

Music of America

The Cleveland Chamber Collective

LIVE! @ [The Bop Stop](#)

Cleveland, OH
April 21, 2021 7 pm

Program

String Quartet (RAGAMALA)

1. Fantasie (Bihag)
2. Scherzo (Malkauns)
3. Recitative (Basant)
4. Rondo (Jōg)

[Reena Esmail](#)

*Kim Gomez, Emma Shook, violins
Lisa Boyko, viola, Linda Atherton, cello*

Convergence

Lisa Boyko, viola, Randall Fusco, piano

[Andrea Clearfield](#)

Neutral Objects

*Kim Gomez, Emma Shook, violins
Lisa Boyko, viola, Linda Atherton, cello*

[Yaz Lancaster](#)

Lorraine

Lisa Boyko, viola, Linda Atherton, cello

[Ty Alan Emerson](#)

Randall Fusco, piano

Kaman Fantasy

Kim Gomez, violin, Randall Fusco, piano

[Saad Haddad](#)

PROGRAM NOTES

String Quartet (Ragamala)

During the year I spent in India, I began to notice a beautiful thing that would happen at concerts. When the artist would announce the raag to be sung or played that evening, immediately, and almost subconsciously, many of the cognoscenti in the audience would begin humming the characteristic phrases or ‘pakads’ of that raag quietly to themselves, intoning with the drone that was already sounding on stage. It had a magical feeling – as if that raag was present in the air, and tiny wisps of it were already starting to precipitate into the audible world in anticipation of the performance. It felt like a connection between the audience and the performer, as they prepared themselves to enjoy what was to come. Each movement of this quartet opens in exactly the same way, and it is inspired by those quiet intonations.

After the opening phrases, each movement diverges into its own distinct character. The first movement is a Fantasie inspired by the beautiful raag Bihag which layers phrases over one another to create large shapes separated by the silence of pure drones. The second movement is a vivacious and rhythmic setting of a Malkauns taan, which to the western ear, always seems to be pulling to a dominant rather than a tonic. The third movement is in the contemplative Basant – a raag that signifies the season of spring in Hindustani music. And the fourth movement is in the complex and multi-faceted Jog, a single raag which seems to contain western notions of both ‘major’ and ‘minor’ within it.

In Hindustani music, the elaboration of a single raag can often take an hour. I didn’t mean for this piece to exhaust these raags, but rather provide little snapshots of particular features and characters of each raag that I find beautiful and special about each one.

Convergence

Convergence was commissioned by and dedicated to Barbara Westphal, my esteemed colleague and acclaimed violist. We spent many summers together at the Sarasota Music Festival. The work is built on the intervallic, melodic and harmonic materials heard in the opening two measures. These elements return in variation throughout the work; aggressive, lyrical, energetic and evocative. The viola and piano are equal partners, engaging in dialogue with these musical materials. Through the process of their dynamic exchange, their expressions converge and transform into a new synthesis. *Convergence* was released on Bridge Records in February, 2015, Barbara Westphal, viola, Christian Ruvolo, piano.

Neutral Objects

for string quartet, 3min / 6.5min (extended version), written for [JACK Quartet](#)

Milk, red hats, masks, toilet paper, soap, fireworks, straws, stamps & mailboxes.

In times of violence, protest & upheaval, “neutral objects” come to stand in the place of events, effectively “de-neutralizing” them as they become situated in new contexts. These objects on their own, decontextualized, represent the everyday.

Recording:

Christopher Otto & Austin Wulliman, violins

John Pickford-Richards, viola

Jay Campbell, cello

Written for & premiered at the National Sawdust Digital Discovery Festival New Works Commission; Mentors for this commission include Marcos Balter, Steve Smith, Ellen Reid, Jeffrey Zeigler, Andy Bart, the members of JACK Quartet, Pamela Z, Chris Grymes and Karen Wong. Special thanks to Artistic Producer Eve O’Donnell, Technical Director Charles Hagaman, Sound Designer Garth MacAleavey, Lighting Designer Sharif Mekawy & Artistic Director Paola Prestini.

Lorraine

In Memoriam Lorraine Emerson. This emotional memory was composed on the first Mother’s Day following her death. Music begins where words fail.

Kaman Fantasy

Kaman Fantasy (pronounced KA-men) takes its name from ‘kamanjah,’ the Arabic word for ‘violin.’ The piece is an exploration of the Arabic ‘maqamat’ (sets of scales) and rhythms in a Western classical context. The music embraces both traditions, often swaying back and forth between Arabic and Western idioms. Since the piano itself is not found in the Arab musical canon, I decided to prepare the instrument’s middle range in an effort to mimic the sound of a common Middle Eastern instrument, the ‘qanun.’ As a first generation Arab-American, I have often found myself shifting between both cultures in the way that I think and act, sometimes voluntarily, most times not. **Kaman Fantasy** is a reflection on those experiences.

Composer Biographies

Reena Esmail

Indian-American composer [Reena Esmail](#) works between the worlds of Indian and Western classical music, and brings communities together through the creation of equitable musical spaces.

Esmail’s work has been commissioned by ensembles including the [Los Angeles Master Chorale](#), [Kronos Quartet](#), [Imani Winds](#), [Richmond Symphony](#), [Town Music Seattle](#), [Albany](#)

[Symphony](#), [Chicago Sinfonietta](#), [River Oaks Chamber Orchestra](#), [San Francisco Girls Chorus](#), [The Elora Festival](#), [Juilliard415](#), and [Yale Institute of Sacred Music](#). Upcoming seasons include new work for [Seattle Symphony](#), [Baltimore Symphony Orchestra](#), [Santa Fe Desert Chorale](#), [Amherst College Choir and Orchestra](#), [Santa Fe Pro Musica](#), and [Conspirare](#).

Esmail is the Los Angeles Master Chorale's 2020-2023 Swan Family Artist in Residence, and Seattle Symphony's 2020-21 Composer-in-Residence. Previously, she was named a 2019 United States Artist Fellow in Music, and the 2019 Grand Prize Winner of the S & R Foundation's Washington Award. Esmail was also a 2017-18 Kennedy Center Citizen Artist Fellow. She was the 2012 Walter Hinrichsen Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters (and subsequent publication of a work by C.F. Peters)

Esmail holds degrees in composition from [The Juilliard School](#) (BM'05) and the [Yale School of Music](#) (MM'11, MMA'14, DMA'18). Her primary teachers have included [Susan Botti](#), [Aaron Jay Kernis](#), [Christopher Theofanidis](#) and [Martin Bresnick](#), [Christopher Rouse](#) and [Samuel Adler](#). She received a Fulbright-Nehru grant to study Hindustani music in India. Her Hindustani music teachers include Srimati Lakshmi Shankar and Gaurav Mazundar, and she currently studies and collaborates with Sails Oak. Her doctoral thesis, entitled Finding Common Ground: Uniting Practices in Hindustani and Western Art Musicians explores the methods and challenges of the collaborative process between Hindustani musicians and Western composers.

Esmail was Composer-in-Residence for Street Symphony (2016-18) and is currently an Artistic Director of Shastra, a non-profit organization that promotes cross-cultural music connecting music traditions of India and the West.

She currently resides in Los Angeles, California.

Andrea Clearfield (Composer) is an award-winning composer of music for orchestra, opera, chorus, chamber ensemble, dance, and multimedia collaborations. Clearfield creates deep, emotive musical languages that build cultural and artistic bridges. She has been praised by the New York Times for her “graceful tracery and lively, rhythmically vital writing”, the Philadelphia Inquirer for her “compositional wizardry” and “mastery with large choral and instrumental forces”, the L.A. Times for her “fluid and glistening orchestration” and by Opera News for her “vivid and galvanizing” music of “timeless beauty”.

Her works are performed widely in the U.S. and abroad. Among her 160 works are twelve large-scale cantatas including one commissioned and premiered by The Philadelphia Orchestra. Andrea was a 2020 recipient of the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage International Artist Residency, was named the 2020 The David Del Tredici Residency Fellow at [Yaddo](#) in Saratoga Springs, NY and was awarded a 2020 [Helene Wurlitzer Foundation Fellowship](#) in Taos, NM. She is currently 2020-2022 Composer-in-residence with National Concerts at Carnegie Hall. 2021 commissions include a cantata for The Mendelssohn Club funded by the NEA to libretto by Ellen Frankel and a new work for chorus and orchestra for the University of New Mexico. Recent works are inspired by Tibetan music fieldwork that she conducted in the Nepalese Himalaya. Her first opera, [MILA, Great Sorcerer](#), to libretto by Jean-Claude van Itallie

and Lois Walden, was presented at the acclaimed [NYC Prototype Festival](#) in January, 2019. She was appointed the Steven R. Gerber Composer in Residence with the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia for their 2018-19 season. Dr. Clearfield was awarded a 2017 Independence Foundation Fellowship, a 2016 Pew Fellowship in the Arts and fellowships at the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Center, American Academy in Rome, Yaddo, Ucross, Wurlitzer Foundation, Copland House and the MacDowell Colony among others.

Her music is published by Boosey & Hawkes, G. Schirmer, Hal Leonard and Seadot and recorded on the Bridge, Sony, MSR, Albany, Crystal and Innova labels. Passionate for building community around the arts, she is founder and host of the renowned Salon featuring contemporary, classical, jazz, electronic, dance, and world music since 1986. As a performer she played keyboards with the Relâche Ensemble for 25 years and had the great honor of being invited to perform with the Court of the Dalai Lama. She is in demand as a curator, adjudicator, speaker and concert host. She has served on the Board of Directors of the Recording Academy/Grammy's, Philadelphia Chapter. More at www.andreaclearfield.com

Yaz Lancaster

“Warm, crunchy, [and] beautifully heart-wrenching” characterizes the work of transdisciplinary artist Yaz Lancaster (they/them/theirs). They are most interested in practices aligned with relational aesthetics & the everyday, fragments & collage, and anti-oppression.

Yaz performs as a violinist, vocalist & steel-pannist in a wide variety of settings including DIY/indie venues, contemporary chamber music, and orchestras. Most recently, they have been developing a pop/post-genre duo with guitarist-producer Andrew Noseworthy. Their work is presented in many different mediums & collaborative projects, and often reckons with specific influences ranging from politics of identity & liberation, to natural phenomena and poetics. Yaz has had the privilege & opportunity to build community in the US, Canada & Trinidad and Tobago—they have created with artists like Andy Akiho, Anne Leilehua Lanzilotti, Contact Contemporary Ensemble, Contemporaneous, Hypercube, JACK Quartet, Skiffle Steel Orchestra, and Wadada Leo Smith. Their record of commissioned music for violin/voice & electronics is forthcoming on people | places | records.

Yaz holds degrees in violin performance & poetry from New York University where they studied with Cyrus Beroukhim, Robert Honstein & Terrance Hayes (among others). They are the visual arts editor at Peach Mag & a contributing writer at ICIYL. Yaz loves chess, horror movies, & bubble tea.

Ty Alan Emerson

Saad Haddad is a composer of orchestral, chamber, vocal, and electroacoustic music who achieves a “remarkable fusion of idioms” (*New York Times*), most notably in his work exploring the disparate qualities inherent in Western art music and Middle Eastern musical tradition. His music delves into that relationship by transferring the performance techniques of traditional Arab instruments to Western symphonic instruments, while extending their capabilities through the

advancement of technology.

Mr. Haddad's orchestral works have been performed by the Minnesota Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, American Composers Orchestra, Illinois Philharmonic, Chicago Composers Orchestra, Kaleidoscope Chamber Orchestra, Symphony in C, Hangzhou Philharmonic, and the symphony orchestras of Albany, Columbus, Milwaukee, New Jersey, Princeton, and Sioux City. He has also received performances by the JACK Quartet, Lydian String Quartet, Locrian Chamber Players, Society for New Music, and Utah Arts Festival, and his works have been performed abroad in China, Austria, Germany, Brazil and Canada.

Recent distinctions include the Charles Ives Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Barlow Endowment General Commission, S&R Foundation Washington Award Grand Prize, Jerome Fund for New Music grant from the American Composers Forum, Palmer Dixon Award from The Juilliard School, Aaron Copland Residency Award, and multiple awards from ASCAP, BMI, and the Vancouver Chamber Choir. He has been in residence at the Millay Colony for the Arts, Ucross Foundation, Bogliasco Foundation, Studios of Key West, Soundstreams Composer Workshop, and Luzerne Music Center.

Saad Haddad divides his time between Los Angeles and New York, where he currently serves as a Dean's Fellow at Columbia University and the 2019-2021 Young Concert Artists Composer-in-Residence.

Performer Biographies

Kim Gomez has been a member of The Cleveland Orchestra since 1990. A native of Louisville, Kentucky, Ms. Gomez grew up in a musical family; she studied at the Peabody Conservatory, then earned a Bachelor of Music degree and an Artist Diploma from the Cleveland Institute of Music, where she was a concerto competition winner. Her teachers have included David Cerone, Josef Gingold, Daniel Heifetz, Virginia Schneider, David Updegraff, Donald Weilerstein, and Mimi Zweig. Ms. Gomez has appeared on three occasions as a soloist with the Louisville Symphony Orchestra and has made solo appearances with the Berlin Symphony Orchestra and the Cleveland Institute of Music Orchestra. Kim and her husband James have six children.

Lisa Boyko joined The Cleveland Orchestra in 1991, after serving as a member of the New Orleans Symphony, Toronto Symphony, and the Minnesota Orchestra. Born in Cleveland and raised in Tucson, Arizona, Ms. Boyko studied for two years in Vienna at the Musikgymnasium and the Hochschule für Musik. In 1985, she received a bachelor of music degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music (CIM), where she was a student of Robert Vernon.

Ms. Boyko has appeared as alumni soloist with the Cleveland Institute of Music Chamber Orchestra in the Cleveland premiere of Darius Milhaud's *Concertino d'été* and continues to perform regularly in solo recitals and chamber music concerts. She is a founding member of the Cleveland Chamber Collective, which since 1992 has had the mission of bringing both new music and neglected works of the past to the public.

Ms. Boyko is a faculty member at CIM and Case Western Reserve University and has taught at the Encore School for Strings and the Masterworks Festival. She is active in local organizations that support and promote music and arts education, including the CIM Alumni Association, the Ohio Viola Society, and Inlet Dance Theatre. In her spare time, she is an avid traveler who also enjoys gardening, reading, and languages.

Linda Atherton, cellist, is a graduate of Boston University, where she studied with Leslie Parnas. After graduating, Linda moved to Indianapolis where she became a founding member of the Lockerbie String Quartet and was also a substitute with the Indianapolis Symphony. Upon moving to Cleveland, she played with the Canton Symphony for several years, as well as with the Ohio Chamber Orchestra, the Cleveland Ballet Orchestra, and the Cleveland Opera Orchestra.

Linda has been soloist with the Cleveland Chamber Symphony, Ohio Ballet, Trinity Chamber Orchestra, Euclid Symphony, and Blue Water Chamber Orchestra. She was a participant in the Blue Hill Kneisel Hall and Taos chamber music festivals, and is currently very active in the Cleveland chamber music scene as a member of ART Trio and the Cleveland Chamber Collective. Linda is a member of the Cleveland Pops Orchestra, Blue Water Chamber Orchestra, Trinity Chamber Orchestra and plays for many musicals including the Broadway Series at Playhouse Square.

Special Guests

Emma Shook, violin, holds the Dr. Jeanette Grasselli Brown and Dr. Glenn R. Brown Chair in The Cleveland Orchestra second violin section, which she joined in 2001. Previously, she was a member of the Chicago Lyric Opera and Santa Fe Opera orchestras for six years. Ms. Shook received her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the Juilliard School, where she was a scholarship student of Dorothy DeLay and Hyo Kang. At Juilliard she co-founded a conductorless chamber orchestra, and in the 1992 won the Peter Mennin prize for leadership and achievement in music. Ms. Shook has given many chamber music concerts in the United States and abroad. She continues to perform chamber music and solo concerts regularly, and has branched out into contemporary classical music, Hungarian folk music, and blues. She lives in University Heights and enjoys gardening, food, nature, and animals of all kinds.

Randall Fusco, piano, is an active soloist and collaborative pianist and has taught at Hiram College since 1987. He has performed a wide variety of standard and modern chamber music with members of the Cleveland Orchestra, Chicago Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. He has performed on the chamber music series of Rocky River Chamber Music, Kent Blossom, Arts Renaissance Tremont, Cleveland Institute of Music and Dana School of Music. He has served as staff pianist for the John Mack Oboe Camp, the International Women's Brass Festival, the Bassoon, Trombone and Bass Institutes at the Interlochen Arts Academy, and has presented master classes at Youngstown State University and the Western Reserve Piano Teachers Association. From 1988-2018, Mr. Fusco was Professor of Music at Hiram College where he holds the title of Professor Emeritus.