



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
FACULTY OF MUSIC

# Karen Kieser Prize Concert

## U of T New Music Festival

Tuesday, January 14, 2020

7:30 pm

Walter Hall, 80 Queen's Park

*Presented by Gregory Lee Newsome*

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We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates.

For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat,

the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across

Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

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# PROGRAM

***Like A Memory*** (2002) Hildegard Westerkamp

Rachel Kiyō Iwaasa, *piano* - Hildegard Westerkamp, *diffusion*  
Marla Hlady, *sculpture*

***Attending to Sacred Matters*** (2002) Hildegard Westerkamp

Hildegard Westerkamp, *diffusion*

***Klavierklang*** (2017) Hildegard Westerkamp  
Text by Hildegard Westerkamp

Rachel Kiyō Iwaasa, *piano & spoken voice* - Hildegard Westerkamp,  
*diffusion*

## Intermission

***Prélude*** (2019) Francis St-Germain

Quatuor Cobalt  
(Guillaume Villeneuve, Diane Bayard, Benjamin Rota, François Leclerc)

## Karen Kieser Prize Presentation

Gregory Lee Newsome & Francis Ubertelli

***Quartetto 2*** (2018) Francis Ubertelli

Quatuor Cobalt  
(Guillaume Villeneuve, Diane Bayard, Benjamin Rota, François Leclerc)

**Technical Assistance:** Eliot Britton, Peter Olsen, Kristen Antunes,  
Adam Fainman, Ryan O'Grady, Tristan Zaba

**Special thanks to:** Sherry Lee, Institute for Music in Canada,  
Jackman Humanities Institute

## The Karen Kieser Prize in Canadian Music

The Karen Kieser Prize in Canadian Music is awarded each year to a graduate student in composition whose work is judged to be especially promising. Karen Kieser was a distinguished triple-graduate of the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto and a former Head of Music at CBC Radio. Friends and colleagues endowed The Karen Kieser Prize in Canadian Music upon her death in 2002 as a tribute to her life, her work and her passionate devotion to the cause of Canadian music and musicians.

Past winners of the Karen Kieser Prize are:

|   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Rebekah Cummings (2018) and<br>Bekah Simms (2018) | <i>Fearless<br/>Microlattice</i>     |
| Tyler Versluis (2017)                             | <i>3 Unuttered Miracles</i>          |
| Sophie Dupuis (2016)                              | <i>Perceptions de La Fontaine</i>    |
| Shelley Marwood (2015)                            | <i>Imaginings</i>                    |
| Patrick McGraw (2014)                             | <i>Glass</i>                         |
| Christopher Thornborrow (2013)                    | <i>Walking</i>                       |
| Adam Scime (2012)                                 | <i>After the riot</i>                |
| Riho Esko Maimets (2011)                          | <i>squall</i>                        |
| Kevin Lau (2010)                                  | <i>Starsail</i>                      |
| Constantine Caravassilis (2009)                   | <i>Sappho de Mytilène</i>            |
| Igor Correia (2008)                               | <i>Three Songs of Great Range</i>    |
| Fuhong Shi (2007)                                 | <i>Lightenings</i>                   |
| Christopher William Pierce (2006)                 | <i>Melody with Gesture</i>           |
| Katarina Curcin (2005)                            | <i>. . . walking away from . . .</i> |
| Craig Galbraith (2004)                            | <i>The Fenian Cycle</i>              |
| Andrew Staniland (2003)                           | <i>Tapestry</i>                      |
| Abigail Richardson (2002)                         | <i>dissolve</i>                      |



### **Karen Kieser (1948-2002)**

Karen Kieser was a passionate woman. She cared deeply about many people – her friends and colleagues, her husband Larry, her parents, siblings, nieces and nephews – and about many things – her work, her religious faith, her home and garden, travel, art and music. But Karen's strongest passions and deepest commitments were dedicated to two things: Canadian music and public broadcasting. The two came together in her distinguished career at the CBC. Karen Kieser was born in Sutton Coldfield, Warwickshire, England, on February 19, 1948. She died just 10 days before what would have been her 54th birthday, on February 8, 2002, after a courageous, five-year battle with ovarian cancer. She held three degrees from the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto: a Bachelor of Music and a Master of Music, both in Piano Performance, and a Master of Arts in Musicology. She could have had a career as

a concert pianist, and indeed she gave many performances throughout the 1970s in North America and Europe, both as a soloist and with the Canadian Electronic Ensemble. But by then, she had already been bitten by the broadcasting bug. From 1973 to 1977, while still in her twenties, she hosted important CBC Radio and CBC Stereo music programs like *Music Alive* and *Themes and Variations*. The quality of grace under pressure she displayed in that role would characterize all her later endeavours, and she never lost her focus on the audience as the ultimate *raison d'être* for a broadcaster's work.

As music producer with the flagship network program *Arts National* from 1977 to 1982, Karen spent the following decade as first deputy head (1982-1986), and later head (1986-1992), of CBC Radio Music. She set three records, as the youngest, longest-serving head of music, and – what probably made her most proud – the first woman to hold the position. Throughout her career, she was a trailblazer for women in senior positions at the CBC. Her tireless work ethic, ability to master countless details while keeping an eye on the big picture, and unique combination of unfailing good manners and steely determination, made her both an inspiration and a role model. Karen's tenure at CBC Radio Music had many highlights, including a renewed emphasis on

live broadcasts and documentaries, numerous prestigious special events and international awards, and expanded audiences. She championed the cause of Canadian music and musicians through the creation of Canadian content policies for classical music broadcasting on CBC, an ambitious commissioning program, and the establishment of CBC Records as a high-profile label with a reputation for excellence both at home and abroad. She was equally committed to finding and developing new broadcasting talent, and many of the leading lights of the music department today (both on and off the air) were recruited and nurtured under her watchful eye. While still head of music, Karen had been an eloquent advocate for the creation of Glenn Gould Studio. In 1992, she became the facility's first general manager. In a very real sense, this "jewel in the crown," which combines an intimate live recital hall and a state-of-the-art digital recording studio, is another of her lasting legacies.

From 1994 until illness forced her to stop working in 1999, Karen was co-ordinator of strategic initiatives for CBC English Radio. Among the numerous projects she worked on during this time were the Festival television specialty channel application, the successful application for the CBC's pay audio channel Galaxie, the move of CBC Radio in Toronto from AM to FM, and a CBC Television

dance special, among many others. Despite being diagnosed with cancer in 1997, she continued to work for another two years: a decision typical of her lifelong devotion to duty. Even thereafter, she remained active as an arts consultant, writer and volunteer, serving on juries and panels for the Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council and Metro Toronto. In 2000, she was honoured with the Vice-President's Award for outstanding achievement in the service of CBC Radio. For the first time, the vice-president of English radio, Alex Frame, insisted on presenting the award personally.

Those who knew Karen Kieser well remember her warm smile and thoughtful concern for other people, whom she always treated with dignity, respect and countless quiet acts of kindness. They speak also of her unflinchingly positive and sincerely optimistic outlook, restless curiosity and wide range of interests, insatiable appetite for hard work, ability to motivate and inspire people to exceed their own expectations, and insistence on holding others (and most of all herself) to the highest standards of quality in every aspect of life, both professional and personal. She conducted her battle against cancer with characteristic rigour, energy, clear-sightedness, humour, a stubborn refusal to surrender, and, in the end, calm acceptance and inner peace.

## PROGRAM NOTES

*Like a Memory* explores that area of aural perception in which we hear music in sounds and sounds in music, where scrap metal structures become musical instruments and the piano becomes a strange sound sculpture.

Many things came together in this composition. In 1985 I took my tape recorder and microphone and walked along Slocan Lake in the interior of British Columbia, Canada, to an abandoned old house I had discovered some days before. Among the few remains inside was a piano. Many strings had broken, pieces of wood, some rusty nails and wires were lying among the strings, and rats had nested in its sounding board. Some keys were missing and of the remaining ones, not all keys were working. I had found a “prepared piano” in the deepest Cagean sense and delighted in improvising on this “instrument” and recording the sounds that emerged. I also played and recorded snippets of classical music that I remembered from piano lessons years ago. They sounded delightfully out of tune and “off”.

In 2000 I went back to the same region with photographer Florence Debeugny to collect sounds and images for a project on ghost towns called *At the Edge of Wilderness*. Fallen down buildings and rusty metal structures became soundmaking devices as I moved

through the abandoned industrial sites, “playing” on anything and everything and finding the most fascinating resonances. Whether the sounds came from an old steam engine or an out-of-tune piano with broken strings, they have become the musical instruments for *Like A Memory*.

*Attending to Sacred Matters* is one in a series of pieces based on the sounds of India. Here I am working specifically with the sounds of the many religious and spiritual practices that I encountered and recorded in this country—such as the chanting from the Sikh Golden Temple in Amritsar, bells and ritual sounds from various Hindu temples, sounds from an Ashram in Rishikesh and the voice of Swami Brahmananda, Muezzins calling for prayer from various mosques, chanting at dusk on the Ganges in Rishikesh, bells from a Jain temple, the chanting of OM, and so on. In addition, there are the sounds of water and the voice of environmental activist Vandana Shiva.

What do we consider to be sacred in our lives and how do we attend to it? This question, my travels in India and my long-standing environmental concerns formed the impetus for this composition and are somehow brought together here.

**Klavierklang** is a sonic-musical journey into the complexities of piano playing. During the past few years Rachel and I often reflected on the challenging and traumatic, but also inspiring experiences we have had with piano teachers, the roles our mothers' ears played in our musical development and how much the piano has been both a sanctuary for sonic explorations and soundmaking, and a site of trauma and discouragement. Ultimately *Klavierklang* is a journey towards the piano playing we have always loved, into the magic of its sound.

*Klavierklang* was commissioned by Rachel Iwaasa and was created with the financial assistance of the Canada Council and the BC Arts Council. Many thanks go to David Bloom, who directed Rachel in the dramaturgical aspects of her live performance.

**Prélude** is an updated vision of German Romanticism. Namely, as if Franz Schubert, Gustav Mahler and E.T.A. Hoffmann lived today with the same aesthetic and political concerns as before. It is, moreover, in Hoffmann's writings that the piece initially draws its inspiration. His tales – strewn with mises en abyme, caricatured characters and dichotomies – which constantly plunge into fantastic realism make him a faithful representative of the essence of this troubled time. In order to get closer to the romantic spirit, some idealized values of

this period are put forward: those of the Middle Ages; a return to nature, to pure emotion and the acceptance of dissymmetry. Thus, for approximately seven minutes, *Prélude* plays with our cultural references by navigating between microtonal motet, contrasts and an almost grotesque quote of sacred music.

**Quartetto 2** illustrates a parallel between the shift to atonalism and the Dionysian experience of looking into the irrational. It seeks to overwhelm the listening parameters and redesign the tonal music geometries through an analysis of language in a structure that is ontologically posterior to the system that instantiates it, i.e., the complex relationships between the signified and the signifier. *Quartetto 2* seeks to reschedule music inside a system of logically inevitable propositions, such as “protocol sentences” in the definition of a grammar where any identity of opposites, any “transformational equivalent,” entails a denial of the “principle of non-contradiction.”

Changing things make possible the continued existence of other things. The reality of a string quartet in today's technological world is confronted with a present that is no longer recognizable, in which the screams of expressionism fossilized long ago. The ideas conveyed here would like to challenge this assertion.

## COMPOSER BIOGRAPHIES

**Hildegard Westerkamp** was born in Osnabrück, Germany in 1946 and emigrated to Canada in 1968. After completing her music studies at the University of British Columbia in the early seventies she joined the World Soundscape Project under the direction of R. Murray Schafer at Simon Fraser University (SFU). Her involvement with this project not only activated deep concerns about noise and the general state of the acoustic environment in her, but it also changed her ways of thinking about music, listening and soundmaking. Vancouver Co-operative Radio – founded during the same time - provided an invaluable opportunity to learn much about broadcasting, and ultimately enabled her to produce and host her weekly program *Soundwalking* in 1978/79.

One could say that her career in soundscape composition and acoustic ecology emerged from these two pivotal experiences and found support in the cultural and political vibrancy of Vancouver at that time. In addition, composers such as John Cage and Pauline Oliveros have had a significant influence on her work.

While completing her Master's Thesis in the 1980s, entitled *Listening and Soundmaking - A Study of Music-as-Environment*, she also taught acoustic communications courses until 1990 in the School of Communication

at SFU together with colleague Barry Truax. Since then she has written numerous articles and texts addressing issues of the soundscape, acoustic ecology and listening, has travelled widely, giving lectures and conducting soundscape workshops internationally.

In 1993 she was instrumental in helping found the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology ([www.wfae.net](http://www.wfae.net)), an international network of affiliated organizations and individuals who share a common concern for the state of the world's soundscapes. She was chief editor of its journal *Soundscape* between 2000 and 2012.

Born in 1994, **Francis St-Germain** is a composer, saxophonist and improviser based in Montreal. He holds a Bachelor of Music in mixed composition (2017) from the Université de Montréal, under the direction of Pierre Michaud, where he also studied with Ana Sokolović. Interested in long-term performances, he founded the company Les Concerts en Alcôve in 2016, producing in situ multidisciplinary events focused on sound, movement, chance and spatialization, with the aim of democratizing contemporary art. These include the *Concert aux puces* (2016) – which was created in collaboration with the composer Maxime Daigneault at the Arte Flea Market – and the *Molécules* concert

series (2017), held at LOCAL 250 (temporary art gallery), as well as at MaBrasserie Brewery Cooperative.

Francis St-Germain also collaborated with the theater companies Tête au corps (HISTOIRES ORDINAIRES, Limbes) and La reine ninja (Festival des Arts de Ruelle, Arène ninja), as well as with the collective of filmmakers Le Zoo. Most recently, his research is focused on linking aspects of mysticism and cerebralism. His piece Beata Ludovica Albertoni (2019), commissioned by the violinist Simon Alexandre, is his most recent representation of this idea.

Born in 1968 in Quebec City, Canada, **Francis Ubertelli** began studying composition under Armando Santiago at the Quebec Conservatory. He later studied under Franco Donatoni and Azio Corghi at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, taking classes with Ennio Morricone and Luciano Berio. He graduated in 1996. A few years later, following the death of his mentor, plagued by a profound aesthetic crisis combined with an extended nervous exhaustion, he quit music. That year, he met the shadow of the divine during a game of chess, which redirected his path in life. In 2011, he published his first novel in France, an essay comparing ongoing social changes with the 9/11 attacks, which he witnessed. In 2015, after some years spent

as a teacher, he returned to music following the birth of his son and a chance encounter with an old acquaintance. He is currently preparing his thesis as part of his doctoral studies at the University of Toronto.

Francis Ubertelli has written numerous works for chamber ensemble and received grants and commissions from the Canada Council for the Arts and the Monte dei Paschi di Siena in Italy, the Istituto Italiano di Cultura, Toronto's Arraymusic, the Charm of Finches flute quintet, the Sounds of Silence Project, Brussels's Thelema Trio, the Fibonacci Trio, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Alizée flute ensemble, the Ensemble contemporain de Montréal, Antwerp's Champ d'Action, the Alcan string quartet and the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa. In addition, selected works have been featured at the Conservatoire royale de Bruxelles's trombone examination and at the Université de Montréal string quartet performance section. His music is regularly played in Canada, the United States, Europe and South America.

Hailed in the press as a "keyboard virtuoso and avant-garde muse" (*Georgia Straight*) with the "emotional intensity" to take a piece "from notes on a page to a stunning work of art" (*Victoria Times Colonist*), **Rachel Kiyo Iwaasa** is recognized among Canada's

foremost contemporary music pianists. Selected to close the ISCM World New Music Days 2017 in Vancouver, Rachel has performed in the Netherlands, Germany, US and across Canada, with engagements including Muziekweek Gaudeamus, Music TORONTO, Music on Main, Vancouver New Music, Redshift, Western Front, Vancouver Symphony, Victoria Symphony, the Aventa Ensemble (Victoria), CONTACT contemporary music (Toronto), New Works Calgary, Groundswell New Music (Winnipeg), and Vancouver Pro Musica.

Rachel has commissioned or premiered works by many of Canada's most eminent composers, such as Hildegard Westerkamp, Rodney Sharman, Jocelyn Morlock, Nicole Lizée, Jordan Nobles, Jeffrey Ryan, Farshid Samandari, Marci Rabe, and Emily Doolittle. One half of the acclaimed contemporary flute/piano duo Tiresias with Mark Takeshi McGregor, Rachel has also collaborated with Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Judith Forst, Heather Pawsey, the Bozzini Quartet, Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Caroline Shaw, and Richard Reed Parry of Arcade Fire. Her interdisciplinary adventures have led to work with photo-based artist SD Holman, playwright/director David Bloom, choreographer Tara Cheyenne Friedenberg, and multi-media provocateur Paul Wong.

Rachel's debut CD, *Cosmophony*, has been praised as "brilliant" and

"unforgettable" (*Vancouver Sun*) and for "the passion, intensity and the nuanced playing she's acclaimed for... she manages to instill a sense of dynamic tension and pull to every note" (*The Province*). Rachel was a co-founder of the Queer Arts Festival in Vancouver, recognized as one of the top 5 festivals of its kind worldwide.

Emerging ensemble, the **Cobalt Quartet** stands out for its eclectic and modern musical approach, exploring with as much enthusiasm the ancient music on period instrument as the contemporary creations. Socially engaged musicians, the members of the quartet are dedicated to making music ever more accessible to a wide audience, defying stylistic and social boundaries. Increasingly active, the quartet concluded its first French tour in 2019 and multiplies collaborations with internationally renowned artists such as Laura Andriani, Yegor Dyachkov, Yukari Cousineau, Jutta Puchhammer, Silvia Mandolini and Vincent Lauzer. The ensemble has also been a collaborative quartet at Domaine Forget since 2018.

Involved in the display of today's repertoire, the ensemble showcases contemporary music with several collaborations and creations by Quebec composers. The quartet performed the world premiere of Francis Ubertelli's *Quartetto No. 2* at the Canadian Music Center

in Toronto and recorded a work by Maggie Ayotte on the album *Déductions* from bassist Rémi-Jean Leblanc. More recently, the ensemble has created *Miniatures* by Francis Battah on gut strings.

The Cobalt Quartet was founded at the University of Montreal in 2017. It has been mentored by Annick Roussin, Yegor Dyachkov and Laura Andriani (Alcan Quartet).

***Coming up at the 2020 New Music Festival:***

***From Bach to Latin America***

Wed Jan 15 | 7:30 pm | Walter Hall | Free

***Thursdays at Noon: André Mehmari, solo piano***

Thu Jan 16 | 12:10 pm | Walter Hall | Free

***André Mehmari Chamber Works***

Thu Jan 16 | 7:30 pm | Walter Hall | Free

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