

USC Thornton

School of Music



THORNTON EDGE

MONDAY | **FEBRUARY 28, 2022** | 7:30PM

NEWMAN RECITAL HALL

Featuring

CARLOS SIMON'S GRAFFITI

West Coast premiere, Thornton Edge co-commission

Program

STEPHEN HARTKE

1952-

Beyond Words

performers

Agatha Blevin, *violin*
Emma Antonides, *viola*
Alexander Mansour, *cello*
Christina Gasparich, *piano*

JULIAN ANDERSON

1967-

I. "L'Aube, soleil naissant"

II. "Les Vignobles"

III. "Les Alpilles"

IV. "Eygalières"

V. "la nuit, peindre les étoiles"

Van Gogh Blue

performers

Marley Eder, *flute*
Besnik Abrashi, *clarinet*
Espen Aas, *bass clarinet*

Kaitlin Miller, *harp*
Marika Mori, *piano*

Wilfred Farquharsen, *viola*
Quenton Blache, *cello*
Sarah Wager, *bass*

Donald Crockett, *conductor*



CARLOS SIMON

1986-

I. Tags, Throw-ups, and Fill-ins

II. Straight Letters

III. Scribing

IV. Masterpiece/WildStyle

Graffiti

West Coast premiere
Thornton Edge co-commission

performers

Marley Eder, *flute*
Sonia Matheus, *oboe*
Besnik Abrashi, *clarinet*
Espen Aas, *bass clarinet*
Anne Ranzani, *bassoon*

Siri Storheim, *horn*
Tali Duckworth, *trumpet*
Stephen Hannan, *trombone*

Dominic Grande, *drums*
Marika Mori, *piano*

Laura Gamboa, *violin*
Vikram Iyer, *violin*
Wilfred Farquharsen, *viola*
Quenton Blache, *cello*
Sarah Wager, *bass*

Donald Crockett, *conductor*

Program Notes

BEYOND WORDS

Beyond Words was composed between October 22 and December 4, 2001 and thus in the immediate aftermath of the unspeakable events of September 11. Rarely have I found it so difficult to work on a piece, but rarely has it seemed so absolutely imperative that I do so. As the opening material began to take shape, I found that certain turns of phrase echoed in the beginning of Thomas Tallis' setting of the first verses of The Lamentations of Jeremiah, which, of course, are concerned with a catastrophe befalling a great city. Therefore, I decided to go a step further and pattern the entire single movement piece on the Tallis. Each of its six sections corresponds in general texture and affect to a section of the model and certain of Tallis' motives have been absorbed into my melodic lines.

One important aspect of the piece does not stem from the Tallis, however, and that is the role of the piano, which appears at first as high, crystalline chords interrupting the flow of the strings' polyphony. It is as if the piano were in shock and unable to participate with the others, but gradually it is drawn into the discourse and becomes a full partner in the concluding pages of the work.

- Stephen Hartke

VAN GOGH BLUE

Van Gogh's numerous letters to his brother Theo are a touching and vivid record of his creative impulses during his amazingly short artistic career. One thing stands out: for Van Gogh, the true excitement of painting was in its materials, the sheer stuff of which his art is made – color. There are innumerable references to his shades of color and different kinds of paint he used to render them on canvas. The color blue was a particular and now famous obsession of his. Surprised that no shade of blue was named after him, I decided to give my piece the title of this non-existent color, in homage to a creative artist for whose work I have always felt a strong affinity. The five movements follow a trajectory from dawn to midnight, as indicated by the titles. The two clarinets are mobile: in the first and third movements, they sit within the ensemble; in the second movement, they stand at either side of the stage, whilst in the fourth they are among the audience. In the fifth movement, the clarinets are removed to the gallery, and one of them is tuned a quarter-tone flat. This final movement, reflecting upon his celebrated *Starry Night*, eventually brings the music full-circle via a sustained lament for the whole ensemble. The coda was influenced by recent research suggesting that Van Gogh was murdered, rather than committing suicide as had been previously believed.

- Julian Anderson

GRAFFITI

Both sounds and images can boldly highlight the vibrancy of city landscapes. Specifically, the specialized art form of graffiti (stylewriting/letterbending/aerosol art) can be seen on spray-painted subway cars, tagged bridges, on masterpiece- and mural-covered walls in cities across the globe. Graffiti has been around for thousands of years in some form and has continuously raised questions on whether it can be viewed as art or as vandalism. While there are several forms and artistic styles of graffiti, this piece seeks to highlight many of the techniques that graffiti artists use: tags and throw-ups, fill-ins, straight letters, scribing, and masterpieces/wildstyles. This work is inspired by the countless artists around the world whose self-expression allows their audiences to redefine and reexamine art. Is it art or vandalism?

-Carlos Simon

Biographies

CARLOS SIMON

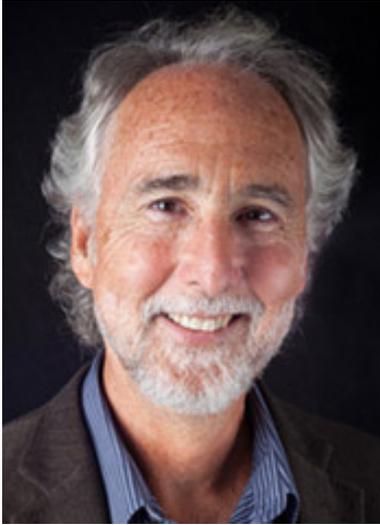
Carlos Simon is a native of Atlanta, Georgia, whose music ranges from concert music for large and small ensembles to film scores with influences of jazz, gospel and neo-romanticism. Simon is the composer-in-residence for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Simon's latest album, *My Ancestor's Gift*, was released on Navona Records in April 2018. Described as an "overall driving force" (Review Graveyard) and featured on Apple Music's Albums to Watch, *My Ancestor's Gift* incorporates spoken word and historic recordings to craft a multifaceted program of musical works that are inspired as much by the past as they are the present.

As a part of the 2018 Sundance Institute, which was held at the historic Skywalker Ranch, Simon was named as a Sundance composer fellow. His string quartet, *Elegy*, honoring the lives of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown and Eric Garner, recently performed at the Kennedy Center for the Mason Bates JFK Jukebox Series. With support from the US embassy in Tokyo and the US/Japan Foundation, Simon traveled with the Asia/America New Music Institute (AANMI) on a two-week tour of Japan in 2018, performing concerts in some of the most sacred temples and concert spaces in Japan including Suntory Hall in Tokyo.

Simon earned his doctoral degree at the University of Michigan, where he studied with Michael Daugherty and Evan Chambers. He has also received degrees from Georgia State University and Morehouse College. Additionally, he studied in Baden, Austria, at the Hollywood Music Workshop with Conrad Pope and at New York University's Film Scoring Summer Workshop.

DONALD CROCKETT



Los Angeles-based composer and conductor Donald Crockett has received commissions from a wide spectrum of organizations including the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra (composer-in-residence, 1991-1997), the Kronos Quartet, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Hilliard Ensemble, the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, Xtet, the San Francisco-based chamber chorus, Volti, the California EAR Unit, the Guitar Foundation of America and the University of Southern California for its 125th anniversary, among many others. Recent projects include an all-Crockett orchestral disc released by Boston Modern

Orchestra Project on BMOP/sound, commissions from New Music USA for SAKURA cello quintet, Kaleidoscope Chamber Orchestra, Aspen Music Festival and Oberlin Conservatory for *And the River*, a concerto for duo pianists and chamber orchestra, the Harvard Musical Association for violist Kate Vincent and Firebird Ensemble, a chamber opera, *The Face*, based on a novella in verse by poet David St. John, a consortium commission from 22 college and university wind ensembles for his *Dance Concerto for Clarinet/Bass Clarinet and Wind Ensemble*, and commissions for new string quartets from the Dilijan Chamber Music Series and the Caramoor Festival. A frequent guest conductor with new music ensembles nationally, Crockett has been very active over the years as a composer and conductor with the venerable and famed Monday Evening Concerts, the Jacaranda concert series, as well as leading the Aspen Contemporary Ensemble. As conductor of the USC Thornton Symphony's annual New Music for Orchestra series, Crockett has premiered over 150 new orchestral works by outstanding Thornton student-composers. His recordings as a conductor can be found on the Albany, CRI, Doberman/Yppan, ECM and New World labels. Deeply committed to education, Donald Crockett is professor and chair of the USC Thornton Composition program, director of Thornton Edge new music ensemble and associate dean for faculty affairs at the USC Thornton School of Music, as well as senior composer-in-residence with the Bennington Chamber Music Conference.

Upcoming Events

Mar. 4 at 8 p.m.

Baroque Sinfonia

Mar. 6 at 3 p.m.

Composition Showcase I

Mar. 6 at 7 p.m.

Composition Showcase II

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