DIFFERENT TRAINS

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FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Soundstreams audiences are accustomed to programs that pursue themes: musical, extra-musical and sometimes both. This program does both, a direct result of a chance meeting on the street with violinist and coach par excellence Barry Shiffman. Barry has been a mentor to the impressive Rolston String Quartet, and mentioned they had rights for a limited time to a recent video created for Steve Reich’s iconic “Different Trains.”

While we have programmed a number of Reich’s best known works, often in his presence, never have we presented “ Different Trains,” and the opportunity to present it with the Rolstons in this special version with video proved irresistible. So repertoire for strings became the evening’s clear musical theme.

At the same time we made that decision, we were looking for visiting mentors for our annual Emerging Composers Workshop (ECW). Two composers previously featured in our series had each written compelling string works: Dorothy Chang (Vancouver), “Streams” for solo viola; and Rolf Wallin (Oslo, Norway), “Curiosity Cabinet” and “Swans Kissing,” each for string quartet. We programmed these three works and invited both composers (and the Rolstons!) to be in residence for the ECW, which will conclude tomorrow morning after ten intensive days. Rounding out tonight’s program is one of R. Murray Schafer’s most beloved works, his “String Quartet #2 (Waves).”

In terms of extra-musical themes, our insightful colleague David Jaeger has pointed out in his program note that several of tonight’s works are themed around water. And Reich’s Different Trains bears musical witness to the Holocaust, one of the possible responses to philosopher and composer Theodor Adorno’s assertion that “poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric.”

Lawrence Cherney
Artistic Director, Soundstreams

Soundstreams would like to acknowledge that this event takes place on traditional territories. These territories include the Wendat, Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nations, and the Métis Nation.

ABOUT SOUNDSTREAMS

A world leader among contemporary music companies, Soundstreams is the foremost global presenter of new Canadian music. Lawrence Cherney, Artistic Director and Ben Dietschi, Executive Director are committed to showcasing the work of living and international composers with a focus on innovative thematic and experiential programming. Soundstreams also serves a broad community of music lovers through free outreach and education programs.

They include; Encounters, a free discovery series featuring performances, discussions, and audience participation; the Emerging Composer Workshop, helping talented contemporary composers worldwide launch their careers; BMO SoundWave provides accessible tickets to young adults; and SoundMakers provides interactive learning experiences online, in the classroom, and in the community.
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We are working together with Soundstreams to make a difference in our communities.
## Program

**Rolston String Quartet**
Luri Lee, Violin  
Emily Kruspe, Violin  
Hezekiah Leung, Viola  
Jonathan Lo, Cello  
Steven Dann, Viola

### R. Murray Schafer
(b. 1953, Canada)

#### String Quartet No. 2 “Waves”

**Rolston String Quartet**

### Rolf Wallin
(b. 1957, Norway)

#### Curiosity Cabinet
- I. Saltarello  
- II. Barcarole I  
- III. 4 x 4 x 4  
- IV. O Schmerz!  
- V. Corrente  
- VI. Vesper  
- VII. Momentum  
- VIII. À propos  
- IX. Barcarole 2  
- X. ¡Arriba!  
- XI. Carillon

**Rolston String Quartet**

### Dorothy Chang
(b. 1970, Canada)

#### Streams
- I. with fury  
- II. diffused  
- III. Breathless

**Steven Dann, viola**

### Rolf Wallin
(b. 1957, Norway)

#### Swans Kissing

**Rolston String Quartet**

**INTERMISSION**

### Steve Reich
(b. 1936, United States)

#### Different Trains
- I. America—Before the war  
- II. Europe—During the war  
- III. After the war

**Rolston String Quartet**  
Video by Beatrix Caravaggio

*The Rolston String Quartet appears with generous support from Randall Howard & Judy McMullan.*  

Due to the presentation of copyrighted materials, photography and videography is strictly forbidden.
A composer’s inspiration can come from anywhere. A quick scan of the titles of the works in tonight’s program reveals a wide range of suggestive images. In fact, all the music on the program is laden with deep meaning, derived from non-musical sources.

R. Murray Schafer’s “String Quartet No. 2,” subtitled, “Waves”, is constructed from a specific and intricately detailed source. Schafer revealed, “In the course of the World Sound-scape Project, we recorded and analyzed ocean waves on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of Canada. The recurrent pattern of waves is always asymmetrical but we have noted that the duration from crest to crest usually falls between six and eleven seconds. It is this wave motion that gives the quartet its rhythm and structure. The listener will readily hear the dynamic undulations of waves in this piece, and as the piece develops, several types of wave motion are combined. Aside from this, I have sought to give the quartet a liquid quality in which everything is constantly dissolving and flowing into everything else. That is to say, the material of the work is not fixed but is perpetually changing, and even though certain motivic figures are used repeatedly, they undergo continual dynamic, rhythmic and tempo variation.”

In 1978 Schafer was awarded the inaugural Jules Léger Prize for New Chamber Music for this now iconic Canadian string quartet.

Vancouver composer Dorothy Chang’s 2005 composition for solo viola, “Streams,” develops in a much different way. She wrote, “The title of Streams refers to the stream of consciousness approach to its formal structure. Written in three short movements, the piece features a number of musical ideas that reappear in various forms throughout the work. The development of the material is loosely structured, unfolding freely in a flow of musical gestures that alternately connect, leap to other ideas or circle back on themselves. Small fragments and motives are recycled and reinterpreted, moving from an aggressive and declamatory opening movement, ‘with fury’, to a quiet and introspective second movement, ‘diffused’, and closing with a fast, light scherzo entitled ‘breathless’.”
In the case of Norwegian composer Rolf Wallin’s string quartets, “Swans Kissing” (2010) and “Curiosity Cabinet” (2009), there are contrasting sources of inspiration. Swedish artist Hilma af Klint’s (1862-1944) series of paintings, “The Swan” (1914) is a set of increasingly abstract variations on a striking figurative picture: one white swan flying down from above on a black background, and one black swan flying up from below on a white background. Their beaks meet with a kiss in the middle of the picture. Wallin says, “Like these paintings, my “Swans Kissing” is split in two. Two bodies of music mirror each other exactly in some aspects, but differ vastly in character. The first body flows slowly and viscerally upwards, the second pushes downwards with a relentless pulse. They meet with a “kiss” halfway through the piece.”

On the other hand, Wallin’s earlier quartet, “Curiosity Cabinet” is a group of eleven miniature quartets inspired by the age old practice of making curiosity cabinets, a practice, Wallin says, “followed by kings, scientists, rich merchants etc. of collecting remarkable natural and man made objects: unicorn’s horns, wondrous corals and giant pearls, artificial nightingales, mermaids’ skeletons, breathtaking artifacts, deformed creatures in glass jars. And above it all: a stuffed crocodile appearing to walk upside down under the ceiling.

“I don’t expect this collection of musical miniatures to achieve miracles, but I hope it can serve as a small cabinet of musical curiosity for the curious listener.”

American composer Steve Reich wrote about “Different Trains” (1988), for String Quartet and pre-recorded performance tape, “The idea for the piece came from my childhood. When I was one year old my parents separated. My mother moved to Los Angeles and my father stayed in New York. Since they arranged divided custody, I travelled back and forth by train frequently between New York and Los Angeles from 1939 to 1942 accompanied by my governess. While the trips were exciting and romantic at the time I now look back and think that, if I had been in Europe during this period, as a Jew I would have had to ride very different trains.

“With this in mind I wanted to make a piece that would accurately reflect the whole situation. In order to prepare the tape I did the following:

1. Record my governess Virginia, then in her seventies, reminiscing about our train trips together.
2. Record a retired Pullman porter, Lawrence Davis, then in his eighties, who used to ride lines between New York and Los Angeles, reminiscing about his life.
3. Collect recordings of Holocaust survivors speaking of their experiences.
4. Collect recorded American and European train sounds of the ’30s and ’40s.

“The strings then literally imitate that speech melody. ‘Different Trains’ is in three movements. They are:

1. ‘America—Before the war’
2. ‘Europe—During the war’
3. ‘After the war.’”
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Rolston String Quartet
Photo by Bo Huang Photography
Rolston String Quartet

The 2018 recipient and first international ensemble chosen for the prestigious Cleveland Quartet Award from Chamber Music America, Canada’s Rolston String Quartet continue to receive acclamation and recognition for their musical excellence. In 2016, a monumental year, they earned First Prize at the 12th Banff International String Quartet Competition (BISQC). In that same year, hey won Astral’s National Auditions and Grand Prize of the 31st Chamber Music Yellow Springs Competition. They were also prize-winners at the 2016 Bordeaux International String Quartet Competition and the inaugural M-Prize competition. There is no wonder they were named among CBC Radio’s “30 Hot Canadian Classical Musicians Under 30” in 2016.

On the heels of their Banff win, Rolston String Quartet immediately embarked upon the BISQC Winner’s Tour, taking them to Germany, Italy, Austria, Canada, and United States. As “Ludwig van Toronto” states, “they performed with a maturity and cohesion rivaling the best string quartets in the world.”

The Rolston String Quartet – Luri Lee (violin), Hezekiah Leung (viola), Jonathan Lo (cello), and new member as of spring 2018 Emily Kruspe (violin) – was formed in the summer of 2013 at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity’s Chamber Music Residency. They take their name from Canadian violinist Thomas Rolston, founder and longtime director of the Music and Sound Programs at the Banff Centre.

Steven Dann
Viola

Upon graduation from university Steven Dann was named Principal Viola of the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa, Canada, a position he has subsequently held with the Tonhalle Orchestra in Zurich, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam, the Vancouver Symphony and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

Dann has collaborated as a soloist with Sir Andrew Davis, Rudolph Barshai, Jiri Belohlavek, Sir John Elliott Gardiner, Jukka-Pekka Saraste and Vladimir Ashkenazy.

Since 1990 Dann has been a member of the Smithsonian Chamber Players in Washington D.C. and was a founding member of the Axelrod String Quartet. He is currently violist of both the Zebra Trio (with violinist Ernst Kovacic and cellist Anssi Karttunen) and Toronto’s twice Grammy-nominated ARC Ensemble.

Dann teaches viola and chamber music at the Glenn Gould School in Toronto’s Royal Conservatory of Music and is the coordinator of the chamber music program at the Domaine Forget in Quebec.
**Dorothy Chang**

*Dorothy Chang’s catalog includes over seventy works for solo, chamber and large ensembles as well as collaborations involving theatre, dance and video. Her interest in cross-cultural and interdisciplinary collaboration has led to a variety of projects including; a radio play adaptation of Gertrude Stein’s “White Wines” for four vocalists and speaking percussionist, several mixed chamber ensemble works for Chinese and Western instruments, and most recently, a collaboration with choreographer Yukichi Hattori and four other composers in the large-scale True North Symphonic Ballet, which premiered in 2017 by the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra.*

Awards and honours that Chang has received include a Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, awards from the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, the International Alliance for Women in Music, Mu Phi Epsilon, the National Society of Arts and Letters, Meet the Composer and the Jacob Druckman Orchestra Prize from the Aspen Music Festival.

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**Steve Reich**

*Steve Reich has been called “America’s greatest living composer” (The Village Voice), “…the most original musical thinker of our time” (The New Yorker), and “…among the great composers of the century” (New York Times). His music has been influential to composers and mainstream musicians all over the world. He is a leading pioneer of Minimalism, having in his youth broken away from the “establishment” that was serialism. His music is known for steady pulse, repetition, and a fascination with canons; it combines rigorous structures with propulsive rhythms and seductive instrumental color. It also embraces harmonies of non-Western and American vernacular music (especially jazz). “Different Trains” and “Music for 18 Musicians” have each earned him GRAMMY awards, and his “documentary video opera” works—“The Cave” and “Three Tales”, done in collaboration with video artist Beryl Korot—have pushed the boundaries of the operatic medium. Over the years his music has significantly grown both in expanded harmonies and instrumentation, resulting in a Pulitzer Prize for his 2007 composition, Double Sextet.*

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**R. Murray Schafer**

*Born in Sarnia, Ontario in 1933, R. Murray Schafer has gained an international reputation not only for his work as a composer, but also as an educator, researcher, writer, ecologist, and visual artist.*

A highly prolific composer, Schafer has produced works in every musical genre, from opera to music theatre, to chamber and orchestral music, by way of pieces for choir and a variety of soloists. His ten string quartets are among his most significant works.

The composer’s celebrated book, “The Tuning of the World” (1977), documents the results of the World Soundscape Project—research that brings together the social, scientific, and artistic aspects of sound and which introduced the notion of sonic ecology.

Schafer was the first recipient of the Glenn Gould Prize, and was also awarded the Molson Prize for his contribution to the arts. Schafer holds six honorary doctorates from universities in Canada, France, and Argentina.
Rolf Wallin

Composer and avant-garde performance artist Rolf Wallin has established a reputation as one of the leading Scandinavian composers of his generation. Much of Wallin’s music combines an intuitive freedom with a rigorous mathematical approach, such as use of fractal algorithms to construct melody and harmony, resulting in a music that often hints at the influence of Ligeti, Xenakis and Berio. But far from being abstract, Wallin’s music often connects directly with the world around him, most notably in works such as “Act” (2004), a celebration of the power of cooperation, “Concerning King” (2006), based on speech patterns from Martin Luther King, and “Strange News” (2007), which tells the story of the rehabilitation of child soldiers in Africa.

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