

NewMusic NewCollege

2020

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Aram Boghosian

CLAIRE CHASE

SATURDAY, JANUARY 30, 2021

New College
THE HONORS COLLEGE of Florida

NewMusicNewCollege

Mark Dancigers, Director
R. L. Silver, Producer

CLAIRE CHASE

Saturday, January 30, 2021 • 5 p.m.

PepsiCo Arcade • New College of Florida

Event Sponsors:
Arlene and Larry Dunn

PROGRAM

<i>Meditation & Calligraphy</i> for solo bass flute (2014)	Felipe Lara (b. 1979)
<i>Fast is the Century</i> (2014) for contrabass flute	Du Yun (b. 1977)
<i>The Stimulus of Loss</i> (2016) for flute and pre-recorded ondes martenot	Suzanne Farrin (b. 1976)
Excerpts from <i>Sex Magic</i> (2020)	Liza Lim (b. 1966)
<i>Moss—on the Sacred Erotic</i> for contrabass flute	
<i>Throat-Song</i> for ocarina	
Excerpts from <i>Pan</i> (2018-2019)	Marcos Balter (b. 1974)
<i>Echo</i> for flute and electronics	
<i>Soliloquy</i> for solo flute	

Thanks & Acknowledgments

Claire wishes to thank New Music New College,
The Hermitage Artist Retreat, and the Density 2036 artists.

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A NOTE FROM DIRECTOR MARK DANCIGERS

New Music New College is thrilled to present the astounding flutist and musical pioneer Claire Chase. We must begin by expressing our gratitude to all of our supporters, both individual and institutional, who have helped make this presentation a reality in this challenging year. To our event sponsors, Arlene and Larry Dunn, thank you for making this beautiful experience possible.

To the New College administration, President O'Shea and Provost Sherman, and their offices: we couldn't do this without your help. To the Mellon Grant, and Daniel Hernandez in the Division of Humanities: you are stars.

We thank also the Tourist Development Council for their continued belief in our mission and for their support. To all of our donors and to our Advisory Board: you've made it possible for us to share this time and these sounds together. To all of you with us tonight: you all make this series.

Total commitment. These two words leap to mind when trying to convey the work of Claire Chase, tonight's performer. You may notice this commitment in the communicative and expressive way that Claire performs every composition. In addition to performance, Claire Chase has committed herself to developing new – often, radically new – music for flutes of all kinds, through her extensive commissioning of contemporary composers from a broad range of backgrounds and approaches. Not stopping at that, she has brought this music to both audiences and students of the flute around the world.

Tonight's program allows a glimpse into this enormous and inspiring undertaking. Tonight's music was all written and conceived for Claire – you will rarely hear a program of works more specifically matched to a performer. This intensely collaborative melding of composers and performers is a theme we will return to throughout the spring season.

Thank you again for being with us for this special experience and exploration.

Mark Dancigers
Director, New Music New College

ABOUT CLAIRE CHASE

Claire Chase is a soloist, collaborative artist, curator, and advocate for new and experimental music. Over the past decade she has given the world premieres of hundreds of new works for the flute, and she has championed new music internationally by building organizations, forming alliances, pioneering commissioning initiatives, and supporting educational programs that reach new audiences. Chase founded the International Contemporary Ensemble in 2001, was named a MacArthur Fellow in 2012, and in 2017 was the first flutist to be awarded the Avery Fisher Prize from Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. She founded and directs the twenty-three-year initiative *Density 2036*, a project to commission an entirely new body of repertoire for solo flute leading up to the centennial of Edgard Varèse's seminal 1936 flute solo *Density 21.5*. Each year leading up to the centennial, Chase premieres a program of newly commissioned music, and in 2036 she will play a 24-hour marathon of all of the repertory created in the project. In December 2020, the first five years of *Density 2036* was released in their world premiere recordings in a four-album compilation produced in collaboration with Meyer Sound Laboratories in Berkeley, CA.

A deeply committed educator, Chase is currently Professor of the Practice of Music at Harvard University, where she teaches courses on ensemble building, cultural activism and transdisciplinary collaboration. She lives in Brooklyn.

PROGRAM NOTES:

Felipe Lara (b. 1979): *Meditation & Calligraphy for solo bass flute (2014)*

From April to June, I was fortunate to take part in a residency at Civitella Ranieri, a 15th-century castle turned foundation and residency in Umbria, Italy. One former fellow, G. Mend-Ooyo, a Mongolian poet and calligrapher particularly called my attention. He was born and raised by a nomadic herding family, in the Mongolian steppe; his work has been translated in forty languages. I asked him to show me some of his work and he invited me to visit his studio in order to see the work he had produced during the residency at Civitella. Mend-Ooyo's calligraphy particularly impressed me. The bold gestures, elemental lyricism, and minute details were astounding to me.

The following afternoon Mend-Ooyo presented me with two wonderful calligraphies, both in black, red, pencil, over a yellow and gold paper; one with the Mongolian symbol for music, the other with fire and water symbols.

I asked Mend-Ooyo: "How do you create such incredible calligraphies?" He replied, "Meditation, meditation, meditation for a very long time...then calligraphy with one quick gesture." I found the approach extremely poetic.

The following week Claire Chase arrived at the castle to work with me on *Parábolas na Caverna* and play a solo concert. I decided to present Mend-Ooyo with a small piece, as a gesture of my gratitude. I decided that I would "meditate" or imagine the general character of a solo bass flute work for an entire evening, then wake up and write it in less than 30 minutes.

The work uses the letters of G. Mend-Ooyo's name as a starting point for the pitch material: G (sol), Me (E flat, from solfege), D (re), Do (C) The vowel sounds from his name are also used to modulate the flute when singing and playing simultaneously is required.

—Felipe Lara

Du Yun (b.1977): *Fast is the Century* (2020) for contrabass flute

FAST IS THE CENTURY

Fast is the century. If I were wind
I would have peeled the bark off the trees
and the facades off the buildings in the outskirts.

If I were gold, I would have been hidden in cellars,
into crumbly earth and among broken toys,
I would have been forgotten by the fathers,
and their sons would remember me forever.

If I were a dog, I wouldn't have been afraid of
refugees, if I were a moon
I wouldn't have been scared of executions.

If I were a wall clock
I would have covered the cracks on the wall.

Fast is the century. We survive the weak earthquakes
watching towards the sky, yet not towards the ground.
We open the windows to let in the air
of the places we have never been.
Wars don't exist,
since someone wounds our heart every day.
Fast is the century.
Faster than the word.
If I were dead, everyone would have believed me
when I kept silent.

—Nikola Madzirov

Translated by Peggy and Graham W. Reid, Magdalena Horvat and Adam Reed

Suzanne Farrin (b. 1976): *The Stimulus of Loss* (2016) for flute and pre-recorded ondes martenot

A friend introduced me to the idea of Emily Dickinson's letters. He quoted a phrase in a talk that I found astounding ("to multiply the harbors does not diminish the sea"). As I went searching for that phrase, I began to read others along the way, each with its own sparkling revelation of her genius.

—Suzanne Farrin

Liza Lim: Excerpts from *Sex Magic* (2020)

Sex Magic (2020) is an evening-length piece for contrabass flute, electronics and an installation of kinetic percussion, about the sacred erotic in women's history.

This is a work about an alternative cultural logic of women's power as connected to cycles of the womb – the life-making powers of childbirth, the 'skin-changing', world-synchronizing temporalities of the body, and the womb centre as a site of divinatory wisdom and utterance.

Moss—on the Sacred Erotic for contrabass flute

Composer Notes:

Moss

The 'amphibians of the plant world', 'mosses and other small beings issue an invitation to dwell for a time right at the limits of ordinary perception'. True intimacy involves an intertwining cross-modal sensory exchange.

See: Robin Wall Kimmerer. *Gathering Moss: A Natural and Cultural History of Mosses*. Oregon State Uni. Press, 2003.

Throat-Song for ocarina

Composer Notes:

Throat

Seat of communication, creativity and truth-telling.

Ocarina

'Vessel flute' often made of clay used in both Mesoamerican and Chinese cultures.

—Liza Lim

Marcos Balter (b. 1974): Excerpts from *Pan* (2018-2019)

Echo for flute and electronics

Soliloquy for solo flute

The goat-god Pan is one of only two Greek deities said to have been put to death. But how can an immortal figure die at all? Should we understand the death of a god not as a contradiction in terms, but rather as the end of an epoch, or a system of values? If so, then what is it that dies with a figure like Pan — and is such a death a cause for grief, celebration, or something else entirely?

PAN, a 90-minute piece for solo flute, live electronics and mass community participation, is a meditation on ambiguity and the discomfort it brings. Pan is himself the consummate in-between. He is half man and half beast; as a demigod, his realm lies somewhere between heaven and earth. He is the symbol of fecundity and the creative urge; he is the weaver of melodies and the guardian of the wilderness. But he is also a cunning predator, whose lust and rapacity drives him to unspeakable deeds.

—Jennifer Judge

DENSITY INFO

Density 2036 is a 24-year project begun by Claire Chase in 2013 to commission a new body of repertory for solo flute each year until the 100th anniversary of Edgard Varèse's groundbreaking 1936 flute solo, *Density 21.5*. Each year until 2036, Claire will commission and premiere a new program of flute music that seeks to expand the boundaries of the instrument.

On December 18, 2020, the first five years (2013-2018) of Density material were released on a special four-album compilation on the Corbett vs. Dempsey label. The recordings were produced by John and Helen Meyer at Meyer Sound Laboratories in Berkeley, CA, with Matias Tarnopolsky, session producer and Dave Denison, recording engineer.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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