



Center for
EUROPEAN STUDIES
at the University of Florida

European Artists in Postwar Exile

a multidisciplinary conference

March 8–9, 2024

Guest Artist Recital Joseph Bognar, Piano

Friday March 8th, 2024

Pre-Concert Talk, 5:00pm

"Györgi Ligeti: A Life and Legacy in Exile"
Navid Bargrizan, East Carolina University

Artists' Panel Discussion, 5:30pm

Joseph Bognar, Navid Bargrizan, and Morgan Rich

Recital, 6:30pm

University of Florida School of Music
Recital Hall, Room 101

Program

Musica ricercata (1951–53)

Sostenuto - Misurato - Prestissimo

Mesto, rigido e cerimoniale

Allegro con spirito

Tempo di Valse (poco vivace -- "à l'orgue de Barbarie")

Rubato, Lamentoso

Allegro molto capriccioso

Cantabile, molto legato

Vivace, Energico

Adagio, Mesto (Béla Bartók in memoriam)

Vivace, Capriccioso

Andante misurato e tranquillo (Omaggio a Girolamo Frescobaldi)

György Ligeti
(1923–2006)

Acht Klavierstücke, op. 3 (1960)

Inesorabile, Andante con moto

Calmo

Sostenuto

Scorrevole

Prestissimo possibile

Grave

Adagio

Vivo

György Kurtág
(b. 1926)

Étude 5: *Arc-en-ciel* (1985)

György Ligeti

Étude 1: *In C* (rev. 2003)

Unsuk Chin
(b. 1961)

Hommage an György Ligeti (world premiere)

Navid Barghizan
(b. 1982)

Program Notes

Tonight's program puts the works of György Kurtág, Unsuk Chin, and Navid Bargrizan in dialogue with the *Musica ricercata* and a piano etude of **György Ligeti**. Ligeti wrote the collection of eleven short piano works that comprise the *Musica ricercata* over the period of 1951–53, and they are some of the last works he wrote before leaving his native Hungary. The *ricercare* (It., "to search for") as a genre dates back to the earliest years of keyboard composition, underscoring the belief that composing was a process of finding or discovery. In the hands of Ligeti, these pieces represent a self-imposed compositional challenge to the creator—how to compose within a strict system of limitations. Igor Stravinsky approached composition in this way, writing: "...my freedom will be so much the greater and more meaningful the more narrowly I limit my field of action and the more I surround myself with obstacles. Whatever diminishes constraint, diminishes strength. The more constraints one imposes, the more one frees one's self of the chains that shackle the spirit." (*Poetics of Music*)

Ligeti proceeds through the eleven movements of the *Musica ricercata*, designing compositional obstacles to be overcome: The first movement explores the possibility of composing with only two pitch classes, A and D. (In reality, it's an etude on the single pitch A, since D appears just once in the final bars of the piece). The second movement, a four-minute austere and ominous chant-like piece used later to great effect in Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut*, employs only three distinct pitches. The third movement presents four pitches (C, E, E-flat, and G) as a clever interplay between the C major and minor triads. So the *Musica ricercata* continues, with each movement including an additional pitch until all twelve chromatic pitches finally appear in the eleventh and final movement. To mark this culmination of the work, Ligeti quotes a chromatic tune from one of the foundational keyboard composers of the seventeenth century, Girolamo Frescobaldi. Frescobaldi wrote organ masses, collections of liturgical music to be used in alternation with the sung chant or as instrumental music to cover liturgical actions. The subject from his chromatic *ricercare* (from the Mass of the Apostles) provides the first six pitches for Ligeti's theme. Ligeti not only extends Frescobaldi's theme to encompass all twelve pitches but presents this melody a total of twelve successive times, cycling through the musical circle of fifths completely before beginning the process again. The countersubject to the theme, a descending chromatic line that Ligeti will return to again and again in his future compositions, sounds at times like a Shepard tone—an aural illusion that a sound is continually falling even though it's always wrapping back around itself. The entire work ends on the pitch A, bringing the cycle to completion exactly where it began.

Program Notes

As the movements progress and accumulate pitches, Ligeti takes the listener through a vast array of musical styles. Along the way, he pays homage to Béla Bartók who died in 1945, especially in the ninth and tenth movements which bear markers of Bartók's style. The fourth movement sounds like the street music of a barrel organ. The seventh movement indulges in a bit of musical minimalism, with a repeating left-hand ostinato against a melody that is disconnected from its accompaniment in terms of any fixed temporal relationship. Within the eleven movements of the set lay the seeds of so much of Ligeti's future musical language: the chromatic descents that evoke lament, note clusters, process-oriented music, propulsive rhythms, as well as extremes of dynamics, register, texture, and tempi.

György Kurtág's Acht Klavierstücke were written at the end of the 1950's, just a few years after the *Musica ricercata*. Kurtág met Ligeti at the Budapest Conservatory when they were both students, and the two struck up a friendship that lasted a lifetime. "I read [Ligeti's] scores and I could see that this was no student, but a full-blown musician. From that moment on, I was his follower, I was his satellite and orbited around him, and that was how our lifelong relationship was," Kurtág said in an August 16, 2023 interview with The Guardian. "Even after his death I feel the connection to him, to his undiminished curiosity."

Kurtág's collection is in an avant-garde musical language distinct from Ligeti's. It is highly atonal and employs extended performance techniques such as arm clusters. The eight pieces go by in a mere five minutes and their compactness remained a hallmark of Kurtág's compositional style throughout his career. Very much like Ligeti, Kurtág seems interested in setting up compositional challenges. The opening movement mirrors the opening of Ligeti's *Musica ricercata* with the throbbing bass and the insistence on repeated pitches. Like Ligeti, Kurtág also plays games with the pitches. The very brief second and third movements for the most part are constructed through the use of 11 distinct pitches. These pieces only end with the entry of the twelfth and final pitch, in both cases a C#, which has been omitted until this point.

Ligeti's three books of piano etudes are considered one of the most significant contributions to the piano repertoire in the 20th century. "**Arc-en-ciel**" from Book I is one of the more accessible of the 18 etudes, in terms of demands on both the player and listener. It is reminiscent of a jazz meditation, with a tempo indication for the pianist to perform in a flexible rhythm. Centered around the pitch C, the movement quickly strays into complex luminescent chords that are reminiscent of the harmonic language of Olivier Messiaen. The "rainbows" of the title are reflected in the arc-shaped phrases and the vivid colorful harmonies. Eventually, the piece ascends and dissolves into the uppermost reaches of the atmosphere.

Program Notes

Berlin-based composer **Unsuik Chin** was born in Seoul, South Korea, but left the country to pursue her music education in Europe, studying with Ligeti at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hamburg in the late 1980's – at the same time Ligeti was embarking on the composition of his etudes. As a student of Ligeti, her musical inspiration was ignited by seeking out examples from nearly every time and place. "Ligeti's teaching was completely unconventional. At that point, he was betraying his faith in the avant-garde. We listened to everything imaginable—ancient music, 'classical' music, jazz, a lot of non-European traditional music, modern outsiders, of course his own music, but nothing avant-garde," Chin reminisces in a 2017 interview with *Music and Literature* (9/10/17).

Chin has finished six out of an intended set of twelve etudes. The first movement, "In C," takes as its harmonic foundation the overtone series on the pitch C. As Chin's etude progresses, it accumulates speed and layers of sounds that resemble composer Conlon Nancarrow's player piano experiments. (Ligeti was influenced by the sounds of Nancarrow, who wrote music for player piano that in its complexity could exceed the capabilities of a single human player). The etude concludes in the same manner as Ligeti's etude, in the highest regions of the piano as just a final wisp of sound.

—Notes by Joseph Bogнар

In *Hommage an György Ligeti*, **Navid Bargrizan** honors the memory of the late maestro Ligeti, whose non-ideological, non-dogmatic compositional aesthetic and his insistent curiosity for diverse musical cultures have become instrumental in Bargrizan's artistic identity and evolving approach. Composed for and dedicated to pianist Joseph Bogнар, this piece avoids any direct associations with Ligeti's music; It rather alludes to Ligeti's core mindset: "composition as analogous to scientific research," where the composer poses a compositional question, seeks to address that question within the matrix he creates, and attempts to achieve a coherent musical structure. In this piece, two graceful dances borrowed from a non-definable, non-existent, imaginary folk musical tradition frame the meddling "comprovisando" section, where the pianist ruminates on the written notes and participates in shaping the musical narrative. Personal narratives substantiate this piece too: As Bargrizan witnessed Bogнар's captivating piano performance, learned about his Hungarian-German roots, and observed his interest in Ligeti's music, he reflected on his own past in the city of Hamburg. He inherited Ligeti's legacy through mentors such as maestro Manfred Stahnke, themselves pupils of Ligeti, who lived and taught in Hamburg for 30 years as an assimilated Hungarian-Jewish artist.

—Notes by Navid Bargrizan

About the Performer

Joseph Bognar is the Frederick A. and Mazie N. Reddel Professor of Music at Valparaiso University, where he teaches music theory and piano, and since 2012, he has held the post of Associate University Organist. He completed undergraduate studies in piano and organ at Valparaiso University, where he graduated summa cum laude. Awarded two university fellowships, he studied piano with internationally renowned accompanist John Wustman at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he earned his DMA in Performance and Literature.

He has played to enthusiastic audiences in the United States, Europe, and Asia and served on the faculties of the Maud Powell Music Festival, Lutheran Summer Music, and the Stamford International Music Festival, where he received acclaim for "his superb technique ... one could only marvel at this talented performer." (Evening Telegraph, U.K.). He was a founding member of the Castillon Piano Trio, whose performances in the United Kingdom were featured on BBC radio. His live chamber performances from Symphony Center, Chicago and the Chicago Cultural Center have aired on WFMT-FM, while his solo performances have featured some of the most formidable 20th-century piano works, including Rzewski's *The People United Will Never Be Defeated!* and Ives's Sonata no. 2: Concord, Mass. For the last eight years, his piano duo collaborations with pianist Nicole Lee have enthralled audiences with their powerful, energetic, and dynamic programs. With a unique versatility as a pianist, organist, and harpsichordist, he continues to perform in concerts, festivals, and conferences nationally and internationally.

Recent teaching interests have drawn him towards collaborations with colleagues in the STEM disciplines. In conjunction with the Department of Computer Science at Valpo, he developed and team-taught an interdisciplinary course in computational music, and he has mentored student research projects combining music with engineering and mathematics. As a further musical expression of these collaborations, he is the founder of ValpLork, Valparaiso University's first laptop orchestra.

With a focus on administration since 2009, he has served as Chair of the Department of Music at Valparaiso University for over ten years. He has served as Associate Regent on the national board of Pi Kappa Lambda (national music honor society) and is currently the Vice President (President-Elect) of that organization. He is a visiting team member and chair for the National Association of Schools of Music in the work of accreditation throughout the nation.

About Navid Bargrivan

Navid Bargrivan is an Assistant Professor of Music at East Carolina University. Before joining ECU, he taught Music History, Composition, Music Theory, Musicianship, General Humanities, and German language at the University of Florida, Texas A&M University-Commerce, Valparaiso University, and Dallas Goethe Center. Between 2001 and 2018, Bargrivan earned master's and doctoral degrees in musicology, composition, and art history from the Universität Hamburg and the University of Florida (doctoral advisor: Dr. Silvio dos Santos). His research projects have led to awards such as a one-year DAAD Postdoctoral Fellowship; several publications in the USA, Canada, Germany, Austria, and Turkey; and conference presentations, for instance, at Society for Music Theory, American Musicological Society, German Studies Association, Society for American Music, and International Association of the Study of Popular Music. Bargrivan's recent instrumental-chamber and electroacoustic compositions have resulted in approximately twenty premieres and more than seventy performances of his works in the North America and Europe. Virtuoso musicians and ensembles such as Laurent Estoppey, Steve Stusek, Susan Fancher, Tolgahan Çoğulu, Jonas Frølund, Katharina Uhde, Joseph Bogner, Boston String Quartet, Bold City Contemporary Ensemble, and Galan Trio have performed and recorded his works, and he was a 2018 Composer-In-Residence of the Harn Museum of Art (Gainesville, Florida). Bargrivan is a three-time finalist of American Prize for Composition, Chamber Music Division (2017, 2020, 2023) and his music is published under Navona, Ravello, and Neuma labels, as well as by Mahoor Institute and Edition Zalzal (www.navidbargrivan.com).

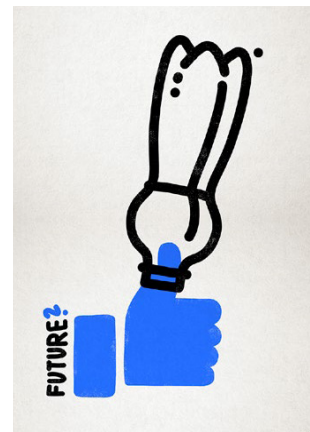
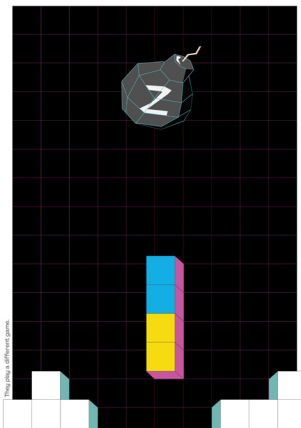
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