

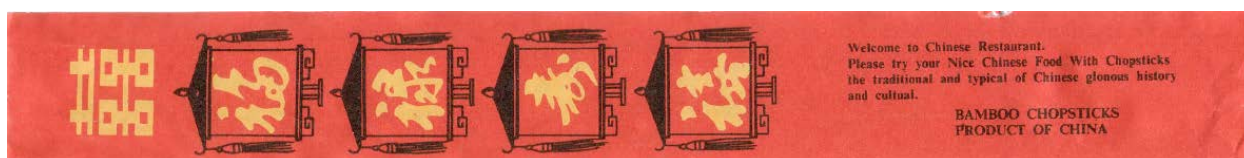
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American Modern Ensemble at National Sawdust on Wednesday, November 1, 2017, at 7:00 pm:

“Lingua Franca,” A Program of Recent and Brand New Music About Mangled Text, ICU Sounds, Rising, Falling, and Clashing Cultures

Guest Ensemble: SYBARITES



Message on chopstick wrapper in David Feurzeig's *Lingua Franca*



AME pianist Blair McMillen ([photo](#) by Bob London), [SYBARITES](#)

The third definition of the phrase “lingua franca” in the Merriam Webster dictionary is: “something resembling a common language.” *Lingua Franca* is the name of a work by David Feurzeig that titles American Modern Ensemble’s November 1 concert at Brooklyn’s National Sawdust – describing a program that also includes a diversity of recent and new works by three winners of AME’s 10th Annual Composition Competition – Pierce Gradone, Texu Kim, and Aaron Mencher – and AME founder Robert Paterson:

- **David Feurzeig’s *Lingua Franca* (2014, New York premiere)** for cello and bass, five settings of “unedited texts from around the world, composed in appreciation of the range of global English expression” which are also recited by the players
- **Pierce Gradone’s *The Art of Falling* (2011)** for solo piano

- **Texu Kim's *Co.Ko. – un poco Loco* (2017)** for solo piano, “a 10-minute musical essay in three movements, reflecting contemporary Korea, where its own traditions and Western influences mingle in a slightly crazy way”
- **Aaron Mencher's *Rise* (2016)** for solo cello, evoking its title both figuratively and literally
- **Robert Paterson's *Ouvir Estrelas* (2017, world premiere)**, a song setting of a poem in Portuguese by Brazilian Parnassian poet Olavo Bilac
- **Robert Paterson's *I See You*, the New York premiere of a version for string quintet and recording of this 2016 work**, originally scored for string orchestra and recording, inspired by a week the composer spent by his father's bedside in the ICU

The acclaimed string quintet **SYBARITE5**, the program's guest ensemble, will perform *I See You*. AME cellist **Dave Eggar** performs *Rise* and is joined by SYBARITE5 bassist **Louis Levitt** for *Lingua Franca*; AME pianist **Blair McMillen** performs *Co.Ko. – un poco Loco* and *The Art of Falling*. *Ouvir Estrelas* features Brazilian soprano **Juliana Franco** as guest artist, performing with Blair McMillen.

AME Composition Competition

This year marked the 10th year of the AME Composition Competition, which gives a monetary award and a performance of a work to the winners of each of its three categories: a third tier for composers of all ages; a second tier for those ages 18-35, and a first tier for those up to age 22. This year's winners – chosen from 162 applicants – are Texu Kim, Pierce Gradone, and Aaron Mencher.

***Lingua Franca* (New York premiere) and that chopstick wrapper...**

As David Feurzeig writes, “Longfellow's romantic notion that music is the ‘universal language of mankind’ is not supported by modern scholarship, which suggests that English is today the world's most widely understood language. Non-native outnumber native speakers almost 3 to 1, so in a sense, those who fancy themselves English's experts are only conservators of a minority dialect. This idea delights me.”

The “poetry” of all but one of the work's five movements, transcribed word for word from actual consumer packaging, will also be performed by the musicians. “The choppy phrasing and curt punctuation of ‘Rice Noodle’ inspired the musical setting, which is severe, even authoritarian. ‘Chopstick Wrapper’ must be seen to be fully appreciated: at the end of the middle section, the performers team up to play the double bass together, their bows crossing as they play a certain well-known – *lingua franca* – children's piano piece.” The ensuing three movements are “Electric Blanket,” “Elevator Music,” and “Ice Tray.” www.uvm.edu/cas/music/profiles/david-feurzeig

Rise

Aaron Mencher says, “The piece's title comes from the idea of rising up from a situation. On the surface, this translates quite literally to the journey from the lowest notes on the cello in the beginning of the piece to the highest at the end of the piece. The climactic ending leaves the piece unresolved, begging to know if all of the effort was worth it.” www.menchermusic.com

Co.Ko. = Contemporary Korea

Texu Kim: "With 'Co.Ko.' being the abbreviation of Contemporary Korea and 'un poco Loco' meaning a little crazy in Spanish (chosen for rhyming), this piece is a 10-minute musical essay in three movements, reflecting contemporary Korea, where its own traditions and Western influences mingle in a slightly crazy way." The first movement is based on a traditional Korean musical genre called *sanjo*, or "scattered melody," the second and third parody the wildly popular K-pop (Korean pop music) genre, and the fourth and final segment draws on the house music trend popular in the 1980s. www.texukim.com

Ouvir Estrelas for voice and piano, world premiere

Translated as "Hearing Stars," this setting of a poem, Sonnet XIII from a series entitled "Via Láctea" ("Milky Way") by Olavo Bilac (1865-1918), a Brazilian Parnassian poet, was commissioned in honor of a friend of Paterson's father-in-law, whose father committed suicide.

I See You (ICU), New York premiere of version for string quintet and recording

Robert Paterson: "*I See You* is inspired by a week I spent at my father's side in a hospital. Having never spent much time in hospitals, I was unaccustomed to hearing the myriad of sounds, particularly in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), where my father lay incapacitated, in critical condition. It was incredibly sad: I could see him, but because he was so sedated, he was barely aware I was even in the room with him. Despite this, there was something strangely soothing and almost musical about the constant pattern of beeps and noises emanating from the machines. To pass the time, I would imagine an orchestra playing, with the litany of noises as accompaniment. ... Throughout the entire work, I incorporate sounds one might hear in an ICU, manipulated and mixed with recordings of heartbeats, breathing and the sounds of children playing. The piece ends with the overlapping patterns of my own heartbeat, my father's heartbeat, and my son's heartbeat, and even my son's heartbeat when he was in my wife's womb, creating an intimate, multi-generational, rhythmic tapestry." www.robertpaterson.com

American Modern Ensemble

Since its founding in 2005, American Modern Ensemble has premiered and performed over 250 works by over 175 living composers, has received acclaim from *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, and *Sequenza21*, among others, and has performed to capacity crowds at venues including Merkin Hall, Lincoln Center, the Rubin Museum, Dixon Place, and National Sawdust.

AME is committed to bridging the gap between audiences and creators, and aims to provide the most welcoming environment possible in which audiences can get to know the creators and performers. To date, over 95% of the composers whose works are being performed have attended the concerts, including John Luther Adams, John Corigliano, Sebastian Currier, David Del Tredici, Ben Johnston, Aaron Jay Kernis, Libby Larsen, Steven Mackey, Ingram Marshall, Paul Moravec, Christopher Rouse, Steven Stucky, Joan Tower, Chen Yi, and many others.

AME frequently collaborates with festivals and presenters such as the Cutting Edge New Music Festival, Prototype Opera Festival, American Opera Projects, and the Dance Theater of Harlem.

Since 2015, AME has been proud to have an ongoing "In-Situ" partnership with National Sawdust in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. www.americanmodernensemble.org

SYBARITE5

Comprised of Sami Merdinian and Sarah Whitney, violins; Angela Pickett, viola; Laura Metcalf, cello; and Louis Levitt, bass, SYBARITE5 has taken audiences by storm all across the US, forever changing the perception of chamber music performance. From Elgar to Radiohead and Visconti to Akiho, SYBARITE5's eclectic repertoire and commanding performance style is turning heads throughout the music world: "...in a program of serial high points, there were too many to mention" (The Washington Post). The quintet's debut album *Disturb the Silence*, was released in 2011 and quickly reached the top ten on the Billboard charts. The group's follow-up album, *Everything in its Right Place*, was released in 2012 at Carnegie Hall to critical acclaim. SYBARITE5's latest album, *Outliers*, featuring all new works from American composers, was released earlier this year. www.sybarite5.org

Robert Paterson, AME Artistic Director

Robert Paterson's music has been performed by the Louisville Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, American Composers Orchestra, Austin Symphony, Vermont Symphony, Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, New York New Music Ensemble, California EAR Unit, and Ensemble Aleph in Paris. In 2011, he was named Composer of The Year by the Classical Recording Foundation with a performance and celebration at Carnegie's Weill Hall. His music is featured in more than 20 recordings and has been on the Grammy® ballot annually since 2012. www.robertpaterson.com

Wednesday, November 1, 2017, at 7:30 pm

National Sawdust

AMERICAN MODERN ENSEMBLE: "Lingua Franca"

Blair McMillen, piano

Dave Eggar, cello

Guest Artists:

SYBARITE5

Juliana Franco, soprano

DAVID FEURZEIG: *Lingua Franca* for cello and bass (New York premiere)

PIERCE GRADONE: *The Art of Falling* for solo piano

TEXU KIM: *Co.Ko. – un poco Loco* for solo piano

AARON MENCHER: *Rise* for solo cello

ROBERT PATERSON: *Ouvir Estrelas* for voice and piano (World premiere)

ROBERT PATERSON: *I See You* for strings and recording (New York premiere of version for string quintet)

Tickets: \$29 in advance, \$34 at the door

<https://nationalsawdust.org/event/ame-music-by-david-feurzeig-pierce-gradone-texu-kim-robert-paterson-and-aaron-mencher/>

September 26, 2017