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Peak Performances

2016 | 2017 SEASON

Large
Print

"See You Later"



Photo by Laura Colmenares Guerra

November 17–20, 2016
Alexander Kasser Theater



MONTCLAIR STATE
UNIVERSITY

Dr. Susan A. Cole, President

Daniel Gurskis, Dean, College of the Arts

Jedediah Wheeler, Executive Director, Arts & Cultural Programming

“See You Later”

Conceived and Directed by **Cathie Boyd**

Production Design by **Cryptic**

Lighting Design by **Nich Smith**

Visuals by **Laura Colmenares Guerra**

Production Stage Manager **Mysti Stay**

Performed by **Third Coast Percussion:**

Sean Connors

Robert Dillon

Peter Martin

David Skidmore

Film Credits

Director **Laura Colmenares Guerra**

Director of Photography **Hyun De Grande**

Camera Assistant **Pieter Van Campe**

Light Assistant **Maxim Honoré**

Director Assistant **Lirian Martinez**

3D/VFX/Composting/Editing **Laura Colmenares Guerra**

Cast **Dominique De Ryck, Alondra Cavallo Balut**

Program

Apple Blossom

Peter Garland (b. 1952)

Haunt of Last Nightfall

David T. Little (b. 1978)

World Premiere!

The Other Side of the River

Gavin Bryars (b. 1943)

Produced by Peak Performances at Montclair State University (NJ).
World Premiere at the Alexander Kasser Theatre (November 2016).

David T. Little's *Haunt of Last Nightfall* was commissioned by Third Coast Percussion.

Gavin Bryars's *The Other Side of the River* was commissioned by Peak Performances at Montclair State University and the University of Notre Dame's DeBartolo Performing Arts Center for Third Coast Percussion.

Duration: 60 minutes, no intermission.

In consideration of both audiences and performers, please turn off all electronic devices. The taking of photographs or videos and the use of recording equipment are not permitted. No food or drink is permitted in the theater.

Program Notes

“I’m a writer,” Eduardo Galeano once said of himself, “obsessed with remembering, with remembering the past of America and above all that of Latin America, intimate land condemned to amnesia.”

Inspired by recently deceased Eduardo Galeano’s writings, including “History never really says goodbye. History says, ‘See you later,’” this staged music performance explores the juxtaposition of power, truth, corruption, and desperation through the contrasting work of composers Peter Garland, David T. Little, and Gavin Bryars.

I must confess that the idea of staging David T. Little’s *Haunt of Last Nightfall* was a little daunting. The work depicts the Salvadoran tragedy at El Mozote and is so dramatic. Not to mention that Third Coast Percussion, for whom it was written, play it brilliantly. What could I possibly add? When I started to look closer at the score, it came to my attention that Little has actually written an instrumental opera set within two acts. I was curious if he had written any other operas when he wrote this work, and interestingly, it was just at the beginning of his operatic career.

So, how to visualise *Haunt* when the music, at times, is so violent that adding another performance layer or video would perhaps be too much? In addition, having grown up in Belfast during the Troubles, I tend to avoid violence or political messages on stage at all costs. How could we bring calm to the overall performance? *Apple Blossom* seemed the answer, as it allows the audience to settle and listen to gentle music. The calm before the storm. I love the contrast of how still the players are in Peter Garland’s work compared to their dramatic playing in *Haunt*. It is such a physical piece, not only for the audience, but for the players as well.

Enter Gavin Bryars, a composer I have worked with for over ten years and who I knew would bring a calming, reflective composition to the evening. One of the things I admire most about Bryars is his ability to write such beautiful music in a variety of styles. One only has to look at *The Sinking of the Titanic* (1969), *Incipit Vita Nova* (1994), and his *11th Floor* (2013) for Édouard Lock to see his breadth of work.

With *The Other Side of the River*, it was clear that Gavin would take a more abstract, philosophical approach, which is what we were looking for. To mirror this, Laura Colmenares Guerra has created a film exploring how two females cope individually with a trauma in their own very personal ways.

Our collaborators, Third Coast Percussion, have been a complete joy to work with. I thank them for their bravery on this journey—it's not every day that musicians are game to memorize music—and also for embracing the work of my long-term lighting collaborator, Nich Smith.

—Cathie Boyd, Director

“See You Later” is a performance inspired by the El Mozote massacre in El Salvador (1981). When Cathie Boyd, artistic director of Cryptic, proposed that I work on the visuals for the performance, three questions came into my mind: First, remembering Susan Sontag in her essay “Regarding the Pain of Others,” I was concerned with how to visually create an environment that talks about war, about political conflict, without showing images that recall the dead.

“If the past has nothing to say to the present, history may go on sleeping undisturbed in the closet where the system keeps its old disguises.”

—Eduardo Galeano

Second, how to get spectators to show empathy towards a conflict that doesn't belong to them? How to universalize a conflict and touch people who are far removed from such situations? How to decontextualize a conflict and recontextualize it within contemporary society?

My third concern was how to bring justice and truth to the victims, how to bring repair and reconciliation to those dead, innocent people. . . Two characters conduct the “*See You Later*” visuals: two women from different time periods, one representing an impossible encounter from the past; and the other, the future and, ultimately, death. They signify a process of evolution from a period of no identity to the discovery that they are one and the same, a reflection of one another that appears when memories are reconstructed and explored.

—*Laura Colmenares Guerra, Visuals*

About the Composers

Peter Garland was born in 1952 in Maine. He studied with Harold Budd and James Tenney at Cal Arts and has had long student-mentor friendships with Lou Harrison, Conlon Nancarrow, Paul Bowles, and the late Dane Rudhyar. He edited and published *Soundings Press* for 20 years and has written two books of essays on American music and culture. He has been a lifelong student of Native American musics and has lived in New Mexico, California, Maine, Michoacan, Oaxaca, and Puebla.

Garland’s musical works after 1971 were marked by a return to a radical consonance and a simplification of formal structure influenced by Cage, Harrison, early minimalism, and an interest in world musics. He has written pieces for pianists Aki Takahashi and Herbert Henck, percussionists William Winant and Chris Shultis, accordionist Guy Klucevsek, the Abel-Steinberg-Winant Trio, and the Kronos Quartet.

Garland has also worked as a musician in shadow-puppet theater, especially in his *The Conquest of Mexico* (1977–80), performed at the 1985 New Music America Festival in Los Angeles. In 1991, Essential Music in New York City presented a 20-year retrospective of Garland’s work. Garland has worked with William Winant since 1972 and has had a long and close musical association with Aki Takahashi. Both were involved in performing his work at Other Minds Festival VI.

David T. Little (b. 1978) is “one of the most imaginative young composers” on the scene, a “young radical” (*The New Yorker*), with “a knack for overturning musical conventions” (*The New York Times*). His operas *JFK* (Fort Worth Opera), *Dog Days* (Peak Performances/Beth Morrison Projects), and *Soldier Songs* (Prototype Festival) have been widely acclaimed, “prov(ing) beyond any doubt that opera has both a relevant present and a bright future” (*The New York Times*). Recent/upcoming works include *Ghostlight—ritual for six players* for Eighth Blackbird/The Kennedy Center, *AGENCY* (Kronos Quartet), *CHARM* (Baltimore Symphony/Marin Alsop), *Hellhound* (Maya Beiser), *Haunt of Last Nightfall* (Third Coast Percussion), a new opera commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera/Lincoln Center Theater new works program, and the music-theater work *Artaud in the Black Lodge* with Outrider legend Anne Waldman (Beth Morrison Projects). His music has been heard at Carnegie Hall, Los Angeles Opera, the Park Avenue Armory, the Bang on a Can Marathon, and elsewhere. Educated at University of Michigan and Princeton, Little is co-founder of the annual New Music Bake Sale, has served as executive director of MATA, serves on the Composition faculty at Mannes-The New School and Shenandoah Conservatory, is composer-in-residence with Opera Philadelphia and Music-Theatre Group, and is the founding artistic director of the ensemble Newspeak. His music can be heard on New Amsterdam, Innova, and VisionIntoArt labels. He is published by Boosey & Hawkes. www.davidtlittle.com

Gavin Bryars (b. 1943) studied philosophy at Sheffield University and became a professional jazz bassist and a pioneer of free improvisation, working especially with Derek Bailey and Tony Oxley. In the late 1960s he worked with John Cage, and this influenced early works such as the indeterminately scored *The Sinking of the Titanic* (1969) and the classic *Jesus' Blood Never Failed Me Yet* (1971).

A major turning point in his development was his first opera, *Medea*, premiered at the Opéra de Lyon and Opéra de Paris in 1984 (directed and designed by Robert Wilson) and given a concert performance by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra in 1995. He has written two further operas, both with libretti by his longtime collaborator Blake Morrison: *Doctor Ox's Experiment* (English National Opera, 1998, directed by Atom Egoyan, and also at Theater Dortmund, 1999), and *G* (directed by Georges Delnon), commissioned by the Staatstheater Mainz for the Gutenberg

600th anniversary. His latest opera, *Marilyn Forever*, was presented by Aventa at the MacPherson Playhouse Theatre, Victoria, BC, in 2013.

He has produced a large body of chamber music both for his own ensemble and for other performers. He has also written extensively for strings as well as producing concertos for violin, viola, cello, double bass (plus one for jazz bass), saxophone, bass oboe, and piano.

Numerous choreographers have been drawn to his music, and he has worked with Lucinda Child (for Rambert Dance Company), Laurie Booth, William Forsythe (Frankfurt Ballet), and David Dawson. In 1999 he collaborated with Merce Cunningham on *BIPED* and in 2002 with Carolyn Carlson on *Writings on Water* for the Venice Biennale. A collaboration with Édouard Lock for La La La Human Steps in 2006 resulted in *Amjad*, which toured the world for two years.

Bryars's work is widely recorded on ECM, Incus, Point, Philips, Argo, Clarinet Classics, Daphénéo, CBC Records, Touch, Mode, and on his own label, GB Records. He is Regent of the Collège de 'Pataphysique.

About the Artists

Cathie Boyd (Concept and Director), born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, founded Cryptic in 1994, after graduating from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, with the desire to create innovative performances that would “*ravish the senses.*” Over the course of the last 22 years Boyd, as artistic director, has led the evolution of the company from music theater to where it is today: Scotland's leading producing art house, having presented work in 27 countries. Her work has involved numerous international commissions including the Singapore Arts Festival; Tramway, Glasgow and Aldeburgh Music Festival, which have been presented at festivals in Europe and throughout the Americas. Directing credits include Armstrong, Britten, Bryars, Dzinitsis, Gounod, Kurtág, Kyriakides, Haddow, Holt, Marta, MacDonald, Neil Martin, Reich, Sciarrino, Shostakovich, Stockhausen, Talbot, Varèse, and Viñao. Boyd has a wealth of experience in working with new technologies for performance and was

made a Fellow of the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) to develop the visual staging of music through new software, which led her to direct live visuals for Stravinsky's *Firebird* with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and festivals across Europe. Boyd has been instrumental in providing a key platform for artists around the world by initiating the creation of Sonica in 2012 (sonic art for the visually minded) and Cryptic Nights in 2009 (Cryptic's ongoing emerging artists program) as well as working as the artistic producer on the first annual Beckett festival, Happy Days, in Ireland. Awards include European Woman of Achievement for the Arts, Outstanding Young Person Award, Junior Chambers of Commerce, NESTA Fellowship, and an Edinburgh Festival Fringe First.

Cryptic (Production Design) is a Glasgow-based, internationally renowned producing art house presenting today's most imaginative, innovative artists while also nurturing the creative talent of tomorrow. Called "sensuous, imaginative and sumptuously visual, an extraordinary and innovative company" (*The Times*), Cryptic creates memorable experiences that engage and inspire its audiences. Cryptic "*ravishes the senses*" with multimedia performances that fuse music and sonic and visual art. Founded by Cathie Boyd in 1994, the company thrives on artistic innovation and creative risk-taking, which has subsequently created an environment where artists have been encouraged to push artistic boundaries.

Nich Smith (Lighting Design) is an independent lighting designer based in Glasgow, Scotland. Smith works with a variety of clients on a range of projects over many disciplines, from theater, opera, and visual arts to architecture and exhibition lighting design. He was awarded the UK Lighting Design Awards 2008 Best Public Building prize for his interactive lighting design for the John Murray Archive at the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh. Current projects include new decorative exterior lighting for the University of Edinburgh Old College, Edinburgh, and interpretive lighting for the house and historic collections at Mount Stuart, Isle of Bute, including first-edition Shakespeare folios recently rediscovered within the family library.

Recent projects include new interpretive and exhibition lighting for King Richard III Visitor Centre in Leicester, England, with lighting for the historic grave site (rated Lonely Planet's "Hottest new visitor attraction 2015"); outdoor interpretive lighting

for the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum at Alloway Auld Kirk, Scotland (awarded a Scottish Design Award 2013, finalist for UK Lighting Design Awards 2014); lighting for the historic apartments of 19th-century writer Sir Walter Scott's Abbotsford House in the Scottish Borders; and lighting for a BBC Radio 4 broadcast from the turbine hall of Ben Cruachan Power Station in the middle of a granite mountain (yes, really, a radio play inside a mountain).

Projects with Cryptic include *HUI: snow, moon & flower* (2015); *These Delicate Things* (2014); *Orlando* (2010); *Confined Human Condition* (2009); *Optical Identity* (2007); *Paper Nautilus* (2006); *Tunnel Visions* (2004); and *Apocalypse* (2003).

Laura Colmenares Guerra (Visuals) is a Colombian visual artist based in Brussels. Video is the central focus of her artistic work. Her research materializes in the form of immersive audiovisual installations that delve into the spectator's perception of space and image. She is interested in the creation of environments that activate the relationship of the participants with their own body and its spatial perception. Her work relates to the politics of the human body, the matter of body perception, and the engagement of the spectator with the artwork.

In parallel, Colmenares Guerra has worked as a video performer, starting as a VJ in the early Techno scene of Bogotá. Since then, she has collaborated with different musicians and composers, creating audiovisual works, performances, and concerts.

In the process of creation of her visual work, Colmenares Guerra mixes numerous media (photography, video, and 3D animation) with advance composite techniques proper to special effects developed for cinema. Her work has recently been showcased at Kings Place, London; the International Computer Music Conference, Huddersfield; and the Glasgow School of Art (UK); the Museum of Contemporary Art of Montréal during the International Biennale of New Media Art; at festival Elektra-Mutek, EM15, at the Imperial Theatre of Montréal (Canada); at Le Cube—Centre for Digital Creation, Paris; and the Arts Centre in Enghien-les-Bains (France); Nadine, iMal at the Erasmus Museum and Sint-Lukasgalerie, the Museum of Bozar, the Theatre Brigittines, and during the Ars Musica Festival 2013, Brussels (Belgium); and the Festival Crea Numerica in the Games of La Francophonie, Beirut (Lebanon).

Mysti Stay (Production Stage Manager) has credits including *Pippin* (National Tour); *The Bikinis*, *Li'l Abner*, *The Boyfriend*, *Camille Claudel*, *Me and My Girl*. (Goodspeed); *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *The Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow* (The Old Globe); *The Scottish Play* (La Jolla Playhouse); *Blithe Spirit*, *Mousetrap*, *Always...Patsy Cline* (Old Lyric Rep); and *Measure for Measure*, *Honk!*, *Hello, Dolly!*, and *The Winter's Tale* (PCPA Theaterfest). She is the former owner and producer of the Pink Garter Theatre in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and current head of the Stage Management program at MSU.

Third Coast Percussion (Performers), hailed by the *New Yorker* as “vibrant” and “superb,” explores and expands the extraordinary sonic possibilities of the percussion repertoire, delivering exciting performances for audiences of all kinds. Formed in 2005, Third Coast Percussion has developed an international reputation with concerts and recordings of inspiring energy and subtle nuance. These “hard-grooving” musicians (*The New York Times*) have become known for groundbreaking collaborations across a wide range of disciplines, including concerts and residency projects with engineers at the University of Notre Dame, architects at the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture, astronomers at the Adler Planetarium, and more. The ensemble has also designed free iPhone and iPad apps that allow audience members to create their own musical performances and take a deeper look at the music performed by Third Coast Percussion.

Third Coast Percussion is the ensemble-in-residence at the University of Notre Dame's DeBartolo Performing Arts Center, a position they assumed in 2013. They have the honor of being the first ensemble at the University of Notre Dame to create a permanent and progressive ensemble residency program at the center. Third Coast Percussion performs multiple recitals annually as part of the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center's Presenting Series, engages with the local community, and leads interdisciplinary projects in collaboration with a wide range of disciplines across campus.

Third Coast's recent and upcoming concerts and residencies include University Musical Society (MI), Society for the Performing Arts (Houston), Walton Arts Center (AR), MiTO Settembre Festival (Italy), Peak Performances (NJ), The Clarice at

University of Maryland, De Doelen (Rotterdam), National Forum of Music (Wrocław, Poland), San Francisco Performances, the Celebrity Series (Boston), the Mondavi Center (CA), Metropolitan Museum of Art (NY), Museum of Contemporary Art (Chicago), Eastman Kilbourn Recital Series (NY), St. Paul Chamber Orchestra Liquid Music Series (MN), National Gallery of Art (DC), University of Chicago Presents, and more. Third Coast has introduced percussion to chamber music audiences in Texas, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Alaska, and Illinois, securing invitations to return to many of these series.

Third Coast's passion for community outreach includes a wide range of residency offerings while on tour, in addition to long-term community engagement residencies at home in Chicago. In addition to its national performances, Third Coast Percussion's hometown presence includes an annual Chicago series, with four to five concerts in locations around the city. The ensemble has collaborated in performance with a wide range of artists and performing ensembles, including Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Eighth Blackbird, Glenn Kotche, and video artists Luftwerk.

The members of Third Coast Percussion—Sean Connors, Robert Dillon, Peter Martin, and David Skidmore—hold degrees in music performance from Northwestern University, the Yale School of Music, the Eastman School of Music, the New England Conservatory, and Rutgers University.

Third Coast Percussion performs exclusively with Pearl/Adams Musical Instruments, Zildjian Cymbals, Remo Drumheads, and Vic Firth sticks and mallets.

Sean Connors is an ensemble member and technical director of Third Coast Percussion. He has performed with Amphion Percussion, the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, Eighth Blackbird, the International Contemporary Ensemble, Signal, and Metropolis Ensemble and was the percussionist for two summers with the prestigious Aspen Music Festival Contemporary Ensemble. As an educator, Connors served for two years as assistant professor of percussion at the University of Wisconsin—Stevens Point and taught elementary school and middle school music in the Chicago suburbs. Connors holds a bachelor of music degree from the Eastman School of Music and a master of music degree from Northwestern University, and is currently pursuing a doctor of music degree from the Eastman School of Music.

Robert Dillon is an ensemble member and development director of Third Coast Percussion. He has also performed as a substitute with the Chicago, Boston, and San Diego Symphony Orchestras and has appeared numerous times on the Chicago Symphony's contemporary music series, MusicNow, as well as the University of Chicago's Contempo series alongside Eighth Blackbird and the Pacifica Quartet. He previously served as chair of percussion studies at Merit School of Music and a percussion instructor at Loyola University Chicago. Dillon served as principal percussionist in the Madison Symphony Orchestra and held positions in the Civic Orchestra of Chicago and the Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra. He is also a member of the unique, international 12-percussionist Ensemble XII and has participated in Pierre Boulez's Lucerne Festival Academy (Switzerland), Tanglewood Music Center, Spoleto Festival USA, National Repertory Orchestra, and Pacific Music Festival (Sapporo, Japan). In addition to Third Coast recordings, Dillon can be heard as a soloist on Innova Records and a performer on Naxos Records. He has performed as a soloist in America, Switzerland, and Jordan. Dillon holds a bachelor of music from Northwestern University and a master of music from the New England Conservatory, where he received the John Cage Award for Outstanding Contribution to Contemporary Music Performance. His teachers included Michael Burritt, James Ross, and Will Hudgins.

Peter Martin is an ensemble member and finance director of Third Coast Percussion. As a chamber musician, he has performed with many leading new-music ensembles, including the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), Eighth Blackbird, the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, the Atlantic Chamber Ensemble, Opera Moda, Tomorrow Music Orchestra, and Ensemble Signal. In addition to his work with Third Coast Percussion, Martin is a member of the award-winning contemporary music group Ensemble Dal Niente. His recorded work can be heard on the New Focus, New Amsterdam, Mode, Ears & Eyes, Harmonia Mundi, and Narooma labels. As an educator, Martin was an assistant professor and director of Percussion Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA, from 2009 to 2013. He held previous teaching positions at Northwestern University and Trinity International University. Martin holds doctor of music and master of music degrees from Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music and a

bachelor of music degree from Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University. While a student, he was awarded first prize at the Percussive Arts Society International Solo Marimba Competition. His teachers included Michael Burritt, She-e Wu, and Leigh Howard Stevens.

David Skidmore is an ensemble member and executive director of Third Coast Percussion. As a chamber musician, he has performed at Carnegie Hall, the Lincoln Center Festival, Kimmel Center, EMPAC, June in Buffalo, Klangspuren Schwaz, the Ojai Music Festival, the Bang on a Can Marathon, and three Percussive Arts Society International Conventions. Skidmore was a member of the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble from 2007 to 2011 and Ensemble ACJW from 2008 to 2010. Skidmore has performed and collaborated with many of the world's finest musicians, including conductors Pierre Boulez, Lorin Maazel, David Robertson, and Michael Tilson Thomas; composers Steve Reich, Steve Mackey, Matthias Pintscher, and Péter Eötvös; and chamber ensembles Sō Percussion and Eighth Blackbird. Skidmore has performed as a soloist in Europe, Asia, and the United States. He has also performed as a member of the Lucerne Festival Academy, the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, the Pacific Music Festival, and the National Repertory Orchestra. He is also a composer, and his works are performed regularly in concert halls and universities across the country. Skidmore taught for four years on the percussion faculty at the Peabody Conservatory. He holds a bachelor of music degree from Northwestern University and a master of music degree from the Yale School of Music. His teachers were Michael Hernandez, Shawn Schietroma, Michael Burritt, James Ross, and Robert Van Sice.

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