

The McKim Fund
in the Library of Congress

FLUX QUARTET

WITH

**CORY SMYTHE
& OLIVER LAKE**

IN TWO CONCERTS

Thursday & Friday, June 10 & 11, 2021 ~ 8:00 pm
The Library of Congress
Virtual Events

The MCKIM FUND in the Library of Congress was created in 1970 through a bequest of Mrs. W. Duncan McKim, concert violinist, who won international prominence under her maiden name, Leonora Jackson; the fund supports the commissioning and performance of chamber music for violin and piano.

Conversation with the Artists

Join us online at <https://loc.gov/concerts/flux-quartet-june10.html> and <https://loc.gov/concerts/flux-quartet-june11.html> for two conversation with the artists, available starting at 10am on Thursday, June 10, 2021 & Friday, June 11, 2021, respectively.

Facebook During-concert Chat

Want more? Join other concert goers and Music Division curators during the concert for a chat that may include the artists, depending on availability. You can access this during the premiere and for a few minutes after by going to

facebook.com/pg/libraryofcongressperformingarts/videos

How to Watch Concerts from the Library of Congress Virtual Events

- 1) See each individual event page at loc.gov/concerts
- 2) Watch on the Library's YouTube channel: youtube.com/loc
- 3) Watch the premiere of the concert on Facebook: facebook.com/libraryofcongressperformingarts/videos

Videos may not be available on all three platforms, and some videos will only be accessible for a limited period of time.

The Library of Congress
Virtual Event
Thursday, June 10, 2021 — 8:00 pm

The McKim Fund
in the Library of Congress

FLUX QUARTET

TOM CHIU & CONRAD HARRIS, VIOLINS
MAX MANDEL, VIOLA
FELIX FAN, CELLO

WITH

OLIVER LAKE, SAXOPHONE
& **CORY SMYTHE,** PIANO

PROGRAM I

PROGRAM I

OLIVER LAKE

Hey Now, Hey

ROSCOE MITCHELL

9/9/99, With CARDS (2009/2011, rev. 2021)

ORNETTE COLEMAN (1930-2015)

A Dedication to Poets and Writers (in four movements) (1962)

LEROY JENKINS (1932-2007)

Revival

OLIVER LAKE

Movements, Turns and Switches (1993)

OLIVER LAKE

5 Sisters



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

OLIVER LAKE, *Hey Now, Hey; Movements, Turns and Switches; 5 Sisters*

“I think of all of it being the same thing: the art, the music the poetry as one, everything is one—it’s about creativity.”

~ Oliver Lake, composer and saxophonist, poet and painter¹

Three works by guest composer and saxophonist Oliver Lake are presented as part of the first FLUX Quartet performance. Be sure not to miss his conversation with Anne McLean of the Music Division and Tom Chiu of the FLUX Quartet, available starting at 10am on 6/10/21 at loc.gov/concerts/flux-quartet-june10.html.

Hey Now, Hey

The concert opens with Lake’s string quartet, *Hey Now, Hey*.

From the composer:

Hey Now, Hey was inspired by a poet I met in Paris, in the early 70’s, named Hart Leroy Bibbs. He gained fame at local readings in Paris as the “Hey Now” poet. The reason was because he recited this two-word phrase repeatedly, with different inflections and various volumes, thus giving these two words many meanings. His entire performance was this two word phrase “Hey now.”

Thus the repetitious theme of *Hey Now, Hey* in the beginning of the piece is inspired by Leroy “Hey Now” Bibbs. Repetition, repetition, repetition—to the second part of the piece, which is slower and leaves space for improvisation ...then to the last part of piece, recapping the repetitious “Hey Now, Hey” theme.

~ Oliver Lake

Layered atop the “Hey Now, Hey” theme, which has its own style of repetition and setting with longer tones, Lake sets additional figurations that are modified kaleidoscopically, echoes of the

¹ Taken from a recorded conversation with Anne McLean, Oliver Lake and Tom Chiu, available at loc.gov/concerts/flux-quartet-june10.html, available at loc.gov/concerts/flux-quartet-june10.html.

technique that gives varied meaning to the expression of the same basic materials.

Movements, Turns and Switches

Movements, Turns and Switches was commissioned by the McKim Fund in the Library of Congress in 1993. At times ebullient and contemplative, the piece offers a broad palette of musical ideas that, while broadly grouped into sections, intersect with each other in interesting ways. Lake, a noted improviser, is well served by the improvisatory skill of Tom Chiu and Cory Smythe, who really embrace and explore Lake's music with understanding and mastery.

From the composer:

Movements, Turns & Switches for violin and piano deals with several moods/sound colors; the music is a reflection of the title (many directions). The composition leaves room for improvisation.

~ Oliver Lake

As Lake put it when asked for more thoughts about the piece: "The title itself is a good definition of what the listener can expect."²

5 Sisters

In the final work on the first FLUX concert, Lake joins the quartet on saxophone for a performance of his quintet *5 Sisters*. Recorded with the FLUX Quartet on the album *Right Up On* (which also features *Hey Now, Hey*), the work features periods of alternation and the commingling of sax and strings. FLUX and Lake have been collaborating for 20 years, and their performance brings out the reflective nature of the music.

From the composer:

5 Sisters is dedicated to memory of my mother and her four sisters.

~ Oliver Lake

2 Ibid.

Elaborating on his brief note, Lake mentioned in conversation that his family owned a restaurant that formed a core part of Lake's upbringing, and it was managed by his mother and four aunts. The music gives the sense to me of looking at the surface of a well of memories, tinged with sadness at the recognition of what now lives in the past. At the same time, when Lake spoke of his influential mother and aunts, he noted with a smile that "[they] taught me how to hustle."³ The music is a fitting tribute and a lovely close to our first concert.⁴



ROSCOE MITCHELL, 9/9/99 *With CARDS*

Acclaimed avant-garde saxophonist, multi-instrumentalist and 2020 NEA Jazz Master Roscoe Mitchell is an omnipresent creative force in new music whose works defy easy categorization. Mitchell studied for a time with Muhal Richard Abrams (whose music is presented on the second FLUX concert), and was a founding member of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) and the legendary Art Ensemble of Chicago.

As I delved into Mitchell's string quartet *9/9/99, With Cards*, it was interesting to trace a possible developmental route for the work. The piece was initially composed in 2009-2011, and then revised as recently as 2021. In 1975 Roscoe Mitchell recorded an album entitled *Roscoe Mitchell Quartet* that included Muhal Richard Abrams, George Lewis and Spencer Barefield; this recording has a piece on it called *Cards* in which the players are each given six notated cards that can be played independently. In 2011, Mitchell released the album *Numbers* with a version of *9/9/99* for violin and piano. Fast-forward to 2013 and we find the release of the album *Not Yet*, which includes a performance of *9/9/99, With Cards* in a version for string quartet (performed by the Eclipse Quartet).

There is a conceptual connection that comes into play with the two pieces; violinist Tom Chiu of the FLUX Quartet describes the use of six cards in the version of the piece performed for this recording; all of the cards are fully notated but are a bit "disconnected and

3 Ibid.

4 The Library of Congress holds the Oliver Lake Collection, which contains music manuscripts (holographs, ozalids, and computer printouts); printed music; a book of original poems by Lake; a published book of paintings by Lake; correspondence; and promotional material.

disjunct” due to interventions by the composer. Each card has about six lines of fragmented music, and the performers have the choice to either select what they will play or “leave it up to chance and shuffle the cards.”⁵ In the newest revision, Mitchell added three composed sections that contrast with the sections where the players “show their hands.”



ORNETTE COLEMAN, *A Dedication to Poets and Writers*

“A waiter drops a trayload of drinks and a man says to his lady-friend, ‘Listen honey, Ornette’s playing our song.’”⁶

Saxophonist and composer Ornette Coleman is known as one of the great innovators in jazz history; as a leading proponent of “free jazz” he is often credited as a liberator of jazz from the confines of chord sequences. As Jo Livingstone puts it in a review of a recent book about Coleman by Maria Golia, “[conventional] jazz harmony is religiously chord-based, with soloists improvising within each key like balls pinging through a pinball machine. Coleman, in contrast, imagined harmony, melody and rhythm as equal constituents. He sometimes said that he played *around* a melody, in such a way that he could hear it was there, but some listeners could not.”⁷

What Coleman was doing was simultaneously simpler and more complex; simpler in that Coleman did not equate technical ability with musicianship, and more complex in that he developed the philosophy of “Harmolodics” to describe what he was striving to accomplish in his music. In 1983 Coleman penned the essay “Prime Time for Harmolodics” that served as a starting point for the conveyance of the theory. However, he never really codified it in words—it is fair to say that he was critical of the value of verbal analysis—but rather exhibited his ideas in practice.

5 Taken from a recorded conversation with Anne McLean, Oliver Lake and Tom Chiu. My suspicion is that in this case, given the degree of coordination, the performers may have opted for a “stacked deck.” However, that itself may be illusory given the recent addition of fixed sections that live among the “card” segments.

6 A joke supposedly in circulation about Ornette Coleman’s 1959 appearances at the Five Spot Club in New York. As quoted in Livingstone, Jo, “The Radically Inclusive Music of Ornette Coleman” (*The New Republic*, June 5, 2020).

7 Ibid.

In his recording *Town Hall, 1962*, Coleman offered one of his first works of “classical” chamber music,⁸ a string quartet called *A Dedication to Poets and Writers*. Some consider this a precursor to Coleman’s “Harmolodics” concept, and perhaps it is, though to my ear the degree of localized referentiality suggests that it may have had a different agenda, or none at all—Coleman was invariably after the essence of music, and it can be problematic to ascribe political/theoretical goals to a piece some 60 years after the fact. The work inhabits its own world, full of beauty and humor. It is presented in four movements, each with contrasting sections, and Tom Chiu of the FLUX Quartet notes that “in our explorations of the piece we try to capture the unique character of each section.”⁹ The work is remarkable, and to hear it is a rare chance to engage with the music of this avant-garde icon in this medium.



LEROY JENKINS, *Revival*

From the opening solos, passed from instrument to instrument, we know that we are in for an exciting ride with Leroy Jenkins’ *Revival*. It is clear from the music of *Revival* that Jenkins had an idiomatic mastery of strings that came from a lifetime of performance as a violinist.

Oliver Lake had a long relationship with Leroy Jenkins, performing with him as a duo for a time. He admired not just his musicianship, but also his personality. This personality comes through in the wit and angst that vie with each other in *Revival*. The conversational tone that opens the work ultimately leads to a rising vamp figure, atop which the first violin bares the soul. It is at once weighty and tongue-in-cheek; the notion of a “revival” is both spiritual and social. As Tom Chiu puts it, “[this] piece is just one big party.”¹⁰

David Plylar
Senior Music Specialist
Library of Congress, Music Division

⁸ “Classical” here is given in quotes, because these distinctions are not very meaningful in experimental music where there are no given stylistic norms. However, Coleman’s use of the string quartet as an ensemble invoked the moniker.

⁹ Taken from a recorded conversation with Anne McLean, Oliver Lake and Tom Chiu, available at loc.gov/concerts/flux-quartet-june10.html.

¹⁰ Ibid.

The Library of Congress
Virtual Event
Friday, June 11, 2021 — 8:00 pm

The McKim Fund
in the Library of Congress

FLUX QUARTET

TOM CHIU & CONRAD HARRIS, VIOLINS
MAX MANDEL, VIOLA
FELIX FAN, CELLO

WITH
CORY SMYTHE, PIANO

PROGRAM II

PROGRAM II

CONLON NANCARROW (1912-1997)

String Quartet no. 3 ("Canons 3/4/5/6") (1987)

I. quarter = 72

II. quarter = 50

III. quarter = 92

ELIZABETH OGONEK

Running at Still Life (2013)

PAULINE OLIVEROS (1932-2016)

70 Chords for Terry: A Meditation on String Theory (2005)

MUHAL RICHARD ABRAMS (1930-2017)

Duet for Violin and Piano (1996)

GIACINTO SCELSI (1905-1988)

String Quartet no. 2 (1961)

I. quarter = 66

II. quarter = 66

III. quarter = 80 - 88

IV. quarter = 60 - 84

V. quarter = 66 - 72 - 66 - 56



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

CONLON NANCARROW, *String Quartet no. 3*

“Count!”¹¹ ~ Felix Fan

Conlon Nancarrow spent much of his career away from the spotlight, due in part to his self-isolation and his primary fixation on a single instrument for most of his compositional career. The isolation comes from his decision to move to Mexico in 1940; as an American member of the Communist Party who had fought in the Spanish Civil War, Nancarrow saw Mexico as a safer haven for his music and politics. While his early and late work did involve more standard instrumentations, the bulk of Nancarrow’s output is for the player piano. His single-minded pursuit of music for the instrument, along with the remarkable variety present in what might have been a limited output in lesser hands, renders him something of a 20th-century Chopin with a helping of iconoclasm.

By working with a mechanically reproducible medium, Nancarrow was able to explore extremely complex tempo and rhythmic relationships, including irrational ones scarcely imaginable for live musicians to produce in performance. His contributions along these lines were enormous, including concepts like acceleration and tempo canons, and Nancarrow came to be recognized later in life as friends like György Ligeti drew attention to his work. He has remained, however, with just a few exceptions in the case of transcriptions of his work, underrepresented in the concert hall on account of there not being too much music composed for forces other than the player piano.

In this respect the string quartets offer a pivotal role in his output; Nancarrow’s last completed work before embarking on the player piano studies was his *String Quartet no. 1* from 1945. This was followed with an unfinished and unavailable second string quartet drafted in the late 1940s. When he returned to composing for other instruments in the 1980s, the third string quartet was the second work he completed (after *Tango? for solo piano*). The impetus for the work stems from a performance by the Arditti Quartet of Nancarrow’s first string quartet that the composer heard; talks led to the commissioning of the third quartet by the Westdeutscher Rundfunk in Cologne to be premiered by the Arditti Quartet.¹²

11 Cellist Felix Fan of the FLUX Quartet’s answer to: “how does one play this piece?”

12 Phillips, Julian, liner notes to *Arditti Quartet: Nancarrow, Ligeti & Dutil-*

Nancarrow's String Quartet no. 3 bears the subtitle "Canon 3/4/5/6," and this offers the keys to the castle. In essence, the relationships between the voices in each movement are governed by this ratio, but Nancarrow handles each movement quite differently. One of the chief dramatic considerations with the concept of the canon is the notion of convergence—how do the parts fit together, and how are moments of arrival handled?

Felix Meyer, in his excellent notes on the piece prepared for a centennial celebration of Nancarrow's music, addresses precisely this issue in the first movement, which does not actually contain the convergence one might expect: "In the first movement, in which the theme is introduced by the cello at a moderate tempo, the entries of the higher, increasingly rapid parts are arranged in such a way that there is never a convergence of all four parts; instead, in the middle of the movement there are six 'mini' convergences in rapid succession between pairs of the parts..."¹³

So there is no "resolution" of this sort in the first movement. Can one expect it in the ethereal second movement, full of harmonics and quiet *pizzicati*? Here it occurs not as a goal but as a fulcrum, a pivot between sections, and the parts ultimately play out individually. The contrast of this movement with its brethren is stunning, and Nancarrow's considerable technique allows him to employ his canonic ideas as structural foundations for the entire quartet.

The simultaneous convergence on the same pitch class at the same point in time finally occurs on the very last note of the piece. In Meyer's words, the "finale consists of three individual canons, of which the last, an acceleration canon, demands extreme technical agility from the quartet. Not only does this section consist of a series of virtuoso trills, tremolos, and glissandi, but the four parts accelerate at different rates—3% (violin 1), 4% (violin 2), 5% (viola), and 6% (cello)—until they converge at a final figure that is so banal it seems like an ironic wink: A-B-C."¹⁴

While in this instance we do not have the pleasure of actually hearing the performance live, there is something viscerally satisfying about watching a group overcome the difficulties of music in which each voice is vociferously independent while at the same time fitting together, hand-in-glove. Such performances

leux, Wigmore Hall Live, 2005, WHLive0003, p.3.

13 Meyer, Felix, "Concert Notes," Cal Performances, *Nancarrow at 100: A Centennial Celebration*, 2012, p.17.

14 Ibid.

by non-mechanical means may not have been imaginable when Nancarrow first ventured into his player-piano explorations, but by the end of his life he had the opportunity to hear his music in a new light, itself converging with a larger canon.

~ David Plylar



ELIZABETH OGONEK, *Running at Still Life*

Elizabeth Ogonek wrote *Running at Still Life* for string quartet for FLUX in 2013. In writing about this work, Ogonek has described it as sectional, with intervening material that focuses on the interval of the second. From an interview online at *Music in the Round*, in response to a question about whether travel has inspired her work, Ogonek replied:

“A few years ago, I wrote a piece for the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival and the FLUX Quartet called *Running at Still Life*. The piece, which draws its inspiration from a road trip that I took from Los Angeles to New York shortly before I moved to London in 2012, examines the rapid geographical transformations that one experiences while driving across the US. I remember being struck by how dramatically different landscapes changed when time was compressed. It was as if the Mojave Desert suddenly morphed into the Rockies and the Grand Canyon into the Great Plains. The piece deals with these elements in a somewhat episodic way in the sense that it is made up of lots of little sections. The idea behind it is that just when the music is about to develop into something more substantial, it changes, exposing a new landscape.”¹⁵

The score is notated with a vast range of articulations and dynamics, and includes constantly changing tempo and meter indications. Although organized in sections, it comes across as a narrative bound together by an emphasis on the interval of the second. This interval appears in many guises and motives: the opening stabbing chord which decrescendos into a motive on the second approached from below, sighing figures, trills and runs. Midway through the work a warm melodic line is accompanied by pulsing chords. Throughout the piece the seconds bind the succession of ideas as

15 Elizabeth Ogonek, "Getting to Know Composer Elizabeth Ogonek," interview by *Music in the Round*, April 29, 2015, accessed online May 26, 2021, https://www.musicintheround.co.uk/news_item.php?id=158.

an organizing principle. Each section of music whets the appetite, as Ogonek describes above, before moving on to yet another sound vista, to create a colorful, engaging, and memorable trip.

*Laura Yust
Senior Cataloguing Specialist
Library of Congress, Music Division*



PAULINE OLIVEROS, *70 Chords for Terry*

"Everybody improvises their way through every day. And so I do that with music."¹⁶

70 Chords for Terry: A Meditation on String Theory for String Quartet was commissioned by the Pacific Rim Festival for the Kronos Quartet and written in 2005 in honor of fellow composer Terry Riley's 70th birthday. The mention of string theory in the subtitle refers to the concept in physics, which describes how strings, as opposed to particles, propagate through space and interact with each other. The allusion is apt for a work in which the sounds from the stringed instruments propagate through space over time as the musicians listen and interact with each other. The reference to meditation points to Oliveros's work on the difference between simply hearing and mindful listening, which permeated every aspect of her life, not just her music.

The quartet is a text-based, instructional work, which means that it does not consist of traditional written notation, but of instructions written to the performers who then realize it according to their understanding or interpretation of the text. In the published anthology of Oliveros's text-based compositions, the performance instructions read:

"Pitch, dynamics, and articulations are free. The piece is intended to be warm, atmospheric, and meditative. The one-minute durations of guidelines for the focus of improvisation are flexible and may overlap one another slightly. The feeling should be timeless. Listen

¹⁶ Pauline Oliveros, "Interview with Pauline Oliveros," by Anita Malhotra, *Artsmania*, May 31, 2011, <https://artsmania.ca/2011/05/31/interview-with-pauline-oliveros/>.

for beats and unusual resonances between instruments. Support and encourage these phenomena."¹⁷

Following the instructions is a table with four rows (one for each instrument) and six columns. Each column header indicates the amount of time in minutes to devote to each block of instructions, and individual cells contain instructions that the player follows for the indicated amount of time. There are six different cells of instructions which alternate between the musicians and guide their improvisations. The instructions create just enough structure to enable group improvisation, but allow enough freedom so that performances maintain similar sonic surfaces while remaining unique.

Such text-based works were intended to be sonic meditations and the connection to the practice of meditation is obvious in Oliveros's own statements. In an article about her work, Oliveros wrote: "As a musician, I am interested in the sensual nature of sound, its power to release and change. In my performances throughout the world, I try to transmit to the audience the way I experience sound both when I hear it and when I play it. I call this way of experiencing sound 'deep listening.' Deep listening is listening in every possible way to everything possible--this means one hears all sounds, no matter what one is doing. Such intense listening includes hearing the sounds of daily life, of nature and of one's own thoughts, as well as musical sounds. Deep listening is my life practice."¹⁸

Oliveros was born into a musical family and received training on a variety of instruments, including accordion, from childhood. After studying composition in college, along with Terry Riley and Morton Subotnick, Oliveros founded and worked at the San Francisco Tape Music Center, which was organized as a collective non-profit so that participating composers could jointly acquire costly electronics technology for use in their compositions. Oliveros was also a founding member and director of the Mills College Tape Music Center. Later, she established the Pauline Oliveros Foundation, which in 2005 became the Deep Listening Institute, a non-profit organization devoted to training interested people in the practice of deep listening.

The phrase "deep listening" actually came about when Oliveros

17 Pauline Oliveros, *Anthology of Text Scores*, eds. Samuel Golter and Lawton Hall (Kingston, NY: Deep Listening Publications, c2013), 125.

18 Pauline Oliveros, "Acoustic and Virtual Space as a Dynamic Element of Music," *Leonardo Music Journal* 5 (1995): 19.

and two other musicians created an album from a recording session made inside the Dan Harpole cistern in Port Townsend, Washington, a large underground cement structure built during World War II which was designed to hold 2 million gallons of water for emergency purposes. Since sound produced inside the cistern has a 45-second delay, musicians playing and singing in this space were literally "deep listening" as the sound reverberated through the space.

Oliveros was interested in the differences between hearing and listening, and advocated deep listening as a mindful activity and approach to life, not just as something to do when listening to music. Her music was intended to be inclusive, frequently involved audiences, and extended to such projects as making accessible musical instruments for individuals with disabilities. She devoted herself to creating music that was beneficial to both creator and audiences and in growing and developing as a person through her works.

~ Laura Yust



MUHAL RICHARD ABRAMS, Duet for Violin and Piano

Muhali Richard Abrams (1930-2017) was a composer, pianist, and mentor to many now prominent musicians whose music bridged the jazz and art music worlds. Mostly self-taught, he used what he had learned from early piano lessons along with the Schillinger method of composition as a starting point, continuing with studies at the Chicago Musical College. Early on he began working with local Chicago-area and touring jazz musicians, and was soon performing and recording with the hard-bop ensemble MJT+3 (with Walter Perkins, Paul Serrano, Nicky Hill, and Bob Cranshaw). With members of his free-jazz Experimental Band (a group that included Donald Rafael Garrett, Jack DeJohnette, Roscoe Mitchell, and Joseph Jarman, among others) he was one of the founders of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), a composer's rehearsal and performance collective established in Chicago in 1965. Abrams was later the founder of the AACM School of Music. Both organizations are still thriving and training talented, versatile musicians. Abrams performed internationally and was the recipient of the Danish Jazzpar Prize in 1990 and the NEA Jazzmasters Award in 2010.

Abrams's Duet for Violin and Piano (1996) was a McKim Commission from the Library of Congress and is one example of his avant-garde chamber music compositions. The duet has two main sections with a return of the opening material at the end. Each instrument enters on its lowest pitch (on standard pianos and violins), which places the musical lines widely, about three octaves apart. The music comes to life with a motive created mostly from half steps. Abrams effectively obscures any feeling of regular pulse with the use of syncopation in the beginning of the work until a bass line with larger intervals and more regular movement appears later in the first section. The more active second section opens with agitated tremolos in the violin in octaves. Before a return to the opening material, the linear character of the piano part transitions to more accompanimental chords. The score is dissonant without sounding harsh due to the aural space created by the extremes of register between the piano and violin parts.

Abrams emphasized in interviews that in his approach to music he preferred to not label music in order to avoid placing unnecessary limitations on its creation or presentation. He considered improvisation and composition intricately linked, even inseparable, and wanted his music to be imbued with the individual musician's expression. Abrams observed that before music is structured into an improvisation or a composition, it is simply sound. In this sense, his ideas are closely aligned with those of Pauline Oliveros.

~ Laura Yust



GIACINTO SCELSI, String Quartet no. 2

The composer of the last work on the program remains something of an enigma. He was a notoriously private man whose music was not well known until the end of his life, eclipsed by the dominant Italian composers of the second half of the 20th century. But as musicians came to know his deeply personal works, they resonated with an approach to music that sought meaning within sound itself, in addition to how the sound was organized. This focused work continues to inspire sonic explorations today.

As Christopher Fox and David Osmond-Smith put it, “Scelsi’s approach to composition was itself hybrid: for him music was not a communicative medium but something immanent, revealed through the creative process.”¹⁹ Beliefs aside, if writing music for people to play, one must find a way to communicate with them. For Scelsi, at least in the latter part of his life, this was an involved process. The “...working method of his mature years was unusual, depending primarily on the selective transcription of improvisations made in a quasi-meditative state. He would perform these improvisations generally at the keyboard, either at the piano, or, in later years, the Ondiola, a three-octave instrument with a rotary attachment for producing microtonal inflections.”²⁰

These improvisations were recorded and then actually written down by an assistant—primarily Vieri Tosatti, whose revelation of this process after Scelsi’s passing caused some controversy for the composer’s legacy. While we will avoid judgment, one of the reasons that this transcription process mattered so much is that therein lay the profundity of Scelsi’s accomplishment. When dealing with a very limited amount of material played at the keyboard, the decisions about who plays what (and how) in a string quartet become exceptionally important.

Three of Scelsi’s quartets were written within a handful of years, with the second quartet dating from 1961, followed by the third and fourth in 1963 and 1964. The quartet has a five-movement structure and an overall focus on the pitch class G, and while this shifts minutely over the course of the work, it is difficult to escape the gravitational pull of that pitch. The exploration of the possible colors of that note is augmented by Scelsi’s own metallic mutes, and hundreds of decisions about what each player is doing at any given moment. Much in the way that Ligeti could create the illusion of directed chaos through hyper-specific notation, so Scelsi and his collaborators could lead the musicians to magical heights through complicated but effective notation. Despite the rhythmic dynamism in the writing, Scelsi’s second string quartet remains immersed in itself. The variety of sound that blossoms from what might seem a limited space is astonishing. And if some controversy remains about Scelsi’s work and who deserves credit for various aspects, the music nevertheless remains. For in the second quartet, to err on the G string is human, but to maintain that focus for five movements is divine.

~David Plylar

19 Fox, C., & Osmond-Smith, D., “Scelsi, Giacinto,” *Grove Music Online*.
20 Ibid.



About the Artists

The **FLUX Quartet**, "one of the most fearless and important new-music ensembles around" (*San Francisco Chronicle*), has performed to rave reviews in venues worldwide, including the Tate Modern with BBC Radio3, Park Avenue Armory, Kennedy Center, Mount Tremper Arts, EMPAC, Walker Art Center, Carnegie's Zankel Hall, as well as international festivals in Australia, Europe and Asia. It has also premiered new works on numerous experimental incubators, including Roulette, The Music Gallery, and Mount Tremper Arts. FLUX's radio appearances include NPR's *All Things Considered*, WNYC's *New Sounds* and *Soundcheck*, and WFMU's *Stochastic Hit Parade*. The group's discography includes recordings on the Cantaloupe, Innova, New World, Passin' Thru, and Tzadik labels, in addition to two acclaimed releases on Mode encompassing the full catalogue of Morton Feldman's output for string quartet.

Strongly influenced by the "anything-goes" philosophy of the fluxus art movement, violinist Tom Chiu founded FLUX in the late 90's. The quartet has since cultivated an uncompromising repertoire that combines late twentieth-century iconoclasts such as Cage, Nancarrow, Scelsi, and Ligeti with today's visionaries, including Oliver Lake, Michael Hersch, David First, Alvin Lucier, Michael Schumacher, Sean Shepard, Wadada Leo Smith, Julia Wolfe, Matthew Welch, and others. Having premiered over 100 new works, FLUX has been awarded grants from the American Composers Forum, Aaron Copland Fund, Meet the Composer, New Music USA, and Chamber Music America. FLUX also discovers emerging composers from its many college residencies, including Wesleyan, Dartmouth, Williams, Princeton, Bard, and the College of William and Mary.

The spirit to expand stylistic boundaries is a trademark of the FLUX Quartet, and to that end the quartet avidly pursues interdisciplinary projects, resulting in acclaimed new works with choreographers Pam Tanowitz and Christopher Wheeldon, avant balloonist Judy Dunaway, digital collective The OpenEnded Group, and visual artist Matthew Barney. In the upcoming season, FLUX will perform and record the full string quartet output of Toshi Ichianagi, widely acknowledged as an influential pioneer of the Japanese avant-garde.



The artistic scope of the half-century-long career of renowned saxophonist, composer, painter, and poet **Oliver Lake** is unparalleled. An extensive resumé of his collaborations includes work with the Brooklyn Philharmonic, Flux String Quartet, Bjork, Lou Reed, A Tribe Called Quest, Mos Def, Me'shell Ndegeocello, Anthony Braxton, James Blood Ulmer, William Parker, Vijay Iyer, Reggie Workman, Andrew Cyrille and a veritable who's who of the jazz vanguard. Lake's efforts extend far beyond the music, with his creation of the non-profit organization Passin' Thru, becoming a mainstay at Pittsburgh's City of Asylum, publishing two books of poetry and frequently producing visual artwork for exhibitions across the country.

Lake's breadth of disciplines can be traced back to his formative years with the Black Artists Group, the innovative St. Louis collective of musicians, poets, dancers and painters he helped build over 35 years ago. As a co-founder of the internationally acclaimed World Saxophone Quartet (with fellow luminaries David Murray, Julius Hemphill and Hamiet Bluiett), Lake firmly established himself in the "Loft" jazz scene of the 1970's in New York City, and has since produced a body of work that is both expansive and versatile enough to avoid falling solely into the trappings of the "avant-garde" and "free" labels. The fact that his work can stand on compositional merit alone, all while he has etched a place for himself as one of the elite saxophone players and improvisers of recent times, is a testament to Oliver Lake's stature as an artist.

Lake's output as an exacting and unequivocally original composer has long been celebrated, highlighted by commissions from the Library of Congress, the Rockefeller Foundation, ASCAP, the International Association for Jazz Education, Composers Forum and the McKim Foundation. He has been the recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowship and was also presented with the Mellon Jazz Living Legacy Award at the Kennedy Center in 2006.

In 2014, Lake was honored with what is arguably the greatest recognition of his artistry and vision to date, becoming one of only nineteen grantees appointed for the prestigious Doris Duke Artist Award, a multi-year grant awarded to American artists in the fields of jazz, theater and dance.

A trailblazer through and through, Oliver Lake continues to produce

in the vociferous, uncompromising way he only knows how to, currently immersed in the work of such adventurous ensembles as the Oliver Lake Organ Quartet, Oliver Lake Big Band and Trio 3.



Pianist **Cory Smythe** has worked closely with pioneering artists in new, improvisatory, and classical music, including saxophonist-composer Ingrid Laubrock, violinist Hilary Hahn, and multidisciplinary composers from Anthony Braxton to Zosha Di Castri. His own music “dissolves the lines between composition and improvisation with rigor” (*Chicago Reader*), and his first record was praised by Jason Moran as “hands down one of the best solo recordings I’ve ever heard.” Smythe has been featured at the Newport Jazz, Wien Modern, Trondheim Chamber Music, Nordic Music Days, Approximation, Concorso Busoni, and Darmstadt festivals, as well as at Lincoln Center’s Mostly Mozart festival, where he was recently invited to premiere new works created in collaboration with Peter Evans and Craig Taborn. Smythe has received commissions from Milwaukee’s Present Music, the Banff Centre for the Arts, the Trondheim Jazz Orchestra, the International Contemporary Ensemble, of which he is a longtime member, and the Shifting Foundation. Smythe received a GRAMMY award for his work with Hahn and plays regularly in the critically acclaimed Tyshawn Sorey Trio.



Upcoming Events in June

Visit loc.gov/concerts for more information

Thursday, June 17, 2021 at 8:00 pm [Concert]

Ksenija Sidorova, accordion

Music by Bach, Mozart, Voytenko, Piazzolla, Angelis & Schnittke

Virtual Event (<https://loc.gov/concerts/ksenija-sidorova.html>)

Additional video content available starting at 10am on 6/17/21

Friday, June 18, 2021 at 8:00 pm [Concert]

Pavel Haas Quartet with Boris Giltburg

Music by Smetana, Bartók & Brahms

Virtual Event (<https://loc.gov/concerts/pavel-haas-quartet.html>)

Additional video content available starting at 10am on 6/18/21



Concerts from the Library of Congress

The Coolidge Auditorium, constructed in 1925 through a generous gift from Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, has been the venue for countless world-class performers and performances. Gertrude Clarke Whittall presented to the Library a gift of five Stradivari instruments which were first heard here during a concert on January 10, 1936. These parallel but separate donations serve as the pillars that now support a full season of concerts made possible by gift trusts and foundations that followed those established by Mrs. Coolidge and Mrs. Whittall.



Concert Staff

CHIEF, MUSIC DIVISION	Susan H. Vita
ASSISTANT CHIEF	Jan Lauridsen
SENIOR PRODUCERS FOR CONCERTS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS	Michele L. Glymph Anne McLean
SENIOR MUSIC SPECIALIST	David H. Plylar
MUSIC SPECIALISTS	Kazem Abdullah Claudia Morales
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER	Donna P. Williams
SENIOR RECORDING ENGINEER	Michael E. Turpin
ASSISTANT ENGINEER	Sandie (Jay) Kinloch
PRODUCTION MANAGER	Solomon E. HaileSelassie
CURATOR OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS	Carol Lynn Ward-Bamford
PROGRAM DESIGN	David H. Plylar
PROGRAM PRODUCTION	Michael Munshaw

Support Concerts from the Library of Congress

Support for Concerts from the Library of Congress comes from private gift and trust funds and from individual donations which make it possible to offer free concerts as a gift to the community. For information about making a tax-deductible contribution please call (202-707-5503), e-mail (jlau@loc.gov), or write to Jan Lauridsen, Assistant Chief, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20540-4710. Contributions of \$250 or more will be acknowledged in the programs. All gifts will be acknowledged online. Donors can also make an e-gift online to Friends of Music at www.loc.gov/philanthropy. We acknowledge the following contributors to the 2020-2021 season. Without their support these free concerts would not be possible.



GIFT AND TRUST FUNDS

Julian E. and Freda Hauptman Berla Fund
Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation
William and Adeline Croft Memorial Fund
Da Capo Fund
Ira and Leonore Gershwin Fund
Isenbergh Clarinet Fund
Irving and Verna Fine Fund
Mae and Irving Jurow Fund
Carolyn Royall Just Fund
Kindler Foundation Trust Fund
Dina Koston and Robert Shapiro Fund for
New Music
Boris and Sonya Kroyt Memorial Fund
Wanda Landowska/Denise Restout
Memorial Fund
Katie and Walter Louchheim Fund
Robert Mann Fund
The Sally Hart and Bennett Tarlton
McCallum Fund
McKim Fund
Norman P. Scala Memorial Fund
Karl B. Schmidt Memorial Fund
Judith Lieber Tokel & George Sonneborn
Fund
Anne Adlum Hull and William Remsen
Strickland Fund
Rose and Monroe Vincent Fund
Gertrude Clarke Whittall Foundation
Various Donors Fund

BEQUESTS

Elmer Cerin
Barbara Gantt
Sorab K. Modi

DONOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Producer (\$10,000 and above)
The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Inc.
DutchCultureUSA
Frederic J. and Lucia Hill
The Netherland-America Foundation
Allan J. Reiter
Revada Foundation of the Logan Family
Adele M. Thomas Charitable Foundation,
Inc.
Mallory and Diana Walker

Underwriter (\$2,500 and above)
Geraldine Ostrove
Joyce E. Palmer
William R. and Judy B. Sloan
George Sonneborn and Rosina C. Iping
The George and Ruth Tretter Charitable Gift
Fund, Carl Tretter, Trustee

Benefactor (\$1000 and above)
Anonymous
William D. Alexander
Bill Bandas and Leslie G. Ford
Leonard and Gabriela Bechick
Peter and Ann Belenky
Richard W. Burris and Shirley Downs
Ronald M. Costell and Marsha E. Swiss
*In memory of Dr. Giulio Cantoni and
Mrs. Paula Saffiotti*
Cathy Eisner Falvo and Jessica Aimee
Falvo *in honor of Carole Falvo*
Milton J. Grossman,
In memory of Dana Krueger Grossman
Wilda M. Heiss
Judith Henderson

Benefactor (continued)

Virginia Lee, *In memory of Dr. and Mrs. Chai Chang Choi*
Egon and Irene Marx
Winton E. Matthews, Jr.
Dr. Judith C. and Dr. Eldor O. Pederson
Richard Price and Yung Chang
Arthur F. Purcell
Harriet Rogers
Mace J. Rosenstein and Louise de la Fuente
Christopher Sipes

Patron (\$500 and above)

Barry Abel
Naomi M. Adaniya
Daniel J. Alpert and Ann H. Franke
Devora and Samuel Arbel
Sandra J. Blake,
In memory of Ronald Diehl
Marc H. and Vivian S. Brodsky
Doris N. Celarier
Margaret Choa
William A. Cohen
Herbert L. and Joan M. Cooper
Diane E. Dixon
Elizabeth Eby and Bengal Richter
Willem van Eeghen and Mercedes de Artega
Lawrence Feinberg
Becky Jo Fredriksson and Rosa D. Wiener
Fred S. Fry, Jr. and Elaine Suriano
Geraldine H. and Melvin C. Garbow
Howard Gofreed,
In memory of Ruth Tretter
The Richard & Nancy Gould Family Fund
Margaret Hines
Marc and Kay Levinson
George and Kristen Lund
Mary Lynne Martin
Rick Maurer and Kathy Barton
Donogh McDonald
Jan and Frank Moses
Undine A. and Carl E. Nash
Judith Neibrief
John P. O'Donnell
Jan Pomerantz and Everett Wilcox
Richard Price and Yung Chang
Amy and Paul Rispin
Bruce and Lori Laitman Rosenblum
Mike and Mical Schneider
In memory of Victor H. Cohn
David Seidman and Ruth Greenstein
Rebecca and Sidney Shaw,
In memory of Dr. Leonard G. Shaw
Beverly J. and Phillip B. Sklover
Anna Slomovic
Maria Soto,
In memory of Sara Arminana
Dana and Linda Sundberg

Patron (continued)

Lorna C. Totman,
In memory of Daniel Gallik
James C. and Carol R. Tsang
Harvey Van Buren
Amy Weinstein and Phil Esocoff,
In memory of Freda Hauptman Berla
Sidney Wolfe and Suzanne Goldberg
Gail Yano and Edward A. Celarier

Sponsor (\$250 and above)

Anonymous (2)
Edward A. Celarier
Carol Ann Dyer
Elizabeth Eby and Bengal Richter
Damien Gaul
Michal E. Gross
James S. and Zona F. Hostetler
In memory of Randy Hostetler
Kim and Elizabeth Kowalewski
Helen and David Mao
George P. Mueller
Robert H. Reynolds
Juliet Sablosky,
In memory of Irving L. Sablosky
Alan and Ann Vollman
Shari Werb
Patricia A. Winston

CONCERTS FROM THE **LI**  **BRARY** **LIBRARY OF CONGRESS**