Instead, the perfect 5th interval in the *maqam* is tuned based on the 3rd harmonic in the harmonic series (the open 5th), unlike equal temperament that tunes all intervals evenly within an octave. The tuning of the remaining notes entirely depends on the *maqam*, each *maqam* has variations of the spacing of intervals within the mode. The reasons for this tuning are probably historically based on string instruments like the oud. A side effect of not having equal-tempered tuning is that the same note (by name) may have a slightly different pitch depending on which *maqam* it is played in.

Christian Music in the Middle Ages

Some scholars and historians believe the traditions of Western music can be traced back to the social and religious developments that took place in Europe during the Middle Ages, namely the significant changes in the structure of European society that took place in the 12th and 13th centuries have been considered a direct result of Europe's participation in the Crusades. Interaction between the East and West affected European culture in areas of art and architecture, literature and education. The early Christian church derived their music from existing Jewish and Byzantine religious chant. Like all music in the Western world up to this time, plainchant was *monophonic*: that is, it comprised a single melody without any harmonic support or accompaniment. Because

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of the domination of the early Christian Church during this period, sacred music was the most prevalent. In the Middle Ages, the church served as an important patron to the arts and music was an integral part of Christian worship. Daily liturgy provided innumerable texts which relied on the development of musical notation. This changed the way that music could be transmitted and learned and also on the reliance on a musical text versus the practise of improvisation as a way of creating new works. Beginning with Gregorian Chant, sacred music slowly developed into a polyphonic music called *organum* performed at Notre Dame in Paris by the twelfth century.

O Jerusalem, Hildegard von Bingen

O Jerusalem, written between 1140-1179, follows Hildegard von Bingen's continued devotion to the Benedictine order, and principally to St. Rupert and the Virgin Mary. However *O Jerusalem* is not your standard liturgical music. It is a dedication ceremony, celebrating the establishment of Rupertsberg, a church to serve von Bingen's sisters in the Benedictine order. The solemn majesty of the music is hard to miss: slowly chiming church bells over a hauntingly beautiful chorus at the beginning of *O Jerusalem* set the tone. Yet despite its seriousness, there is a joyful energy within. This sense pervades the piece, giving the music a buoyant quality within its medieval mode. The relationship between Hildegard's music and text is critically important, and is meant to uncover deeper spiritual meaning. While many medieval compositions were based on liturgical plainchant, Hildegard's music is original.

Five and a Half Bridges, James Rolfe

words by André Alexis

When I spoke with the writer André Alexis about how to approach the subject of Jerusalem, he suggested we begin with the idea of the bridge—the bridge as metaphor for connection (Jerusalem itself being a place where many cultures meet), the bridge as erotic symbol, as symbol of desire and longing. He wrote verses for five actual bridges: Pont-Neuf in Paris; the Stone Arch in Shaharah, Yemen; Arkadiko in Mycenaea; Si-o-se Pol in Isfahan, Iran; and the Alexandra Bridge (a favourite from our Ottawa childhoods). They form a journey toward the final one in Jerusalem: imaginary, unfinished, a bridge to connect this world to our best imaginings of this world. *James Rolfe, 2012*

This piece was commissioned by Soundstreams with the generous assistance of the Canada Council for the Arts.

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CREATIVE ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES



André Alexis, writer

André Alexis is the writer of three novels (*Childhood, Asylum, Ingrid and the Wolf*), two collections of stories (*Despair and Other Stories of Ottawa, Beauty and Sadness*), and a number of works for the stage. He was, for a time, the host and writer of two Radio One programs (*Radio Nomad, Skylarking*) and a contributing book reviewer at *The Globe and Mail*. Despite his undying love for Ottawa, Ontario, he lives in Toronto and dreams of home.



James Rolfe, composer

Toronto composer James Rolfe, born in Ottawa, has been commissioned and performed in Canada, the USA, Europe, and New Zealand by soloists, ensembles, orchestras, choirs, theatres and opera companies. He received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2000, the K. M. Hunter Music Award in 2003, the 2005 Louis Applebaum Composer Award, and the 2006 Jules Léger Prize for New Chamber Music. Mr. Rolfe's operas include *Beatrice Chancy* (1998, performed in Toronto, Dartmouth, and Edmonton) and *Inês* (2009, nominated for a Dora Award), both produced by The Queen of Puddings Music Theatre Company. Tapestry New Opera Works co-produced *Elijah's Kite* in 2005 with the Manhattan School of Music. The Canadian Opera Company premiered *Swoon* in 2006, and has since commissioned a new opera. Other current projects include works for Toronto's Tarragon Theatre (with writer André Alexis), Coleman Lemieux Dance (with choreographer James Kudelka), Canadian Art Song Project, Continuum, and TorQ Percussion Quartet, as well as Victoria's Aventa Ensemble.



Hildegard von Bingen, composer

Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179) also known as Saint Hildegard, and Sibyl of the Rhine, was a German writer, composer, philosopher, Christian mystic, Benedictine abbess, visionary, and polymath. One of her works as a composer, the *Ordo Virtutum*, is an early example of liturgical drama and arguably the oldest surviving morality play. She wrote theological, botanical and medicinal texts, as well as letters, liturgical songs, and poems. During the composer's lifetime, European armies conquered Jerusalem in the First Crusade. In October 2012, Pope Benedict XVI named her a Doctor of the Church.



Léonin, composer

Léonin (1165-1185), is thought to have been a leading liturgical composer of his generation, associated with the Notre Dame, or Parisian, school of composition. Very little of Léonin's life is known. Among his accomplishments as a poet was the setting of the first eight books of the Old Testament as hexametric verse. However, today he is chiefly remembered for his contributions as a composer of polyphonic liturgical music. While most composers of this genre were anonymous, Léonin is credited with having written the *Magnus liber organi* (*The Great Book of Organum*), a work that notated Léonin's sacred polyphonic compositions and which greatly influenced western art music practices for the next several hundred years.

PERFORMING ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES



David Fallis, conductor

Conductor David Fallis is one of Canada's leading interpreters of operatic and choral repertoire, especially known for his work in both baroque and classical, and contemporary music. He has led critically acclaimed productions of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, *The Coronation of Poppea*, *The Return of Ulysses* for Toronto's Opera Atelier. He has conducted for Houston Grand Opera, Cleveland Opera, Wolftrap Theatre, Utah Opera, Singapore Festival, Festival Vancouver, Seoul Arts Centre, Symphony London, Symphony Nova Scotia, and in major opera houses in Japan. In 2012 he made his debut both at the Royal Opera House in Versailles, and the Glimmerglass Festival, conducting Lully's *Armide*. As Artistic Director of the Toronto Consort, Canada's leading ensemble specializing in the music of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, he has toured extensively in North America and Europe and has led the ensemble in nine CDs. He conducted the world premiere of R. Murray Schafer's *The Children's Crusade* at the 2009 Luminato Festival in Toronto. Mr. Fallis was the producer and conductor of historical music for the acclaimed TV series *The Tudors*. He teaches in the Graduate Department of the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto.



Françoise Atlan, vocalist, readings

As an artist of dual culture, with a particularly original vocal expression, style and technique, Atlan's Judeo-Berber roots have led to her passion for Mediterranean vocals, especially the Judeo-Spanish and Judeo-Arabic traditions, while pursuing her career as lyric singer. Invited as a soloist to major international venues, Françoise collaborates with great musicians and ensembles. Several of her recordings have received awards from the critics Diapason d'Or, Choc du Monde de la Musique, FFFF Télérama and the Grand Prix of the Académie Charles Cros. Françoise holds a teaching degree in musicology from the University of Aix-en-Provence. In addition to her career as a singer, she is also artistic director of the Andalusian Atlantic Festival of Essaouira.



Dawn Bailey, soprano

Soprano Dawn Bailey is a versatile artist, recognized for her engaging performances in a wide variety of vocal styles. Dawn is equally at ease on the concert and operatic stages, moving fluidly from chamber music to opera, oratorio, and art song. Especially sought after for her imaginative interpretations of music from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, she has appeared with some of Canada's leading early music ensembles, including Tafelmusik, the Toronto Consort, Ensemble Caprice, The Toronto Masque Theatre, Les Violons du Roy, the Theatre of Early Music, and le Studio de musique ancienne de Montréal.



Yair Dalal, oud, violin

Yair Dalal is a composer, violinist, oud player and singer who plays an important role in shaping the global world music scene. Over the last decade he has created 11 albums, covering wide and varied cultural territory, authentically representing Israel's cultures and fusing them through music as a whole. Much of Dalal's work reflects his extensive musical skills in both classical and Arabic music. Whether working on his own, or with his Alol ensemble, Dalal creates new Middle Eastern music by interweaving the traditions of Iraqi and Jewish Arabic music with a range of influences originating from such diverse cultural milieus as the Balkans to India. During the past years he has played in concerts worldwide, collaborated with top musicians from all over the world and from different disciplines. In addition to his musical endeavors, Dalal is also a peace activist, devoting much of his time and energy to helping remove ideological barriers between different cultures and, in particular between Jews and Arabs.



Zach Finklestein, tenor

American-born Canadian Zach Finkelstein has established himself as a young tenor of note. He sang *The Rooster* in Stravinsky's *Renard* with the Mark Morris Dance Group at BAM and his association with Morris continues with performances of Satie's *Socrates* and Beethoven's *The Muir* in Pittsburgh, Cleveland and at Princeton. He has appeared at BAM in Thomson's *Four Saints in Three Acts*, at Carnegie Hall for 'The Song Continues Workshop' and Tanglewood as the Cat/Milkman in Knussen's *Higglety Pigglety Pop!* This season, he appears with the Grand Philharmonic Choir of Kitchener Waterloo (Mozart's *Requiem*), the Ontario Philharmonic (*Messiah*), and the Toronto Classical Singers (Schubert's *Mass in E flat* and Bach's *Magnificat*). Of particular note were his recent appearances at Trinity Wall Street in New York singing *Messiah* (also at Lincoln Center) and works of Steve Reich. Mr. Finkelstein holds an Artist Diploma (Voice) from the Royal Conservatory's Glenn Gould School and a Bachelor of Arts (Honors) in Political Science from McGill University.



Ben Grossman, hurdy gurdy, percussion

Ben Grossman is a busy musician: improviser, studio musician, composer, noisemaker and audio provocateur. He works in many fields, having played on over 80 CDs, soundtracks for film and television, sound design for theatre, installations, work designed for radio transmission, and live performances spanning early medieval music to experimental electronica. Ben's tools of choice are electronics, percussion, and, especially, the hurdy gurdy (*vielle à roue*), a contemporary electro-acoustic string instrument with roots in the European middle ages. He studied the instrument in Europe and has also studied Turkish music in Istanbul. With an abiding interest in pushing the limits of his instruments and pushing the boundaries of whatever venue or medium in which he works, Ben's solo CD, *Macrophone* was released in 2007 and features a unique two disc form for simultaneous, aleatoric playback.



Michael Ibrahim, nay, mizmar

Michael Ibrahim is one of the newest and most innovative emerging artists to the Arab music scene. A Syrian American, Michael was born in Sterling Heights, Michigan. He has studied the *oud* since the age of ten and the *nay* since the age of twenty. After completing his Bachelors degree in music performance at Eastern Michigan University, Michael went on to pursue a Masters Degree in Conducting at Wayne State University. Michael is also the Founder and director of the Michigan Arab Orchestra, a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to the performance and education of Arab music.



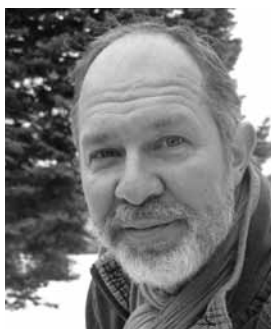
Paul Jenkins, portative organ

Paul Jenkins cultivates an eclectic musical career as a keyboardist and tenor. A member of the Toronto Consort since 1990, he also performs regularly with the Aradia Ensemble, and has appeared with some of Canada's leading baroque and early music groups, including Tafelmusik, Opera Atelier, Ensemble Anonymus and La Nef. Guest appearances include Apollo's Fire, the Cleveland Baroque Orchestra, the Windsor, Kitchener-Waterloo and Toronto Symphony Orchestras, Orchestra London, Opera in Concert, the Toronto Chamber Choir, Esprit Orchestra, I Furiosi, Toronto Masque Theatre, and many music festivals. Paul also enjoys touring, recording and giving recitals.



Pierre-Yves Martel, viola da gamba

Since settling in Montreal in 2004, Pierre-Yves Martel has started an international career in both improvised and early music, working with musicians from diverse cultures and backgrounds. After several years of study and research on the double bass, he decided in 2008 to abandon that instrument to focus on the viola da gamba. He is the founder and artistic director of the award-winning group Quartetski, dedicated to the reinterpretation of works by great composers in an improvised context. Among his most recent projects are Saint Laurens, a collaboration with Philippe Lauzier which has performed in Canada, France, Germany, Norway and Austria, and the trio XYZ: la formule xyz, a project conceived with Lauzier and turntablist Martin Tétrault. As a member of Constantinople since 2008, he has contributed to more than a dozen original projects, including *Versailles à Topkapi*, co-directed with Kiya Tabassian and featuring his arrangements of the music of Marin Marais.



Diego Matamoros, readings

Diego Matamoros has been performing, for both stage and screen for more than thirty years. Co-founder in 1998 of the Soulpepper Theatre Company with Albert Schultz and ten other prominent Canadian theatre artists, Mr. Matamoros has spent the last fifteen years performing leading roles with the company. He has performed in Canada and in the United States in leading roles, including such major centres as New York City, Chicago, and Cincinnati, Ohio. Most recently he co-created and performed a one man 'fragment' for the theatre entitled *The Aleph*, based on a Jorge Luis Borges short story of the same title. Mr. Matamoros is the recipient of several awards, including four Dora Mavor Moore Awards for best performance as well as a Gemini award for his role in the Canadian mini-series *The Sleep Room*. He most recently appeared as Josef in Jeremy Podeswa's acclaimed feature film *Fugitive Pieces*.



Peter Moss, dramatic consultant

Peter Moss has worked extensively as a director and producer and executive producer in theatre and television. In television he directed movies for the CBC and has worked as a broadcaster in both private and public broadcasting. Most recently he has been Executive Vice President of Programming and Production for Corus TV. In theatre he has been the Artistic Director of Young People's Theatre in Toronto and directed for the Stratford Festival and other major regional theatres



Laura Pudwell, mezzo soprano

Laura Pudwell's reputation as a superb vocalist has been well-established as a result of her performances worldwide. Her vast repertoire ranges from early music to contemporary works. Ms. Pudwell is equally at home on the opera, oratorio or recital stage, and has received international acclaim for her recordings. On the opera stage, Ms Pudwell has performed across Canada with such companies as Opera Atelier, the Calgary Opera, Vancouver Early Music and Festival Vancouver, as well as with the Houston Grand Opera and the Cleveland Opera. Laura Pudwell is a regular participant in many festivals, and appears regularly with the Toronto Consort, and is a frequent guest soloist with Tafelmusik, the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, the Toronto Chamber Choir, Symphony Nova Scotia, the St. Lawrence Choir, to name a few.



David Roth, baritone

A graduate of the vocal performance programme at the University of Toronto, baritone David Roth studied under the direction of Patricia Kern. David has sung in Canada, the U.S., and great Britain as both soloist and chamber musician with such organizations as the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir, and the Toronto Masque Theatre. David has appeared as a featured soloist with Tafelmusik in the programme Bach in Leipzig and the 30th anniversary celebration, the Durham County Chamber Choir in performance of Faure's requiem and the Kitchener Symphony Orchestra in Kurt Weill's *The Seven Deadly Sins* David has recently appeared in recital with the Aldeburgh Connection at the Bayfield festival of song and in concert with I Furiosi looks forward to engagements this coming season with Tafelmusik, The Toronto Consort, Maritime Concert Opera and others.



Roula Said, vocalist, readings

Roula Said is a multi-faceted artist who has dedicated her talents to Middle Eastern music and dance. One of Canada's leading lights in the world of bellydance, Roula is the director of Om Laila Bellydance, the producer of FunkaBelly (Toronto's premier global Grooves Dance Party and Bellydance Cabaret), and the vocalist, dancer and percussionista of Gypsy/Arabic funk band, Nomadica (which she co-leads with trumpeter and composer, David Buchbinder). As a musician, she sings and plays qanun and percussion, having studied with George Sawa, Simon Shaheen, Bassam Bishara and master musicians in Syria.



Kiya Tabassian, setar

Kiya Tabassian was born in Tehran, Iran, immigrating to Quebec in 1990. He has been trained in Persian music under Reza Ghasemi and Kayhan Kalhor. He studied musical composition at the Conservatoire de musique de Montréal with Gilles Tremblay. In 1998, he co-founded Constantinople, a Montréal-based ensemble which has earned an international reputation for its unique juxtaposition of early musical sources and the living traditions of the Middle East. He has recorded 11 CDs for the Atma and Analekta labels and has created with Constantinople over 30 original programs performing them at some of the most prestigious festivals and venues around the world. Over the past decade, he has staged nearly 400 concerts in 91 cities in 20 different countries.



Soundstreams Fundraising Gala on Tuesday, February 5, 2013 on the 68th floor of First Canadian Place

A rare opportunity to experience one of Toronto's most spectacular locations, the evening will also feature a one-of-a-kind silent auction.

6:00pm Cocktail reception
7:00pm Dinner
68th floor, First Canadian Place

Join us of a dazzling dinner gala exploring the theme of musical variation. From The Beatles to Gershwin to Berio, Soundstreams artist will delight with their take on popular classics.

Limited seating available

To purchase your ticket please call or contact
Christina Niederwanger at 416-504-1282

*Soundstreams Annual Fundraising Gala
is generously hosted by:*



INTERVIEW WITH COMPOSER JAMES ROLFE

James Rolfe's long history with Soundstreams has included performances of 8 new works. This January, he premieres his latest as part of *The Three Faces of Jerusalem* concert. He recently shared his inspiration for this work, as well as his advice for turning 30, with Soundstreams.



Si-o-se Pol Bridge, Isfahan, Iran

Your new piece is called *Five and a Half Bridges*. Tell us where the “bridge” metaphor comes from and how it relates to the *Three Faces of Jerusalem* concert.

The writer André Alexis had the idea to use, in his words, “the bridge as metaphor for connection (Jerusalem itself being a place where many cultures meet), the bridge as erotic symbol, as symbol of desire and longing.” It so happens that we both love bridges, relating to them as mysterious and powerful things.

How does each verse of the piece correlate musically to each specific bridge?

I took musical cues from the words for each bridge. For Shaharah in Yemen, “Sitting in the sun / miles above” brought to mind trudging and toiling in the blazing sun, which became something of a work song or field holler from the American south, with a middle eastern inflection. For Arkadiko in Mycenaea, the image of horses frothing led to music that gallops madly back and forth. The final bridge in Jerusalem is different, as it’s “imaginary, unfinished, a bridge to connect this world to our best imaginings of this world.” So the music is yearning, the chorus repeatedly intoning “Why?,” the solo voice answering, tumbling in refrain after refrain, leaving the question open.

Tell us about your composing process – do you have any rituals or funny habits that help you?

Every day, I try to remember my dreams, to go for a run, to compose, to eat well and stay in balance. Music shows up whenever it pleases, or not: you have to be tuned in, to keep your mind and heart and body open for it.

You have worked numerous times with Lawrence and Soundstreams, what is one of your favourite Soundstreams moments?

There have been so many wonderful performers, and it has been a joy and a privilege to work with them all. One of the most recent, in March 2011 with Trio Mediaeval and the Toronto Consort, was a standout.

Soundstreams is celebrating our 30th birthday this year. What do you wish you had known at 30 that you would like to share?

I wish I had been more understanding and accepting of myself, of my music, and of the people around me.

(cont.)

You recently spent a year living abroad. How did that time away add to your insights on the contemporary music community in Toronto?

I was in Wellington, New Zealand, a much smaller city. Its arts community is lively and welcoming and accomplished, but returning to Toronto made me realize the depth of our own community—composers, performers, producers, and audiences, there is so much going on.

Lightning Round

Favourite city: Toronto!

Worst airport: Los Angeles

Guilty pleasure song: *Boys & Girls*, by Martin Solveig, with Dragonette

Best concert hall: Koerner Hall, Toronto

Favourite restaurant: Curry Twist, The Junction

TEXT

Five and a Half Bridges

by André Alexis

1. Pont-Marie (Paris)

A bridge over the Seine,
Boats pass under, no birds
spring up. Somewhere, buried
somewhere, two who embraced
as their barque went under
took what was meant for us.

2. The Stone Arch in Shaharah (Yemen)

Sitting in the sun, miles
above, one hand closed on
a cracked piece, one closed on
a proper deception.
Finger and thumb, thumb and
stone finger on nothing.

3. Arkadiko (Mycenaea)

On the road from Tyrins
to Epidauros or
back, grinding earth to dust,
horses frothing, sunlight
beating down on a stone
aleph cracked smooth.

4. Si-o-se Pol (Iran)

At sundown, windows like
candles, rippling on dark
skin. Darkness crimped with light.
Light yearning for itself,
stretched out and flowering,
sturdy in Isfahan.

5. Alexandra Bridge (Ottawa)

Winter itself, in steel
and stone, grumbles at birds,
scratches the open wounds
of the black bleeding flesh
beneath the white cottoned
river. So many years
gone, I've lost grief to grief.

6. A Bridge in Jerusalem

Why not chaste, the way a lone cloud in a wide,
blue sky is chaste?
Why not a crossroad in the air?
Why not a living creature, with wings?
Why not an instrument to sound while the rails
drum mindlessly?
Why not, on iron shoulders, carried off?
Why not, chimerical in the desert, a bridge
of bridges

going nowhere out
going all ways in?

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350 King Street West

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Sayonara and I, Worker

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Never Forget, Never Give Up

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