February 22 and 23, 2024 7:30pm

Heliconian Hall Toronto

Confluence Concerts

Larry Beckwith Curator

A Message from the Curator

Welcome to Confluence Concerts' inaugural Side-by-Side concert! For the past week and a half, we have been engaged in an intense series of workshops and exploratory rehearsals with a diverse collection of young artists who were selected to work with Confluence Concerts' Associate Artists in this program. They have benefitted from learning more about programming, grant writing and career planning, touring, arranging and composition, and a whole host of other areas of the musical world. In addition, we made music together in jams and sight-reading sessions, and came up with an eclectic program of music to share with you tonight.

Throughout the process we downplayed the idea of "final product" and "performance" and enjoyed the luxury of being able to explore ideas and try out new modes of musical expression, with each participant taking turns leading and contributing to each other's musical ideas.

This concert is the result of that journey. It has been a pleasure to get to know these wonderful young musicians. Tonight, the Confluence stage is theirs!

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the land we are gathering on is the traditional territory of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinaabe, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit. As an organization dedicated to bringing artists and artistic traditions together, it is our duty and privilege to recognize the original caretakers of the land on which we live and work, to listen and to learn about how we can contribute to the spirit of reconciliation and resurgence, and to move forward in a good way.

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Performers

Harrison Argatoff

Larry Beckwith

Shirsha Chakraborty

Wing Yan Chan

Cloud

EmmaSo

Mackenzie Donaldson

Stone He

Kathryn Rose Johnston

Teiya Kasahara 笠原 貞野

KöNG Duo (Hoi Tong Keung and Bevis Ng)

Camila Lozada

mezzopiano (Máiri Demmings and Zain Solinski)

Zain Solinski

Nuha Yousef

Our Artists



Harrison Argatoff

Harrison Argatoff is a Toronto-based saxophonist and composer. His music, describedas "Somewhere between Bach, BL!NDMAN and Mark Turner" (Jazz Halo, 2020), strives to combine the study of free-improvised, jazz, and classical music to cultivate an enthusiastically eclectic, yet distinctly personal sound. Since graduating from the University of Toronto's jazz program in 2018, Harrison has performed across Canada and released four innovative albums, most notably with intergenerational jazz quartet "Harrison Squared", which features Canadian greats Mike Murley and Steve Wallace.

Harrison was raised a Doukhobour in the interior of British Columbia, surrounded by teachings of pacifism, communal music making, and a wide sweeping respect for life and nature. After years spent stubbornly resisting piano lessons to embrace long-haired rock-and-roll guitar, at age ten he discovered, and was immediately captivated by, the saxophone. In his youth, Harrison studied with Craig Thomson, a compelling teacher and saxophonist based in Kelowna BC, who nurtured a profound fascination and appreciation for jazz music.

At present, Harrison's efforts are divided between creating honest, purposeful art, and developing as a musician, particularly as an instrumentalist and composer. Harrison is currently a student of Wallace Halladay, studying classical saxophone; Sasha Rapoport, studying classical composition; and John Hollenbeck, studying contemporary composition. These mentorships, initiated in 2020 with support from the Canada Council for the Arts, have inspired a new sense of aliveness and curiosity in Harrison's artistic practice, while continually challenging his patience and humility.

Our Artists



Larry Beckwith

Larry Beckwith is an enthusiastic and varied contributor to the musical life of Toronto and beyond as a conductor, violinist, singer, writer, educator, administrator and programmer. He studied violin and musicology at the undergraduate and graduate levels at the University of Toronto, and has since sung, played and worked with most of this city's leading musical organizations. As an artistic leader/founder of three organizations - Arbor Oak Trio, Toronto Masque Theatre and Confluence Concerts - Larry has presented 35 seasons of musical events in Toronto and has commissioned and premiered over a dozen major works by Canadian creative artists. Larry has appeared at a number of Ontario's summer music festivals, including Chamberfest in Ottawa, the Elora Festival, the Westben Festival, Toronto Summer Music, and the Festival of the Sound. In the summer of 2018, he conducted the successful Festival of the Sound world premiere and subsequent Ontario tour of Sounding Thunder: The Song of Francis Pegahmagabow by Timothy Corlis and Armand Garnet Ruffo; it was remounted in the summer of 2022. Larry is a committed educator and runs the celebrated strings program at the arts-intensive Unionville High School in addition to conducting the Mooredale Senior Youth Orchestra.

Our Artists



Shirsha Chakraborty

Shirsha is an Indian Alternative R&B singer-songwriter, vocal arranger performer and vocal coach. Born in India, into a family of avid music lovers, Shirsha would hum and sing before she even knew how to talk. From a young age, Shirsha was very enticed by intricate melodies she found in Bollywood songs. However until her move to Canada, she was yet to be exposed to English music. Listening to the radio, Shirsha began to develop a recognition of chords and harmony, and how beautifully they enhanced a melody. As she explored North American Pop, Rock and R&B, her ears latched onto the kinds of sonic elements that moved her.

During her high school years in the vocal program at Mayfield Secondary School, Shirsha finally began to learn about theory. There she was also introduced to music that inspired her immensely, such as, A Cappella choir vocals, chamber music, Gospel and musical theatre. She joined these ensembles at her school to diversify her skills, challenge herself, and experience her first taste of singing with equally passionate and talented peers in a group.

After high school, Shirsha received a grant from the Ontario Arts Council to pursue intensive Hindustani Classical training in India. Alongside the mentorship, Shirsha gained crucial recording experience in Bollywood Industry studios and solidified her desire to make a career in music. She returned to Canada with an acceptance into the music degree program at Humber College where her knowledge, skills and influences expanded exponentially. It felt thrilling to rearrange music and write her own, improvise with Jazz vocabulary, and collaborate with professors and peers of diverse backgrounds and expertise. Shirsha's undergrad experience rewired the way she thought about genres and rules, and she began to envision how all her strongest influences could melt into a seamless soundscape.

Shirsha is excited to be a part of the Side by Side project by Confluence Concerts as it fits beautifully into what she looks to be surrounded by: education, collaboration and performance. There is no better way to start the year than to come together with new friends and share your art proudly.

Our Artists



Wing Yan Chan

Since starting piano lessons as a child, music has become a lifelong passion. I compose, arrange, and improvise music ranging from classical to pop. I have sung in and accompanied choirs, played flute and piccolo in marching bands and wind ensembles, as well as performed solo and with other musicians.

I love the arts for its freedom; how "rules" are meant to be broken, and creative liberties are meant to be taken. For me, composing starts with improvising (which I liken to music doodling), full of exploration and experimentation. No note is necessarily wrong, but we also can't confirm if anything is correct. I like to challenge myself to reframe "mistakes" as new ideas - after all, some of the greatest discoveries came from accidents, which were pursued and developed into what they became known as. It is in these unfamiliar territories, in unexpected ways, that we can unlock new achievements.

In addition to the music I listen to and perform, I am greatly inspired by the intersection of music and technology. From an engineering perspective, composers traditionally work within constraints of musical instruments and human abilities; however, modern technologies enable an ever-expanding set of new possibilities. Working with software enabled me to understand music as combinations of audio frequencies at varying loudness changing over time. Performers, arrangers, and composers each play with those variables in their own realm, using their stylistic choices to express themselves and evoke feelings in us.

At Confluence Concerts' 2024 Side-by-Side workshops and concerts, I hope to meet and collaborate with artists of diverse backgrounds to create something uniquely ours and share it with the world. I look forward to growing as an artist through new experiences and fresh ideas for future musical projects

Our Artists



Cloud

I'm Cloud (she/her), a trans femme theatre artist, actor/performer, and musician/composer (bass & keys). Excited by exploring and blurring the lines between senses and mediatic forms, I use a "mixtape" approach to creating new work, basically a patchwork of everything I've lived and around me. My music and art practice has a groovy, "kaleidoscopic" feeling that's driven by a strong rhythm, a moody melody, and colourful instrument/arrangement choices.

I love to create music and artwork that has a multisensory, synesthesiac feeling. I want to create music that, even without words, tells you a story, evokes emotions, or takes you to a certain place. This is a strategy I've internalized deeply when composing for theatre and I love for it to be true of my own original music too. For me, listening to an album or a concert should be a similar journey as reading a book or a graphic novel, playing a game, watching theatre, or experiencing the story of your own life.

In this program, I'm excited to continue exploring how to synthesize digital and physical/analogue practices, as well as to arrange and perform work as an ensemble rather than as a soloist - especially music specifically crafted for concert settings such as these. I'm excited to be here both as part of the cohort and alongside Confluence's artist associates and learn from each other reciprocally. I'm excited by the music I have yet to create, the people I have yet to meet and learn from, and the experiences I have yet to have, so I'm amped to be here!

Our Artists



EmmaSo

EmmaSo Whitla is a translator, performer, caregiver, language lover, mender, and settler on the city-land known colonially as Toronto. She works collaboratively, especially in community, and feels most at home when singing in harmony with other singers, musicians, and naturally-occuring drones. She has taught and performed internationally, and is most grateful for opportunities to work with artists who are as passionate and animated as she is by the work that they do. These collaborations have shaped her artistic practices, and inspire her to keep working toward beauty through the arts. She is very pumped to work with the team at Confluence Concerts, especially with such mentors as the Confluence Artists Associates and looks forward to learning from all of the wisdom and expertise they bring collectively. What a team!

EmmaSo loves to connect deeply with people, especially through melody and harmony, which is her preferred way of communicating with the universe. There is music everywhere: in the mundane, the sacred, in the deepest griefs, and in the most exquisite joys. Dance and music are deeply expressive human activities -- they are not really as separate as we might think. Recently she's been inspired both by a strong curiosity about diversity in language and by songs that speak to our relationships with the earth and all its inhabitants. She both fears the ecocidal harmful practices currently taking place, and knows that the earth holds wisdom and stories that go far beyond what humans conceive of in our day-to-day logic. She leads the harmony singing group Harmonious Accord, and loves to craft and contribute to what she affectionately calls the Gift Economy.

Our Artists



Mackenzie Donaldson

For much of my life music has been a guiding and instructing force. I have always been drawn to the piano, to sound, to improvisation, and felt deeply myself while playing and practicing music; as a child and teenager I quickly discovered that I could pursue a sense of personal exaltation and freedom through music.

Over the years, music has connected me not only with myself but with others, and I have been fortunate to share in many special communal moments of togetherness, joy, and understanding. I enjoy many aspects of being a musician; the routine and discipline of tending to my instrument and craft, the colourful and creative expression that I can access in performance, writing and arranging music, and forming relationships. When I play I hope to engage people meditatively and introspectively, and that my music can be a source of emotional, mental, or spiritual cleansing or centering. Important to me is discovering the present moment together in music.

Participating in Side-By-Side I hope to connect and learn with others, be exposed to new ideas and perspectives, and ultimately gain a deeper or wider understanding of what music can mean and what it offers to people. I am curious about exploring metaphor and storytelling in music, and engaging in highly articulate emotional expression as an improviser and composer. I am excited about the prospect of collaborating and blending processes and motivations in musical composition and in overall curation of the concerts. The language of music is vast and potent and I look forward to meeting new voices over these sessions and learning together. I anticipate creative refreshment, fun, problem solving, connection, expression, and sharing.

Our Artists



Stone He

Who is he? Stone is unsure who or what he is, but maybe this bio would explain why he joined the project. Recently, he has been primarily performing as a bassist but also performed on keyboard around Toronto. Although coming from an engineering research background, he has also participated in various musical and has found time to actively strive to improve on his musical knowledge and skills – while also working in Nanomechanics research. From his unconventional background, he hopes to gain more musical knowledge and collaborate with others through this project.

Stone sees music as a way to make connections with other people whether they are the audience or fellow musicians. Usually, he is inspired by many musicians, young and old, that had been encouraging to those who are interested in participating in music or has followed an unconventional path to music (Hector Berlioz, Tom Scholz and Wes Montgomery for example). Whether they are musicians that Stone has met or not, he wants to emulate them to a certain extent one day. By participating in this project, he hopes to connect with more musicians and work on something unique and memorable. In addition, he hopes to improve his songwriting skills through this project as well. After this project he hopes to share the knowledge that he had learned to others and maybe be an inspiration for another artist someday...

"One of the best things about music is how it's able to bring people together. Honestly, I'm pleasantly surprised that I got the offer - cause y'know, it's a good opportunity for me to work with other musicians, make connections, and pass on my knowledge to the people I meet y'know. I am grateful that I would have this opportunity to participate in this project."

Our Artists



Kathryn Rose Johnston

Praised with a voice that has "melted the hearts of many" (Kingston Snapd), Kathryn Rose Johnston is an up-and-coming soprano on the Canadian opera scene. Originally from Kingston, Ontario, Kathryn has studied across the country from a Bachelor of Music at the University of Toronto to a Master of Music at the University of British Columbia. Through her travels, Kathryn has come to appreciate the scope of what opera has to offer. With a deep excitement for new projects, Kathryn is a co-creator and co-star of The Java and Three, a concert based on a retelling of Bach's Coffee Cantata for which she wrote original English recit. This retelling was meant to lean into the feminism that already exists in the work, just to update it in a modern context. She has also premiered and workshopped new works by various Canadian composers including Dean Burry and Norbert Palej. The power of both new works and reimagined classics to influence the evolution and impact of classical music is a concept that Kathryn is eager to continue exploring. Updating text, reframing through narration and finding alternative methods of presentation are just a few ways she tries to breathe new life into older works. As a new member of the Fonitika Vocal Ensemble, a Toronto based vocal quartet, she and her colleagues strove to create a full audience experience in their latest concert with a relaxed atmosphere, fireplace, wide range of repertoire and a snack and hot beverage table patrons were encouraged to visit anytime throughout the concert. Kathryn is very excited to join Confluence this Winter to continue exploring new and long beloved music in fresh and exciting ways, including some unique collaborations.

Our Artists



Teiya Kasahara 笠原 貞野

Nikkei Canadian settler Teiya Kasahara (they/them) is a queer/trans non-binary opera singer and theatre maker based in Tkarón:to/ Treaty 13, and was recently featured in the CBC short-doc <u>Opera Trans*formed</u>. Heralded as "an artist with extraordinary things to say" (Globe and Mail), Teiya comes from a background of more than a decade and a half of singing both traditional and contemporary operatic roles across North America and Europe. They recently performed their critically acclaimed operatic play <u>The Queen in Me</u> at the National Arts Centre, among others roles at Canadian Opera Company (*Pomegranate, Salome* cover) and Kingston Symphony Orchestra (soprano soloist in Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*).

In their practice, they explore the intersections of identity through their original works, such as *The Butterfly Project* (Confluence Concerts; Toronto Summer Music Festival) and *Little Mis(s) gender* (Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies artist-in-residence at the University of Toronto, and currently in development with Queer AF Collective).

Teiya is a co-founder of Amplified Opera, an artistic associate with Confluence Concerts, and a long-time collaborator with re:Naissance Opera and Tapestry Opera. In April, they will perform the soprano solo in Verdi's Requiem with the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir. For more information and to subscribe to their quarterly newsletter, visit www.teiyakasahara.com.

Our Artists



KöNG Duo

Photo by Bo Huang

Originally from Hong Kong, award-winning KöNG Duo (Bevis Ng and Hoi Tong Keung) is a Toronto-based percussion duo specializing in contemporary classical music. They strive to expand the possibilities of the genre through instrumentation and the incorporation of multimedia. Besides thoughtful programming, KöNG Duo collaborates actively with composers to expand the percussion duo repertoire. Some of which are featured in this concert.

KöNG Duo demonstrates their creativity in curating imaginative programs, with the hope of broadening their audience's perception of percussion chamber music. As a reflection on home, KöNG Duo curated a multimedia performance titled "good morning, hong kong," which was débuted as the culmination of their summer residency at the Banff Centre in 2022. Following its initial success, KöNG Duo was invited to present excerpts from "good morning, hong kong" locally at the University of Toronto's Thursday at Noon Series and internationally at TROMP Percussion Eindhoven. In May 2023, they presented a new set titled "Percussion Music from Everyday Life" at Music TORONTO's inaugural Celebration of Small Ensembles series.

KöNG Duo's composer-performer collaborations include Fish Yu's Frolic (2022-2023) and Stephen Morris' Shadows and Fire (2022-2023). As their key collaborative project, Frolic, by Hong Kong-raised composer Fish Yu, is a 25-minute multimedia extravaganza which features Hong Kong culture. It was premiered at Bevis' recital in April 2023 and had its US premiere at New Music Gathering in Portland, OR in June 2023.

Our Artists



Camila Lozada

As an artist, my creative journey is a heartfelt exploration driven by a deep love for musical expression and an insatiable appetite for inspiration. My Peruvian roots provide a rich tapestry of cultural influences that shape my artistic identity.

Music, to me, is a universal language that transcends barriers, connecting hearts across diverse backgrounds. This project, emphasizing collaboration, resonates with my vision of creating a harmonious blend of talents and perspectives that go beyond individual brilliance.

My voice and piano have become my trusted companions, enabling me to articulate the intricacies of my emotions. This project offers a unique opportunity to expand my artistic horizons and engage in a collective dialogue where melodies transform into meaningful conversations.

As a Latin American woman in Toronto, the intersection of cultures has profoundly shaped my artistic journey. I am excited about infusing Spanish into the collaborative process, adding linguistic nuances that enhance the emotional resonance of our shared musical expression.

In essence, my eagerness to participate in this project stems from a genuine passion for music, a longing to co-create with fellow artists, and a commitment to fostering an inclusive, culturally rich, and emotionally resonant musical experience.

Our Artists



mezzopiano

mezzopiano is a classical music duo comprising one mezzo soprano (Máiri Demings) and one pianist (Zain Solinski). This project expresses the duo's desire to escape the confines of the classical canon for the wild and weird world of music written for mezzo and piano. The goal of their exploration is to expose audiences to new and lesser-known works, in tandem with performing well-known repertoire in new and novel ways. Despite their name they enjoy performing at a wide range of dynamics: soft, loud, and everything between and beyond.

We are inspired by art of many forms, many genres, and from many eras. When devising new projects, we like to cast a wide net in terms of inspiration; we are always keen to learn from the practices of other artists. Seeking out such inspiration has led us to embrace cross-disciplinary collaboration; driving us to create multi-faceted projects that incorporate animation, visual art, and dramaturgy during our time as a duo.

Our artistic goals are very much in alignment with what Confluence offers. We are very eager and able to develop our skills in our work with Confluence and the other selected young artists. We see our ability to build strong collaborative relationships across disciplines reflected in Confluence's own philosophy, and as essential to our continued musical success. The engaging approach that Confluence employs is reflected in the wide range of artistic practices it encourages from its performers, such as arranging, creative concert curation, and multi-genre performances. We are keen to develop such practices ourselves through our participation in this workshop.

Our Artists



Nuha Yousuf

Nuha Yousuf is completing her final year at Wilfrid Laurier University, studying classical vocal music. She is beyond thrilled to a part of the Side-by-Side Confluence Concerts project. Her interests include classical voice, musical theatre, free improvisation and new music, song and lyric writing, contemporary dance, movement work and choreography, opera and theatre direction, and theatre performance. She is also a drag king and seeks to fuse together and explore the world of opera and drag. Nuha loves interdisciplinary work, creating collaboratively and using devised methods. She seeks to advance a world of classical music that is accessible, relevant, and inclusive to everyone no matter background, marginalization, or experience. She strongly believes that music is for everyone, and that it is most powerful when shared as a community. Nuha also believes music and the arts are a powerful vehicle for social justice and can help uplift and amplify marginalized voices.

This year, Nuha will be co-creating, assistant directing and singing in an improvised and devised Opera in the Laurier Improvisation Concert Ensemble. Nuha will be performing Little Red Riding Hood in Opera Laurier's 2024 winter production of *Into the Woods*. In Opera Laurier's fall 2023 excerpt production, *Openings*, Nuha performed "second woman" in Act I of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneus*, and was a soloist for *Another Op'nin'*, *Another Show* from *Kiss me Kate*. This summer, Nuha worked as an assistant director for Theatre Wakefield's *Big la Pêche Puppet Project*. In 2023, she was awarded runner up in the NUMUS Emerging Improvisers Competition. Last year, Nuha assistant directed Opera Laurier's production of Adamo's *Little Women*. In 2023, she sang the role of Jane in the Laurier Improvisation Concert Ensemble's live improvised soundtrack to the silent horror film, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*.

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Our Commitment to Young Artists



Photo by Bo Huang

Confluence Concerts believes in the power of young people to make an enormous contribution to our organization and to the broader music scene. We are committed to creating opportunities for young people to participate in every aspect of music creation, from performance and program curation to governance and administration.

In 2021 we introduced our annual Young Artistic Associate program, which provides mentorship and support in the areas most interesting and valuable to the artist. In December, this year's Young Associates, the KöNG Duo, presented Dreams of Home, where longing, dreams and memories merged through classical and contemporary repertoire.

This season we launched two exciting initiatives to further support and engage young people: our new youth council, led by young board members Jessica Wang and Wesley Hui, and Side-By-Side, a week-long intensive program in February for recent music graduates and emerging artists.

For more information or to get involved, contact our Managing Director Jennifer Collins

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Artistic Associates

Andrew Downing

Teiya Kasahara 笠原 貞野

KöNG Duo:

Hoi Tong Keung and Bevis Ng (2023–24 Young Associates)

Patricia O'Callaghan*

Suba Sankaran

*Patricia O'Callaghan is generously sponsored by Kit and Barbara Moore

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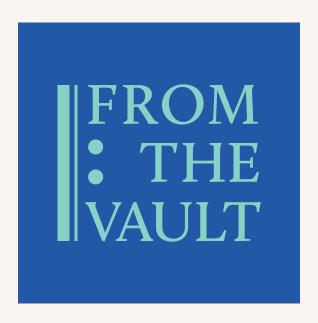
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Past Performances



Visit our website to watch treasures from our vault of online performances from the past three years. We'll be releasing short videos regularly so check back from time to time. Or better yet, join our mailing list receive all of our news.

Available now:

<u>I'm Your Man</u> (Leonard Cohen), featuring Patricia O'Callaghan and Robert Kortgaard

O! Fair Cedaria, Hide Those Eyes (Henry Purcell), with Elisabeth Hetherington and David Mackor

This Pretty Planet (Tom Chapin)/Fragile (Sting), with Suba Sankaran and Dylan Bell

<u>Lush Life</u> (Billy Strayhorn), with Alex Samaras and a cohort of outstanding jazz musicians

Confluence Concerts 25

Coming Next



March 21 & 22, 2024 7:30pm

Curated by Andrew Downing

Unsung Tickets

Unsung celebrates some of the best and brightest Toronto songwriters who are woven into this city's musical fabric in its cafés, bars, festivals, and living rooms. Featuring John Southworth, Justin Orok, Rebecca Campbell, and Lydia Persaud, the concert will introduce you to songs that will doubtlessly become some of your favourites. The evening will vary in style from art song to troubadour ballad and deal with love, loss, joy, sadness, and everything in between.

In addition to hearing the songwriters sing their own songs, Confluence Artistic Associates Patricia O'Callaghan and Teiya Kasahara 笠原 貞野 will add their voices to the evening, and the group will be joined by an ensemble of guitar, piano, strings, and vibraphone.

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Coming Next



May 3 & 4, 2024 7:30pm

Co-curated by Confluence Artistic Associate Teiya Kasahara 笠原 貞野 and pianist David Eliakis.

Dichterliebe Tickets

A gender-expansive re-telling of Schumann's *Dichterliebe*, including additional musical settings by his contemporaries.

Drawing inspiration from the original poetry of Heinrich Heine's "Lyrisches Intermezzo," Dichterliebe: Whose Love? takes us down a queer, chosen journey rather than the expected 19th-century lieder recital of Robert Schumann's music.

Confluence Concerts is grateful to our arts councils for their ongoing support and encouragement.





