

AH YOUNG HONG

&

JACOB RHODEBECK

PERFORM

BABBITT

HAAS

HERSCH

Spectrum NYC
April 7, 2019
7:30 PM
70 Flushing Ave.
Brooklyn, NY

04.07.2019

Spectrum NYC presents

P R O G R A M

rake forth the embers

Michael Hersch (b. 1971)

Philomel

Milton Babbitt (1916-2011)

...wie stille brannte das Licht

Georg Friedrich Haas (b. 1953)

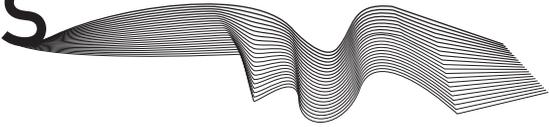
Ah Young Hong, soprano

Jacob Rhodebeck, piano

New York Premiere of *rake forth the embers*.
U.S. Premiere piano-vocal version of *...wie stille brannte das Licht*.

Please silence all electronic devices

NOTES



Dark Sounds at the Threshold of Burning

The two premieres on tonight's program each explore their own distinct corners of the proliferating landscape of sadness, a field upon which quotidian and chimerical images dissolve into one another. Babbitt's titular *Philomel* acts as an archetype: her myth tells us that after exacting revenge on her tormentor, the princess of Athens is transformed into a nightingale. The punishment for fervent hope is always a cage of abiding despair. The nightingale's unique evening song is the occupation of the unpaired of the species, it is a call for a companion in the ever-dimming void.

Michael Hersch's *rake forth the embers* and Georg Friedrich Haas' *...wie stille brannte das Licht* (how quietly burned the light) interpret the act of singing itself as a passage from light into darkness. This quiet burning of smoldering embers suggests a fire dying and dissolving slowly into black: ultimately a metaphor for life itself. Both Hersch and Haas play with the ambivalent chiaroscuro of this image to prolong our sojourn into the abyss.

rake forth the embers bridges two poems by poet and novelist Thomas Hardy. The verses from *A Commonplace Day* and *The Church and The Wedding* join at the moment twilight's "beamless black" becomes the night's enduring "moan." The transient warmth of humanity floats as a thousand loose embers against an ageless cold.

Hardy's "further and further" suggests such a cosmic time. Hersch designs his own musical cosmos around this, introducing the work with material which would later prove central to his 2015 *Violin Concerto*. Hersch wrote these works, along with his monodrama *On The Threshold of Winter*, while dealing with the sudden loss of a close friend. They treat the same absent subject, and the nature of protracted grief engenders a sense of frozen time. Hersch's *rake forth the embers* is unique in its considered movement, absent the wrenching fragmentation that characterizes the composer's cornerstone works. This episode of grief is allowed its uninterrupted statement. What we might interpret as Hardy's characteristically misanthropic encounter with the eternal question, Hersch transforms musically into an essay on the nature of time and the impressions of absence.

Embers as the fleeting gestures of human life— always at the point of disappearing— defy night's permanence. For soprano Ah Young Hong, this image of hope flickering in unfathomed darkness is an intrinsic aspect of Hersch's language:

I have always felt his music embodies a space where at first shadows do not even exist. In order for shadows to exist, there must be light. However, if you live in that space

long enough, you can sense light. Thin, silvery beams of light that bleed into the space from time to time, allowing all of us some kind of relief, giving us some kind of hope there is another place where this light exists and it is somehow finding its way into our soul.

Writer Nicholas Dawidoff noted a similar phenomenon in Hersch's early work, an observation which could perhaps apply to broader issues of light and dark in all this evening's music that, for the listener, "an adjustment has been made and somehow it is enthralling to root around in these places of yearning, decay and oppression. Once the eyes are accustomed to the dark, there is a lot to see there."

Other lingering embers wend through Georg Friedrich Haas' *...wie stille brannte das Licht* as Haas explores his own dark places. Like Hardy's day turning ghost, an incipit gesture draws a circle from end to beginning. The first poem of the cycle, Georg Trakl's *Nachts*, shares a secret language with Else Lasker-Schüler, whose *Maienregen* closes the work. As his speaker surrenders both to the night and to the blurry delirium of a lover, Trakl and Lasker-Schüler diffuse into one another as well. Her obsession with the *eye*— as the essential threshold— and his with the *mouth*— as the abyss— weave their works into a single poetic countenance.

The poets speak to each other across incomprehensible distances in a communion forever deferred, and Hong completes the deliberate task of reuniting them into a single voice. Of her relationship to the work, she writes:

The texts themselves tell of a kind of love that is so fierce and so desperate. This kind of love is immediately tragic because anything this profound can only exist with the other side of love, the end of love, the abyss where loneliness is never lacking. Sometimes it feels as if I am trying to devour, to breathe in, to drown in that love. If only I can inhale it, breathe it, let it crash into my being... but it is heartbreaking no matter how strong the passion; one will ultimately be left alone.

Hong's interpretation of the cycle is special not only for the ways she embodies the speakers of these poems but also in the way she calls into being the invisible characters that surround and envelop them, each absent or implied or actual *you*. What she describes as a "sense of belonging" to the music allows us to feel these others reflected through her.

Haas examines the process of reconciling *I* and *You*. Philomel explores the purgatory she traded for hell. Hersch discovers the solace of atrophy. Each of these works, in its own way, finds that there is no catharsis without some form of surrender. Each cluster, each gradient of tone, helps to construct a soul made of experience and observation, of fruitless striving and fecund sorrow. And over this course, our eyes adjust to the darkness. If the separate worlds of Babbitt and Haas and Hersch dwell together in the same obsidian sadness, it is Hong who searches and shines her particular light on each of them. She stands beaming at this threshold to help us see further beyond.

Tim Holt

Philomel

Philomel (1964) owes its existence to three significant relationships in the Milton Babbitt's creative life. First, there was the RCA Mark II Sound Synthesizer Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center, installed in a former dairy in New York City in 1957. This analog machine was nothing like the digital versions so widely used today. For one thing, it was massive, taking up an entire room. Creating music on it was a laborious process that required punching holes in a roll of paper—rather like a player piano—to generate sound from analog oscillators. “The machine was totally zero,” Babbitt recalled, “nothing predetermined, and any number we punched could refer to any dimension of the machine.” The reward, however, was that he could make music that did not require the intervention of performers. Since the 1940s, Babbitt had been refining his system of serial composition to encompass duration, dynamics, and register, in addition to pitch. These additional parameters markedly increased the complexity and interpretive difficulty of his music to the point that it practically required the arrival of some form of *deus ex machina*.

Babbitt worked in the Columbia-Princeton studio for several years before presenting his first electronic work, *Composition for Synthesizer* (1961), realized on the RCA synthesizer and recorded on tape. This was followed by *Vision and Prayer* (1961), a Dylan Thomas setting for soprano and tape written for Bethany Beardslee. Babbitt and Beardslee had met after the soprano had completed her studies at Juilliard. Inspired by her remarkable musicianship and ability to negotiate the most demanding music, Babbitt wrote a song cycle for her: *Du* (1951). And when she was awarded a grant from the Ford Foundation, Beardslee approached Babbitt to commission a new work, and *Philomel* was born.

John Hollander supplied the text for *Philomel*, describing his work as “a cantata text, somewhere between a lyric poem and a frankly programmatic libretto.” Babbitt and Hollander were kindred spirits. Both were virtuosi in their respective areas; Hollander was not only musically literate but intensely concerned with the musical aspect of poetry, while Babbitt, for his part, took a logician's delight in wordplay. (Babbitt's humor is readily apparent in his titles for certain works, like *Ensembles for Synthesizer*, *Sextets* and *The Joy of More Sextets* for violin and piano, *It Takes Twelve to Tango*, *Sheer Pluck* for guitar, *Transfigured Notes* for string orchestra, and *Septet, But Equal*.) This fortuitous overlapping of Babbitt and Hollander's aesthetic priorities fuels *Philomel's* expressive power.

The story of Philomel appears in the Roman poet Ovid's *Metamorphoses* but originated with the Greeks. It's a gruesome tale. Procne and Philomel are daughters of Pandion, the Athenian king. Procne marries Tereus, king of Thrace, who takes her back to his country where she bears him a son, Itys. Procne misses her younger sister terribly, however, and Tereus travels back to Athens and, with Pandion's permission, returns to Thrace with Philomel. During the return voyage, Tereus lusts for his sister-in-law, and when they disembark, he takes her into the forest

and rapes her. She threatens to reveal this crime to her sister, so Tereus cuts out her tongue before raping her again. Philomel is kept captive but weaves her tale of woe into a tapestry. When Procne discovers the truth about Philomel's disappearance, she finds her sister and brings her to the Thracian castle in disguise. During a feast, Procne kills Itys and has his body cooked and served to Tereus. When the king calls for his son, Procne presents him with the son's severed head. Procne and Philomela flee the palace, pursued by the enraged Tereus and they end up in the woods where Philomela was raped. As the king chases them, the gods intervene, and Tereus is transformed into a hoopoe, a bird known for befouling its own nest; Procne becomes a swallow, and Philomela is given a new voice as a nightingale.

Hollander later explained: "Long ago I had wanted to use the myth of Philomel for an elaborate aria because I had always felt that the story was quintessentially operatic, with a great transformation scene in which a soprano who had been singing nothing but vocalises or choppy syllables suddenly can break out into both sustained melody and language. [So] after having heard *Vision and Prayer*, the possibilities of a synthesized accompaniment for dramatic purposes seemed enormous, and...when Babbitt asked me for a text, the metamorphosis of the nightingale seemed an obvious subject." Babbitt's idea was to enhance the drama by weaving Beardslee's voice—pre-recorded and transformed via the synthesizer—into the electronic score. This pre-recorded vocal element has various roles: it allows us to hear Philomel's inner voice as she hears it or remembers it, the voices of other birds, and sometimes acts as a kind of Greek chorus. When performed in concert, the soprano sings on stage surrounded by four loudspeakers, one for each of the four channels of the recording.

Philomel is cast in three sections. Hollander envisioned the first as the equivalent of a recitative interspersed with "bits of arioso." We hear Beardslee's pre-recorded voice before we hear the "live" soprano's. Both the taped and live voices cling to the pitch "E," and the text begins with what Hollander described as "a sustained presentation of the vowel nucleus /iy/, the core of the phrase 'I feel,' for it is from her fear, fancied outrage, and remembered pain that Philomela's psychic energy in the song is generated." The singer's phrases are choppy and often slip from song into a song-like speech. Poetically, Hollander wrote, "the opening section develops by permutations of the phonemes of the words Philomel and Tereus, the sequences *feel a million, filaments and tears, trees, tears* (verb), etc. eventually expanding into more coherent phrase groups and finally stanzaic clauses."

In the second section, Philomel has been transformed and is conversing with other species of bird as she explores her new identity. Hollander imagined this as an echo song, a satiric verse form popular in the 17th and 18th centuries. His aim was for an "horrific" effect "in a kind of baroque way" that avoided the coy humour traditionally associated with echo songs. In the score, the echoing reply to Philomel's queries comes from Beardslee's taped voice. The cantata closes with an extensive aria. Philomel has found her voice and new being, and (as Hollander put it) we finally hear "the fully realized singing of the fully formed nightingale."

Philomel's transformation is accomplished with great finesse in both music and verse. Babbitt's music can be perplexing because of its complexity, even when its surface is elegant—and it almost always is. For historian Richard Taruskin, "Babbitt's achievement was a joyous affirmation of formalism," and the course of his career could be viewed "as a tireless quest [for] greater and greater beauty (or 'elegance,' as mathematicians use the word), for its commitment to an ever increasing, all-encompassing orderly control of an ever more multifarious and detailed complex of relationships... What sets *Philomel* apart from most of Babbitt's music is its representational dimension, which provides a metaphorical context for interpreting serial procedures that are more often presented as wholly abstract." Indeed, even if one is unaware (or uninterested) in Babbitt's procedural legerdemain, the music can be appreciated for its ability to illustrate and illuminate the text.

Right from the very beginning, when we hear the soprano emerge, stuttering, from a thicket of electronic sounds—including the pre-recorded sound of Beard-slee's voice—we can imagine Philomel fleeing frenziedly through the forest pursued not only by Tereus but also by the dreadful demons of her memory. Babbitt's score evokes a scene teeming with life: creatures scuttling and scurrying out of Philomel's way, and the poor woman's breathless desperation. Then, at the end of the first section, there are subtle hints of the imminent transformation, like the lyrical emphasis on the phrase "a new self," with its long-held high A-Flat—one of the soprano's first sustained notes in the score thus far. Babbitt's word-painting can be even more obvious, as in the echo song, where the word "scream" is sung (both live and on tape) with an expressive, scream-like glissando. There's even a musical backwards glance to the baroque in the final aria, where Philomel sings "I ache in change / Though once I grew / At a slower pace" with vaulting, Handelian phrases.

Andrew Farach-Colton

TEXTS



rake forth the embers

Michael Hersch, text by Thomas Hardy

The day is turning ghost ...

I part the fire-gnawed logs,
Rake forth the embers, spoil the busy flames, and lay the ends
Upon the shining dogs;
Further and further from the nooks the twilight's stride extends,
And beamless black impends ...

* * * *

And when the nights moan like the wailings
Of souls sore-tried,
The folk say who pass the church-palings
They hear inside

Strange sounds as of anger and sadness
That cut the heart's core,
And shaken words bitter to madness;
And then no more.

— Thomas Hardy

These fragments are drawn from two Thomas Hardy poems:
A Commonplace Day and *The Church and the Wedding*.

Philomel

Milton Babbitt, text by John Hollander

I.

T A P E

(Eeeeeeeeeeeee)

Not true trees—

Not true tears—

Not true trees—

Not Tereus; not a True Tereus—

Trees filled with mellowing

Felonous fame—

Is it Tereus—

Is it Tereus—

P H I L O M E L

Eeeeeeeeeeeee!

Feeeeeeeeeeee!

I feel—

Feel a million trees

And the heat of trees

Feel a million tears

Is it Tereus I feel?

Feel a million filaments;

Fear the tearing, the feeling

Trees of ephemeral leaves

Trees tear,

And I bear

Families of tears—

I feel a million Philomels—

I feel trees in my hair

And on the ground, [vines,]

Honeymelons fouling

My knees and feet

Soundlessly in my

Flight through the forest;

I founder in quiet

Pillowing melody,
Honey unheard—

Here I find only
Miles of felted silence
Unwinding behind me,
Lost, lost in the wooded night.

My hooded voice, lost.
Lost, as my first
Unhoneyed tongue;
Forced, as my last
Unfeathered defense;
Fast-tangled in lust
Of these woods so dense.
Emptied, unfeeling and unfilled
By trees here where no birds have
trilled—

Feeling killed
Philomel stilled
Her honey unfulfilled.

Feeling killed

What is that sound?
A voice found;
Broken, the bound
Of silence, beyond
Violence of human sound,
As if a new self
Could be founded on sound.

The trees are astounded!
What is this humming?
I am becoming
My own song. . . .

(Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee)

II. Echo Song

T A P E

O Thrush

Stung, stung, stung;
With the sting of becoming
I sing

Stung!
I sing
I sing

O Hawk

Die, die,

O Hawk in the high and widening sky,
What need I finally do to fly
And see with your unclouded eye?

O Owl

Slight, slight, slight;

O—
Slight—

Black, black,

Blood

P H I L O M E L

O Thrush in the woods I fly among,
Do you, too, talk with the forest's
tongue?

I sing

O Hawk in the high and widening sky,
What need I finally do to fly
And see with your unclouded eye?

Die;

Let the day of despairing
Be done

O Owl, the wild mirror of the night,
What is the force of the forests light?

With the slipping away of
The sun

O sable Raven, call me back!
What color does my torn robe lack?

Black;
As your blameless and long-
Dried blood

O sable Raven, call me back
What color does my torn robe lack?
Blood

Scream!

Scream,

O—
Scream—

Bird

Bird

The world's despair should not be
heard!
Fear and terror not be stirred:
The Gods who made this hubbub
erred!

Thrace, Thrace, Thrace!

There is change!
In the woods of Thrace!

There is change!
In the woods of Thrace!
Oh ... oh Hawk
Be shrill
Be born!

O bright Gull, aid me in my dream!
Above the riddled breaker's cream!

Scream,

For the shreds of your being!
Be shrill

The world's despair should not be
heard!
Fear and terror not be stirred:
The Gods who made this hubbub
erred!

Bird, bird

You are bare of desire:
Be born!

Oh green leaves! Through your rustling
Lace
Ahead, I hear my own myth race.

Thrace!
Pain is unchained,
There is change!
In the woods of Thrace!

III. Philomel

Living, growing, changing, being in the hum always
Of pain! The pain of slow change blows in our faces
Like unfelt winds that the spinning world makes in its turning:
Life and feeling whirl on, below the threshold of burning.

I burn in change.
Far, far I flew
To this wailing place.
(with tape) And now I range
Thrashing, through
The woods of Thrace.

If pain brush again the rushing wings of frightened change,
Then feeling distills to a burning drop, and transformation
Becomes intolerable. I have been defiled and felt my tongue
Torn out: but more pain reigns in these woods I range among.

I ache in change,
Though once I grew
At a slower pace.
(with tape) And now I range
Thrashing, through
The woods of Thrace.

Pressed into one fell moment, my ghastly transformation
Died like a fading scream: the ravisher and chased
Turned into one at last: the voice Tereus shattered
Becomes the tiny voices of night that the God has scattered.

I die in ...
Pain tore in two
Love's secret face.
(with tape) And now I range
Thrashing, through
The woods of Thrace.

Love's most hidden tongue throbbed in the barbarous daylight;
Then all became pain in one great scream of silence, fading,
Finally, as all the voices of feeling died in the west
And pain alone remained with remembering in my breast.

I screamed in change.
Now all I can do
Is bewail that chase.
(with tape) For now I range
Thrashing, through
The woods of Thrace.

Pain in the breast and the mind, fused into music! Change
Bruising hurt silence even further! Now, in this glade,
Suffering is redeemed in song. Feeling takes wing:
High, high above, beyond the forests of horror I sing!

I sing in change.
Now my song will range
Till the morning dew
Dampens its face;
Now my song will range
As once it flew
Thrashing, through
The woods of
Thrace.

(with tape)

PHILOMEL

Words by John Hollander

Music by Milton Babbitt

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...wie stille brannte das Licht

Georg Friedrich Haas, texts by Georg Trakl, Theodor Storm,
August Stramm, and Else Lasker-Schüler

Translations by Ah Young Hong
with advice from Wolfgang Justen and Ruth Drucker

1.

a... a... o... a... ä... ö... a... o... ö... etc.

2.

Nachts

Die Bläue meiner Augen
ist erloschen in dieser Nacht...
Das rote Gold meines Herzens.
O! wie stille brannte das Licht.
Dein blauer Mantel umfing
den Sinkenden;
Dein roter Mund besiegelte
des Freundes Umnachtung.

At night

The blueness of my eyes
was extinguished this night.
The red gold of my heart.
O! how quietly burned the light.
Your blue coat embraced
the sinking;
Your red mouth sealed
the friend's derangement.

— Georg Trakl

3.

m... n... ng... ä... ö... ü... i... etc.

4.

Stünd' ich mit dir auf Bergeshöh

In dieser trüben Nacht,
Tief unten Todeseinsamkeit
Und droben Wolkenjagd!

If I were standing with you on a mountain high

In this gloomy night,
Deep down the loneliness of death
And above the hunt of clouds!

Nur in den Schlünden schwatzte
Der Wind durch die Grabesruh,
Und droben in der wilden Nacht
Alleinzig ich und du! -

In the abyss below, only the wind
Would shatter the stillness of the graves
And high above, in the wild night,
Alone in the universe, I and you! -

Ich wollte dich fest umschlingen
und küssen aus Herzensgrund,
Und leben und vergehen!
Tiefinnig Mund an Mund.

I would hold you tight
and kiss you from the depth of my heart
and live and perish!
Profoundly mouth to mouth.

— Theodor Storm

5.

Erhört

Das Hauchen weht
Und
Wirft die Widerstände
Das Wehen bebt
Und
Schüttelt Halt zu Boden
Das Hauchen braust
Und
Wirrt die wühle Tiefe
Das Brausen schwirrt
Und
Schluchzt das Herzblut auf.
Das Hauchen stürmt
Und
Reisst die Zeit in Ewig
Das Stürmen stürzt
Und
Wirbelt in das Nichtsein!
Du
Haucht
Das
Du!
Und
Hauchen Hauchen
Hauchen
Stürmet
Du——

— August Stramm

He's listening

The breath blows
And
Throws the resistances
The gusts tremble
And
Shake any hold to the ground
The breath roars
And
Entangles the agitated depths
The roaring whirs
And
Sobs upon the heart's blood.
The breath storms
And
Tears time forever
The storm crashes
And
Whirls into nonexistence!
You
Breathes
The
You!
And
Breath breath
Breath
Storms
You——

6.

---u!

a... ä[ö]... o... i... ü... ä... ü... i... etc.

7.

Maienregen

Du hast deine warme Seele
Um mein verwittertes Herz geschlungen,
Und all seine dunklen Töne
Sind wie ferne Donner verklungen.

Aber es kann nicht mehr jauchzen
Mit seiner wilden Wunde,
Und wunschlos in deinem Arme
Liegt mein Mund auf deinem Munde.

Und ich höre dich leise weinen,
Und es ist - die Nacht bewegt sich kaum -
Als fiel ein Maienregen
Auf meinen greisen Traum.

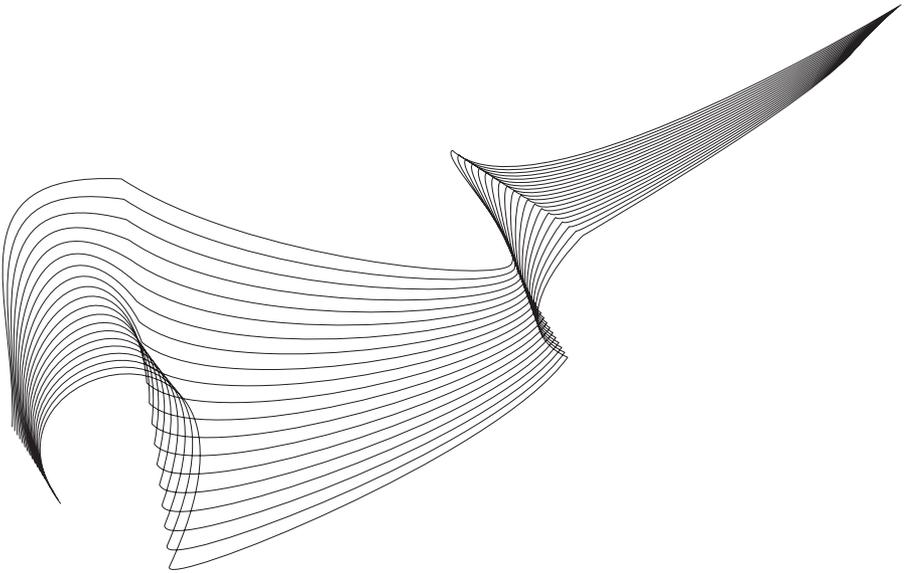
May showers

You have wound your warm soul
Around my disintegrated heart
And all its dark sounds
Have died away like distant thunder.

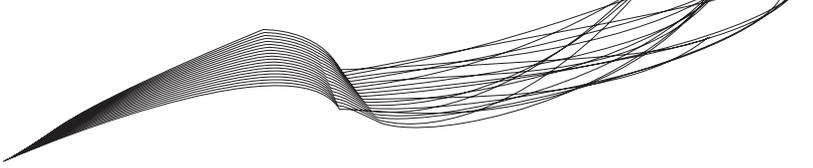
But it can no longer exult
With his wild wound,
And contented in your arms
Lies my mouth upon your mouth.

And I hear you crying softly,
And it is - the night barely moves -
As if May showers fell
Upon my old dream.

— Else Lasker-Schüler



PERFORMERS



Ah Young Hong

“fearlessness and consummate artistry” - *Opera News*

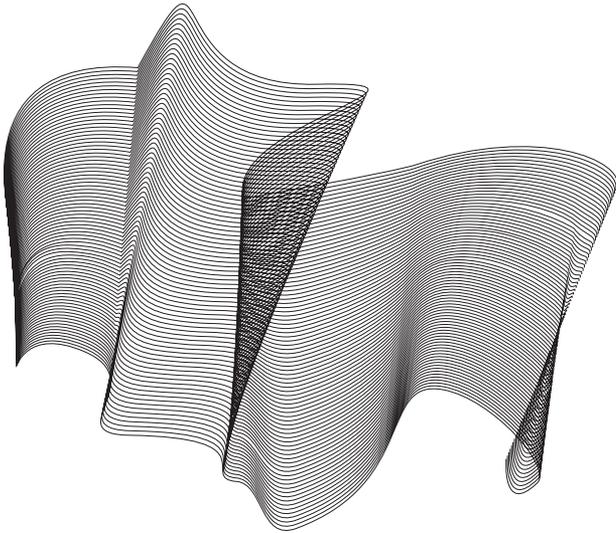
Soprano Ah Young Hong has interpreted a vast array of repertoire, ranging from the music of Monteverdi, Bach, Mozart, Poulenc and Sondheim, to works of Shostakovich, Babbitt, Haas and Kurtág. Best known for her work in Michael Hersch’s monodrama, *On the Threshold of Winter*, *The New York Times* praised her performance in the world premiere as “the opera’s blazing, lone star.” In a recent production directed by the soprano, *The Chicago Tribune* called her “absolutely riveting,” and the *Chicago Classical Review* noted the soprano’s “fearless presence, wielding her unamplified, bell-like voice like a weaponized instrument. Hong delivered a tour de force vocal performance in this almost unfathomably difficult music— attacking the dizzying high notes with surprising power, racing through the rapid-fire desperation of agitated sections, and bringing a numbed, toneless sprechstimme and contralto-like darkness to the low tessitura.” Other operatic performances by Ms. Hong include the title role in Monteverdi’s *L’incoronazione di Poppea*, Morgana in Handel’s *Alcina*, Gilda in Verdi’s *Rigoletto*, Fortuna and Minerva in Monteverdi’s *Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria*, and Asteria in Handel’s *Tamerlano*. She has also appeared with Opera Lafayette in Rebel and Francoeur’s *Zélindor, roi des Sylphes* at the Rose Theater in Lincoln Center and as La Musique in Charpentier’s *Les Arts Florissants* at the Kennedy Center.

In high demand as a concert and chamber soloist, Ms. Hong has performed with Konzerthaus Berlin’s ensemble-in-residence, Ensemble unitedberlin, the acclaimed Netherland-based contemporary music group Ensemble Klang, The Daedalus Quartet, Phoenix Symphony, Charleston Symphony Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, Wiener KammerOrchester, Concert Artists of Baltimore, and Tempesta di Mare, amongst others. During the 2017-2018 season, she performed both with Ensemble Dal Niente in Chicago and on the NOVA Chamber Music series in Salt Lake City as soprano and director of a new production of Michael Hersch’s *On the Threshold of Winter*, and she gave her Ojai Festival debut with violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja in György Kurtág’s complete *Kafka Fragments*. Ms. Hong also appeared as soloist during the 2018 Aldeburgh Music Festival and on the CalPerformances series in Berkeley. Alex Ross from *The New Yorker* has praised her

as “commanding” and “transfixing.” Highlights of the 2018-19 season include the Washington, D.C. premiere of Hersch’s *On the Threshold of Winter* at the Corcoran New Music Festival, performance with the FLUX Quartet in Philadelphia, and her second appearance at Spectrum NYC in a program of contemporary works including Milton Babbitt’s *Philomel*. In 2020, she will be making her solo debut with Camerata Bern (Switzerland) and at the Wien Modern Festival (Austria).

Ms. Hong recorded the American premiere of Johann Sebastian Bach’s *Alles mit Gott und nichts ohn’ ihn*, for National Public Radio’s Performance Today. Other recordings include the world premiere of Rebel and Francoeur’s *Zélin-dor, roi des Sylphes* (Naxos), Pergolesi’s *Stabat Mater* (Peter Lee Music), and *Sentirete una Canzonetta* with Harmonious Blacksmith. Ms. Hong is also a featured soloist in Ensemble Klang’s recording of Michael Hersch’s *Black Untitled*. 2018 saw the commercial release of her acclaimed recording on the Innova label. The album features Milton Babbitt’s *Philomel* and Michael Hersch’s *a breath upwards*. In 2020, she will be collaborating with Patricia Kopatchinskaja in a recording project of Kurtág’s *Kafka Fragments*.

Ms. Hong currently serves as faculty on the voice department at the Peabody Conservatory of The Johns Hopkins University.



Jacob Rhodebeck

Jacob Rhodebeck is a pianist known for his tremendous command of the instrument and his enthusiasm for performing new and little known music. Recently, Mr. Rhodebeck's performance of Michael Hersch's 3-hour solo piano work, *The Vanishing Pavilions* was described as "astounding" (David Patrick Stearns, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*) and "a searing performance" (*New York Times*).

Prior to attending college, he studied piano with Christopher Durrenberger, at Wittenberg University. Mr. Rhodebeck attended the University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music and studied with Elizabeth Pridonoff. It was during this time that his interest in performing new music came about. While at CCM he performed five solo recital programs featuring many contemporary works, as well as a recital comprised entirely of works commissioned from student composers. After receiving his Bachelor's degree from CCM, Mr. Rhodebeck went on to Stony Brook University to continue his study with Gilbert Kalish, completing both Master's and Doctorate degrees.

Mr. Rhodebeck is highly active in the world of new music, recently garnering *New York Times* reviews with the Lost Dog New Music Ensemble in performances of music by John Luther Adams and Per Nørgård and a *New York Times* review and Critics' Pick for his performances of Hersch's *The Vanishing Pavilions*. Mr. Rhodebeck has also collaborated with and premiered works by Mason Bates, Christopher Bailey, Lukas Ligeti, among many others. He has performed as a soloist with the Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music Symphony Band and as a member of the Stony Brook Contemporary Chamber Players. Mr. Rhodebeck has performed in many masterclasses with artists such as: Garrick Ohlsson, Ursula Oppens, Frederic Rzewski, and Emanuel Ax. He was a Fellow at the Tanglewood Summer Music Festival for two seasons. Mr. Rhodebeck was a member of the contemporary piano/percussion ensemble, Yarn/Wire, and has worked with many other contemporary music ensembles including Wet Ink, Composers Concordance, and counter)induction.

Mr. Rhodebeck has given performances, lectures, and masterclasses at many universities, including Hamilton College, Vanderbilt University, and the Peabody Institute at Johns Hopkins University. He can also be heard on numerous CDs including Lost Dog New Music Ensemble's "Chamber Music of Philippe Bodin," Yarn/Wire's debut recording "Tonebuilders," "Stony Brook Soundings Vol. 1" with the Escher String Quartet, and Christopher Bailey's album of piano works, "Glimmering Webs". He is in the process of recording Michael Hersch's *The Vanishing Pavilions* and Michael Finnissy's *Folklore*. Currently, in addition to being the pianist for the Lost Dog New Music Ensemble, Mr. Rhodebeck is the Choral Accompanist at the Riverdale Country School and is a professor at Sarah Lawrence College.

