

Roomful of Teeth



Friday, March 20, 2015

Welcome to the Cleveland Museum of Art

The Cleveland Museum of Art's performing arts series brings together thoughtful, fascinating, and beautiful experiences, comprising a concert calendar notable for its boundless multiplicity. This year we welcome two Pulitzer Prize-winning composers, dance programs both traditional and modern, several exciting young ensembles, and much more. Here is the place where performance is intended to explore connections of cultures, the heart, and the human spirit.

In the galleries

Constructed Identities
Through Sunday, April 26

*Themes and Variations:
Musical Drawings and Prints*
Through Sunday, May 17

Senufo: Art and Identity in West Africa
Through Sunday, May 31

*The Novel and the Bizarre:
Salvator Rosa's Scenes of Witchcraft*
Through Sunday, June 14

Floral Delight: Textiles from Islamic Lands
Through Sunday, June 28

Fresh Prints: The Nineties to Now
Sunday, March 22–Sunday, July 26

Please **turn off all electronic devices** before entering the performance hall.

Photography and audio/video recording in the performance hall **are prohibited.**

Roomful of Teeth

Friday, March 20, 2015, 7:30 p.m.

Gartner Auditorium, the Cleveland Museum of Art

Personnel

Estelí Gomez, soprano
Martha Cluver, soprano
Caroline Shaw, alto
Virginia Warnken, alto
Eric Dudley, tenor
Avery Griffin, baritone
Thomas McCargar, bass-baritone
Cameron Beauchamp, bass

Brad Wells, artistic director

Program

Caroline Shaw	<i>Partita for 8 Voices</i>
	I. Allemande
	II. Sarabande
	III. Courante
	IV. Passacaglia

— intermission —

William Brittelle	<i>High Done No Why To</i>
Eric Dudley	<i>Suonare/to sound</i>
Judd Greenstein	<i>Montmartre</i>
Brad Wells	<i>Render</i>
Rinde Eckert	<i>Cesca's View</i>
Judd Greenstein	<i>AEIOU</i>

Notes

Caroline Shaw: *Partita for 8 voices* (2009–2011)

The score's inscription reads: "*Partita* is a simple piece. Born of a love of surface and structure, of the human voice, of dancing and tired ligaments, of music, and of our basic desire to draw a line from one point to another."

Each movement takes a cue from the traditional baroque suite in initial meter and tone, but the familiar historic framework is soon stretched and broken, through "speech, whispers, sighs, murmurs, wordless melodies, and novel vocal effects" (Pulitzer jury citation). Roomful of Teeth's utterly unique approach to singing and vocal timbre originally helped to inspire and shape the work during its creation, and the ensemble continues to refine and reconsider the colors and small details with every performance. *Allemande* opens with the organized chaos of square dance calls overlapping with technical wall drawing directions of the artist Sol LeWitt, suddenly congealing into a bright, angular tune that never keeps its feet on the ground for very long. There are allusions to the movement's intended simulation of motion and space in the short phrases of text throughout, which are sometimes sung and sometimes embedded as spoken texture. *Sarabande*'s quiet restraint in the beginning is punctured in the middle by an ecstatic, belted melody that resolves quietly at the end, followed soon after by the Inuit-inspired hocketed breaths of *Courante*. A wordless quotation of the American folk hymn «Shining Shore» appears at first as a musical non sequitur but later recombines with the rhythmic breaths as this longest movement is propelled to its final gasp. *Passacaglia* is a set of variations on a repeated chord progression, first experimenting simply with vowel timbre, then expanding into a fuller texture with the return of the

Sol LeWitt text. At *Passacaglia*'s premiere in 2009, there was spontaneous applause and cheering at the explosive return of the D-major chord near the end—so feel free to holler or clap any time if you feel like it.

Of the premiere of *Partita*, *New York* magazine wrote that I had "discovered a lode of the rarest commodity in contemporary music: joy." And it is with joy that this piece is meant to be received in years to come.

–CS

William Britelle: *High Done No Why To* (2010)

High Done No Why To was written while in residency with Roomful of Teeth and represents my initial attempt to synthesize their many amazing extended vocal techniques into a single coherent piece. I decided to use words as "sound" instead of "lyrics" in order to stay focused on texture and harmony (rather than getting caught up in an external narrative). The ending of the piece was written from midnight to 6am on the eve of our final rehearsal of the residency and is meant to bring a sense of catharsis to the end of a somewhat restless and angular piece.

–WB

Eric Dudley: *Suonare/to sound* (2010)

From a larger set of pieces called *Wordplay*, *Suonare/to sound* is a meditation on qualities of timbre and language. I was fascinated with the idea of writing complementary poems—each a direct translation of the other—that have interesting sonic properties of their own which are amplified when superimposed. In this case in English and Italian, a reflection on the nature of sound and its various guises in our everyday lives yields rich internal assonance and vowel harmony in both

languages. My image for the musical setting was that of a cavernous, echoing space, with each of the voice parts moving as if in delayed reaction to the others. Slowly shifting harmonies in the lower voices trace a path through the English text, while the two soprano voices skim across the surface in Italian pirouettes, one an echo of the other. Roomful of Teeth gave the piece its premiere during our summer residency at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art in 2010.

-ED

Text:

(English)	(Italian)
Sounds sound near and sound far	<i>Suoni suonano vicino e lontano</i>
Sound deafens and sound whispers	<i>Suono assorda e suono soffia</i>
Sounds sound in sleep and in dreams	<i>Suoni suonano in sonno e in sogni</i>
Sound sounds always	<i>Suono suona sempre</i>

Judd Greenstein: *Montmartre* (2009)

Montmartre is an exploration of sound and color, opening with a counterpoint between throat-singing men and yodeling women, then moving on through a variety of more familiar vocal production techniques, belted and bell-like. I named the work after the famous Paris neighborhood because it's where the concepts of sound and timbre were finally elevated to their rightful place alongside harmony, counterpoint, and voice leading in the Western classical tradition. French composers in the early 20th century wrote pieces that were open to sounds they heard from around the world; now, Roomful of Teeth is doing the same kind of exploration with the human voice.

-JG

Brad Wells: *Render* (2013)

Written in a cottage in northern Vermont, *Render* is a song inspired by David Eagleman's short story «Search.» The story describes a vision of the afterlife as both the periodic unraveling of our material, molecular structure into other forms in nature and the complete continuity and maintenance—in spite of the unraveling—of our consciousness and feeling.

-BW

Rinde Eckert: *Cesca's View* (2009)

I spent three weeks at a retreat in the Pyrenées. My apartment had this extraordinary view. Every night this lovely woman named Cesca fixed all of the residents dinner in her home. She and her husband Luis served us. We stayed late to talk about life and art over bottles of their excellent wine. Every morning I was awakened to the sound of bells—goats were being herded down the mountain.

-RE

Judd Greenstein: *AEIOU* (2009)

AEIOU was written at Mass MoCA in the summer of 2009, during the first-ever assemblage of Roomful of Teeth. I came up for the second week of their 2-week residency, not knowing what the group was capable of doing—a forgivable sin since the group itself was just beginning to learn their own abilities and capacities. With me, I brought some sketches that I felt could be adapted to whatever sounds I heard the singers produce; these were études of sorts, studies in rhythm and harmony that left a lot of room for different sounds in different places. Once I heard what the group was able to do, I adapted some of these with their varied techniques in mind, creating fully-formed pieces that combined my sketches with the sounds of the ensemble.

AEIOU uses the five basic vowel sounds, in their Spanish configuration, as an ordered set, a “text” of sorts that structures the forward progress of the work, while the sonic landscape is a tapestry of interwoven yodels, throat singing, and straight-tone clarity. It’s an extremely challenging work and could only be performed by the singers of this incredible ensemble, to whom I give my deepest thanks.

-JG

Ensemble Bio

Founded in 2009 by Brad Wells, Roomful of Teeth is a vocal project dedicated to mining the expressive potential of the human voice. Through study with masters from non-classical traditions the world over, the eight voice ensemble continually expands its vocabulary of singing techniques and, through an on-going commissioning project, invites today’s brightest composers to create a new repertoire without borders.

The ensemble gathers annually at Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (Mass MoCA), where they’ve studied Tuvan throat singing, yodeling, belting, Inuit throat singing, Korean P’ansori, Georgian singing, Sardinian *cantu a tenore*, Hindustani music and Persian classical singing with some of the world’s top performers and teachers of the styles. Commissioned composers include Rinde Eckert, Judd Greenstein, Caleb Burhans, Merrill Garbus (of tUnE-yArDs), William Britton, Sarah Kirkland Snider, Missy Mazzoli, Sam Amidon, and Julia Wolfe.

Roomful of Teeth has performed at Merkin Hall, (le) Poisson Rouge, Town Hall (Seattle) and Carlsbad Music Festival (California), among others. The group regularly leads vocal technique workshops, master classes, improv-based workshops and concerts at colleges,

elementary schools, high schools, and community centers across the country. In August 2014, Roomful of Teeth was spotlighted at the International Federation for Choral Music symposium in Seoul, Korea (one of only three American vocal ensembles invited).

The project’s debut album, *Roomful of Teeth*, was released in 2012 and nominated in three categories for the 2014 56th Annual GRAMMY Awards, including Best Engineer for Classical Album, Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance, and Best Contemporary Classical Composition. The album subsequently received a GRAMMY for Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance.

In April 2013, ensemble member Caroline Shaw received the Pulitzer Prize in Music for *Partita*, the four movements of which appear on the group’s debut album. An iTunes exclusive EP of *Partita* was subsequently released and ranked no. 1 on iTunes Classical charts.

Roomful of Teeth’s second full-length recording is slated for release this spring, featuring works by Wally Gunn, Missy Mazzoli, William Britton, Caleb Burhans, ensemble tenor Eric Dudley, and artistic director Brad Wells.

UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

Mivos Quartet

Saturday, March 28, 7:30 p.m.
Transformer Station

“One of America’s most daring and ferocious new-music ensembles” (*The Chicago Reader*), the Mivos Quartet has performed the works of emerging and established international composers who represent varied aesthetics of contemporary classical composition. Program: Alex Mincek, String Quartet No. 3; Martin Stauning, *Atmende Steine*; Helmut Lachenmann, String Quartet No. 3, “Grido.” \$20; CMA members \$18.
cma.org/mivos

CIM/CWRU Joint Music Program

Wednesday, April 1, 6:00 p.m.
Museum galleries

The next installment of our “First Wednesday” concerts features Baroque chamber ensembles and Baroque orchestra from CWRU. Free, no tickets required.
cma.org/cim

Wu Man

Wednesday, April 8, 7:30 p.m.
Gartner Auditorium

Recognized as the world’s premiere *pipa* virtuoso and leading ambassador of Chinese music, Wu Man has carved out a career as a soloist, educator, and composer. She was named Musical America’s 2013 Instrumentalist of the Year and is a principal member of Yo-Yo Ma’s Silk Road Project. She performs a program centered around the multi-media work *Ancient Dances: Three Poems by Li Bai (701–762)* composed by Chen Yi and Wu Man for *pipa* and percussion with video design by Catherine Owen, and calligraphy by Wang Jiaxun and Lu Weiming. \$55–\$42, CMA members \$50–\$38.
cma.org/wu

Performing Arts

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John Luther Adams:

Veils and Vesper
September 20–November 8

John Luther Adams: *Inuksuit*
Sunday, September 21, 2:00

Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble
Saturday, September 27, 2:00

CIM/CWRU Joint Music Program
Wednesday, October 1, 6:00

U-Theatre
Friday, October 10, 7:30

Vân-Áhn Vanessa Võ
Sunday, October 26, 7:30

Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble
Saturday, November 1, 2:00

CIM/CWRU Joint Music Program
Wednesday, November 5, 6:00

Royal Ballet of Cambodia
Wednesday, November 5, 7:30

Calder Quartet
Wednesday, November 19, 7:30

CIM/CWRU Joint Music Program
Wednesday, December 3, 6:00

Tallis Scholars
Thursday, December 11, 7:30

Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble
SPECIAL GUEST: JENNIFER KOH, VIOLIN
Saturday, December 13, 2:00

Marc Ribot plays Charlie Chaplin’s *The Kid*
Sunday, December 14, 1:30

CIM/CWRU Joint Music Program
Wednesday, January 7, 6:00

Intonarumori:

Orchestra of Futurist Noise Intoners
January 11–15 (on display)
Friday, January 16, 7:30

Karel Paukert
Sunday, January 25, 2:00

Chanticleer
Friday, January 30, 7:30

CIM/CWRU Joint Music Program
Wednesday, February 4, 6:00

Ragamala Dance Company and Rudresh Mahanthappa
Wednesday, February 11, 7:30

CIM/CWRU Joint Music Program
Wednesday, March 4, 6:00

Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble
Saturday, March 7, 2:00

Matthias Ziegler
Thursday, March 19, 7:30

Roomful of Teeth
Friday, March 20, 7:30

Mivos Quartet
Saturday, March 28, 7:30

CIM/CWRU Joint Music Program
Wednesday, April 1, 6:00

Wu Man
Wednesday, April 8, 7:30

Oberlin Contemporary Music Ensemble
Saturday, April 11, 2:00

Calder Quartet
Tuesday, April 14, 7:30

CIM/CWRU Joint Music Program
Wednesday, May 6, 6:00

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**DEPARTMENT OF
PERFORMING ARTS, MUSIC,
AND FILM**

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#CMAperformingarts

Programs are subject to change.

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