

WORLD **NEW** MUSIC MAGAZINE

2020

Volume 30



ISCM During a Year of Pandemic

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Editor's Note

Typically the International Society for Contemporary Music's *World New Music Magazine* is published as a reflection on its annual World New Music Days festival. But in 2020, like almost every other large-scale event, this festival had to be postponed, marking the first time the delegates from the ISCM have not gathered together to exchange ideas and to listen to new music since the Second World War.

This past year has been extremely challenging for people all over the world. But despite all of the tragedy wrought by the global pandemic, there has also been a tremendous amount of resilience and innovation. While the ISCM was not able to hold its festival or convene its week-long general assembly, we held our first-ever virtual general assembly on June 27 during which our new webmaster Fredric Bergström unveiled a brand new ISCM website. In November, we also initiated a new ISCM Virtual Collaborative Series to which delegates can submit repertoire from their regions; through this new program we have found a way to continue to share exciting new sonic work with one another as well as any curious listener who discovers us online.

Early on during the pandemic, the editorial team for the *World New Music Magazine* decided to put the work on the 2019 Issue, focusing on our previous festival in Estonia, which we planned to make available during the 2020 ISCM Festival in New Zealand, on hiatus and instead focus on documenting this strange era in which we had all been suddenly

thrust. It seemed necessary to share with our colleagues and the greater music community worldwide how we have coped through this grimly surreal year. In that spirit we offer here a series of articles from various parts of the globe describing local music scenes and positing what all this might mean for musical creativity going forward. As in previous issues, we also offer a reflection space to honor the people in our community we have lost since our previous in-person gathering. Sadly, the list of people who are no longer with us is much longer than any we have heretofore compiled. Yet despite the ongoing sorrow, we have much for which to remain hopeful. Plans are underway for the ISCM 2021 World New Music Days in Shanghai and Nanning next September, a rescheduled festival in New Zealand in 2022, and, to mark our centenary of our very first festival in 1923, the ISCM plans to hold its first-ever World New Music Days on the African continent in 2013 when we gather in Johannesburg and Soweto, South Africa.

We hope this unusual issue of *World New Music Magazine* will be a one-of-a-kind publication and that in the near future we can once again talk and make music together in person and that this magazine will continue to impart the excitement of all of these discussions and performances once they resume.



Frank J. Oteri
Editor-in-Chief, *World New Music Magazine*
Vice President, ISCM

An ISCM Timeline for 2020



At the beginning of 2020, most of the details for the 2020 ISCM World New Music Days, scheduled to take place from 21-30 April 2020 in Auckland and Christchurch, New Zealand, were already in place. All of the ensembles were set and all the works selected for performance had been chosen. Many ISCM delegates had already booked their flights. It was to be an historic gathering since it was to have taken place concurrently with the Asian Composers League Festival and General Assembly. But it was not to be.

March 16

ISCM 2020 World New Music Days and General Assembly cancelled
due to the pandemic.

June 27

ISCM holds its 1st-ever virtual General Assembly
and launches a new ISCM website

November 22

The new ISCM Virtual Collaborative Series is launched
on the ISCM website and social media.

December 6

The Call for Works is announced for the
2021 ISCM World New Music Days in Shanghai and Nanning.
(Submissions can be made online
from January 18, 2021 until March 16, 2021.)

March 16, 2020

Dear ISCM Members,

With great sadness, we must inform you that the 2020 General Assembly meetings and festival in New Zealand cannot take place.

Due to global developments over the past few weeks in relation to the spread of COVID-19, in particular the border closures and other restrictions that an increasing number of individual countries have been putting in place over the past few days, the ISCM Executive Committee has taken the unprecedented step of releasing the New Zealand festival organizer – the Composers Association of New Zealand (CANZ) – from its contractual obligation to host the ISCM World New Music Days in 2020. The unprecedented global crisis we face is clearly a case of force majeure.

The ISCM festival and meetings have occurred every year since the organization's inception in 1922, the only exceptions being 1940 and 1943-45 during World War II. The New Zealand government has announced that international visitors must be subjected to 14 days self-isolation upon arrival in New Zealand. Furthermore, prudent restrictions on large gatherings, in accord with similar measures that are being announced in most other countries around the globe, are likely to be announced by the New Zealand government very soon.

The ISCM Executive Committee is very concerned about people's health, and we appreciate the only known way to slow the spread of COVID-19 is to radically reduce population movement and large gatherings. The result of these far-reaching measures will mean that for a time many performers cannot work, many festivals and conferences are being cancelled, and the rate at which we have recently enjoyed international movement and in-person cultural exchange will drop significantly for a while. We are in uncharted territory, and the ISCM must find new ways to continue developing ways to engage with the music and culture of our wonderfully diverse regions.

In relation to the ISCM World New Music days that we can no longer hold in 2020, we are hopeful of a postponement and have asked CANZ if they would instead hold the festival in 2022, including most of the submitted and selected works that were programmed for 2020.

Working with our Legal Counsel, we are in the process of developing emergency measures that will make it possible for us to meet our statutory obligations, and soon you will be receiving an information about the important matters that need to be dealt with this year.

I am deeply disappointed that we cannot welcome you to Aotearoa New Zealand this year, and very much hope we can do so in 2022.

With best wishes,

Glenda Keam
ISCM President

June 27, 2020

Webmaster Fredric Ber...

[V] ISCM Switzerland ...

Frank J. Oteri - Vice Pr...

George Kentros - ExCom

Olga Smetanova - Sec...

[V] Austrian Section | S...

[V] Taipei (Taiwan) - C...

[V] ISCM Serbia- Milos...

Glenda Keam - Preside...

[V] Ireland - AIC - Seb...

[V] ISCM France - Rao...

[V] ISCM Germany- Ma...

[V] ISCM Wallonia- Lor...

AREA - Doina Rotaru

[V] ISCM New Zealand...

Musikagileak - Mikel C...

ISCM Serbian section ...

ExCom Irina Hasnas

[V] ISCM Estonia - Mar...

Do Hong Quang- Vietna...

[V] ISCM South Africa L...

Ruta Staneviciute

[V] ISCM Romania - Di...

[V] ISCM Shanghai - D...

[V] ISCM China Hong K...

Roger Shapiro Fund ...

[V] ISCM Canada- Rod...

[V] ISCM Latvia - Anna...

[V] ISCM Faroe Islands...

Prague Spring Festival...

Wolfgang Renzl - Legal...

Associate Member Sco...

ISCM USA Friedrich Kern

[V] Welsh Section - De...

[V] ISCM Netherlands ...

[V] Iceland - Signý Leif...

[V] ISCM Finland, Niilo...

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[V] ISCM Russia -Victo...

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Ignacio Priego (NMSA)

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[V] ISCM Sweden - Ma...

[V] ISCM Poland - Anna...

Edi McKeon

[V] Australia - John Da...

New Zealand Antonia...

Stef Cominx- Auditor

ISCM South African Se...

Scotland: Oliver Se...

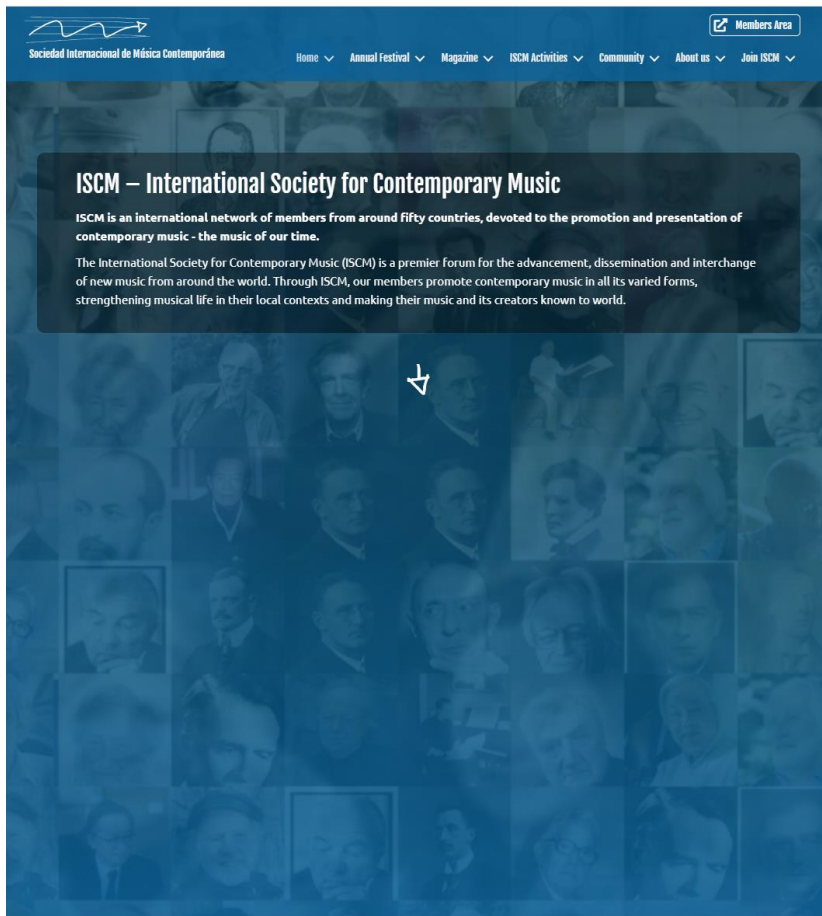
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SUPPORT Fredric

NMSA, Camron Andrews

A Screenshot from the New ISCM Website

designed by Fredric Bergström



WNMD – World (New) Music Days

The annual ISCM World Music Days Festival is organized each year by a different host. The festival presents music from each of our members, showcasing the incredible diversity of musical practice in our time.



World New Music Magazine

The WNM Magazine is an annually published magazine on contemporary music published by the ISCM. It is published in connection to ISCM's annual festival World (New) Music Days, hosted by one of ISCM's members.



ISCM Activities

ISCM arranges many activities throughout the year. These are the ISCM Young Composer Awards, ISCM-VICC Composer in Residency program and ISCM Collaborative Events that are activities co-organised by multiple ISCM Members.



Community & Opportunities

ISCM's Community is where the ISCM members can promote and meet in activities or opportunities to other members like Competitions, Festivals, Conferences / Workshops or Residences.

Music life in Latvia 2020 March - December

By Anna Veismane



Photo by Edwin Hooper via Unsplash.com

If we asked how the virus Covid-19 has affected the life of culture and music, we would get many different answers. A musician working for the governmental structure, a self-employed composer, a producer working in the private sector, a rock musician, and a tutor in the higher educational establishment each experienced different situations.

Musicians “under the auspices of somebody”—professional collectives such as orchestras, choirs, opera companies, and educational establishments—are the most protected ones. These artists received and still receive income, although

sometimes at a reduced amount. Self-employed musicians, such as solo artists, whose careers were based on worldwide or European-level performances and whose artistic activity was simply stopped, or alternatively also rock and pop artists and artists representing other genres find themselves in a less advantageous situation and they have undergone a truly devastating hardship.

Many shortcomings of the system were revealed since the social guarantees were directly related to social contributions made or not made previously. Some self-employed

persons received only a single support from the government within the framework of a special state programme. Producers of concerts and festivals and everyone working in the private sector really arrived at an unenviable situation where often due to systemic shortcomings the persons concerned are not eligible for any state support. People from other walks of life frequently believe that being a musician is something like pursuing a hobby rather than doing a permanent job.

So how can we describe the period between mid-March and October?

March – everything has been stopped, people are afraid, confused, everybody tries to keep their minimum subsistence.

April – musicians and also people from other artistic sectors start organising various online events. These are both projects created by organisations and privately arranged online concerts for a fee or free of charge.

Latvian Radio 3 “Classic” was among the first ones to open a concert cycle “Alone in the Studio” on 13 April, where one musician was invited to the studio to perform for radio and video live broadcast, keeping the necessary distance and reducing the number of people involved. Chamber music concerts with participation of one pianist or two musicians from one household were featured every week until mid-June. The first concert with

participation of Raimonds Pauls, a popular music composer and piano player well-known in Latvia and Eastern Europe, reached more than 135,000 listeners, setting an unprecedented record for an on-line concert. (Latvia has 1.9 million residents.) In April, many regional concert halls offered online concerts — in Cēsis, Rēzekne, Liepāja, Ventspils.

Notably, many musicians who are residing abroad returned to Latvia temporarily and they have been involved in concert life of Latvia.

In **May**, small chamber music units were allowed to perform provided that 2 meters distance was kept. Online concerts are becoming a part of our everyday life and, interestingly, the harshest competition over winning the audience takes place on Facebook. It is becoming “number 1 concert hall” and the offerings are rich and even oversaturated.

In **June**, as the daily movements are gradually restored, interest in online concerts starts fading away. Residents of Latvia try to get input from other sources — nature, recreation, gardening.

During the summer months — **June, July, August** — concert life is slightly revived with restrictions imposed on the number of listeners proportional to the area of the site. Professional collectives are deemed to be a single household and

therefore many restrictions do not apply to them. Also, different kinds of amateur performances—choral singing, theatre, etc.—which are rather popular in Latvia, are revived in August, however with more cautious measures.

In **September**, the concert season opens for the major professional collectives of Latvia – the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra “Rīga”, Liepāja Symphony Orchestra, State Choir “Latvija”, and the Latvian Radio Choir. The Latvian National Opera has also re-launched its season and each performance has to be played several times to work off and recover the loss of the spring season. The situation is rather difficult for regional concert halls and culture institutions in general because state support varies from institution to institution and it is not clear how the problems will be solved in the long-term.

In the second half of September and **October**, the concert schedule is as dense as possible — concerts postponed from the spring season take place in parallel to previously planned autumn concerts. We are privileged, because European artists can come to Latvia under a condition of mandatory tests and self-quarantine for a few days after their arrival. But travel is still very limited and so far concerts featuring guest artists are either cancelled or postponed.

Concert organisations still tend to offer concerts both in person and online, so this period is well-documented in a way. Many listeners have marked that they have grown tired from cultural events offered over the internet, because a concert is like an adventure and an event which is basically a social communication requiring presence.

I am caught in a reflection that particularly the concert life has been subjected to relatively harsher restrictions compared to other events gathering crowds—such as public transport, shops, and markets, where a prolonged stay in one enclosed space has been justified. Are visitors of music and art events really the most disorganised and irresponsible people out there? Sometimes we see paradoxical situations where listeners are allowed to enter a concert hall according to a strategic plan, each attendee being registered, while in the nearby market or shop people crowd chaotically and fail to keep any distance.

Artists from various fields find it important that the State Culture Capital Foundation (SCCF) offers various project contests and this year their number has increased. Even though it may be the last resort, any form of support for artists is a source of hope.

The goal is always to look to the future, and the future is unpredictable now. It is worth remembering that the situation in Latvia is much better in comparison to other countries in the

world. So far. Even though every one of us experiences this time differently.

*

November, December. Post scriptum.

From 9 November to 6 December (and presumably till the end of the year), an emergency situation has been declared in Latvia. Professional music groups continue their work. Rehearsals and recordings are allowed, but there are no longer any concerts with live audiences. Instead, there are lots of life-stream concerts, broadcasts, and podcasts as it was in springtime, possibly even more. This is a fact that we must accept.

I had a sad feeling of emptiness when I entered the music school, an almost silent music school... Students are allowed to attend one at a time for individual lessons. It seems a utopian dream that the school choir or orchestra could play a concert (for example, a Christmas concert for parents). Performance, applause, making music together gives energy, inspiration and satisfaction for both children and teachers.

How does the new generation feel—children, young people? What conclusions will they draw up after this time? Perhaps a spark of truth can be found in the Latvian saying “there is no evil without good,” although it is difficult to see benefits through a humanly-limited, down-to-earth perspective. At the moment, it would be premature and arrogant to

judge something in the categories of Evil and Benefit. Everything will be otherwise. How long will both sides, teachers and children, and, more generally, all of us be able to find inner passion, creative joy? We still can and I wish to keep it with all of my heart!

###

Composer
Anna Veismane’s
has been
performed by
Latvian
National
Symphony
Orchestra,



Latvian Radio Choir, string quartet ConTempo, ISSA Sonus Ensemble and The Concorde Contemporary Music Ensemble as well as violinist Baiba Skride, violist Edmundo Ramirez, accordionists William Schimmel, Timo Kinnunen, pianist Lauma Skride, and guitarist Bogdan Mihailescu. In addition to serving as a member of the Latvian Composer’s Union’s board and the chair-person of ISCM Latvia section, Anna Veismane works at Latvian Radio 3 – Klasika as a producer of music recordings and program manager.

Pandemic-Pandemonium

New Music in Chile During a Perfect Storm

By Álvaro Gallegos

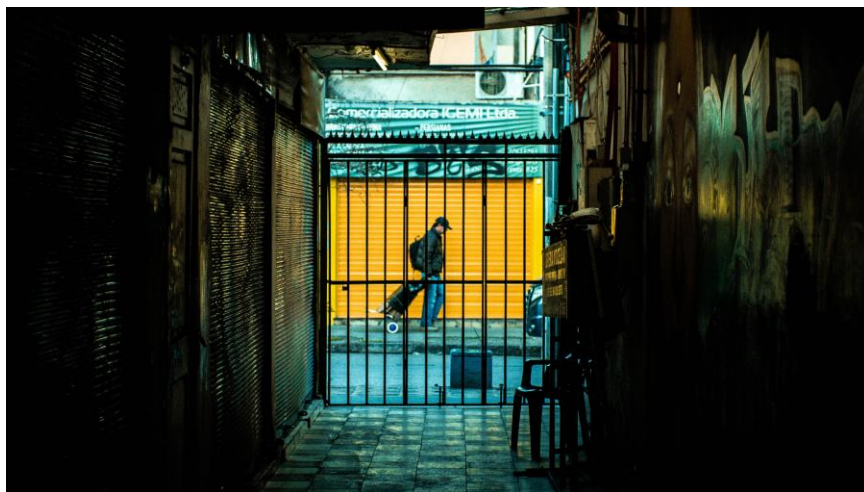


Photo by Diego Marin via Unsplash.com

If the musical scenes of the countries in the northern hemisphere have been seriously damaged by this unparalleled pandemic that we have experienced in 2020, imagine the negative effect it can have on more fragile economies, and where music of the written tradition, especially new music, must constantly make great efforts to remain stable.

Chile has always been a country that has sought to make itself heard in musical matters. And it has always had to fight against abundant indifference, not only from the public, but also in terms of sponsors and presence in the media. But the Covid-19 pandemic came at the worst time imaginable.

Since the country was not able to fully recover from the social unrest that began on October 18, 2019.

Although the background of this movement consisted of legitimate citizen demands, and the weariness caused by decades of inequality and abusive policies on the part of the State, it led to weeks of intense mobilizations that caused cancellations of musical events, which gradually returned, first at non-usual times, like noon, until the climax of summer (January and February) brought some calm. And when it was thought that in March the social environment would get convulsed again, the pandemic landed in Chile,

bringing total silence. In short, a perfect storm.

*

Before the health crisis, an anticipated premiere was to take place in November, with the National Symphony Orchestra of Chile presenting a work by the young composer Tomás Brantmayer (b.1992), including recitations by the poet Raúl Zurita (National Prize for Literature, 2000). "It is sad that a project where we have worked for so long is canceled," says Brantmayer, "however what happened in Chile was so big that my own work is secondary."

Established as one of the most appreciated sub-30 composers in the country, Brantmayer was at that time studying at the Royal College of Music in London, but the strength of the social movement made him postpone his studies. "Academics can wait... I wanted to be a witness and a participant in this social process," he recalls. Regarding the pandemic, Brantmayer confesses that "it has not been so easy creatively, although I have still been able to finish some works, but the saddest thing is the cancellation of concerts. For me it is what gives writing a purpose."

Indeed, among the multiple cancellations produced since the pandemic are the new music festivals in Chile. Among them is MusicAhora from the city of La Serena, whose curator is Esteban Correa (b.1979), one of the leading composers in the north of the country. "Other festivals

chose to make smaller versions online, but I think it is a big effort for the real scope, so it is better to spend that energy preparing the next version for 2021," explains Correa.

The activity of the specialized ensembles was obviously affected as well, since almost entirely they depend on a conservatory or university. This is the case of the Compañía de Música Contemporánea, led by Carlos Valenzuela (b.1980), who relates: "We had the whole year scheduled, and we lost our rehearsal place." Along with dozens of premieres by Chilean composers, the group had great challenges ahead, including works by Varèse and Romitelli. Valenzuela reflects on the fragility of the music environment that the pandemic has revealed: "My teacher, Cirilo Vila (1937-2015) always talked about the absence of an authentic community of new music in Chile, it is all very scattered, and I agree with him."

One thing is the *praxis* of music as a sound phenomenon. But another is the mere musical creation. This second aspect has not been largely affected, since there are a considerable number of Chilean composers whose main purpose is the notation itself, the score, regardless of whether the music gets to sound. An emblematic case is that of the most eminent composer living in Chile, Fernando García (b. 1930). At 90, he comments that "for a long time I have had nothing left in life but to write music, so with or without a pandemic there is no major difference." In his

confinement since March, García has already finished 47 works, reconfirming his status as a prolific creator.

In the case of Esteban Correa, the pandemic caught him with several commissions on the table, three of them for orchestra: "It did not prevent me from continuing to work on those pieces, but it raises the uncertainty of when they will actually be premiered." He considers that the pandemic "has not been a direct inspiration in my music, but the situation of the confinement has allowed me to think more carefully about certain aspects of my language, also influenced by some readings, connected or not with what is happening at a global level."

*

One of the richest cities in Chile in terms of contemporary music is Valparaíso. And unfortunately, it was one of the hardest hit by the coronavirus. The composer Valeria Valle (b.1979) is highly active in the port city scene, and for her the complex thing was to make teaching compatible. "I do classes at two universities, and I had to adapt to teaching through Zoom," she says, stressing that "this leads to times getting longer, affecting the creative activity." However, she adds that "I have still been able to finish several commissions, including a solo clarinet piece that was requested from me from Costa Rica." The composer regrets that worldwide programs that highlighted the position of women have been canceled: "I hope that this

new approach, with a gender and ethnic perspective, is resumed when the pandemic ends."

The community (if we can use that word) of new music in Chile, fortunately has not had to regret casualties due to Covid-19, even though there have been some musicians who contracted the disease. One of them was the composer René Silva (b.1984), one of the most requested currently in terms of commissions. "My partner was infected, so it was obvious that I also caught the virus," he recalls. "I did not have any symptoms or discomfort, but it is the most dangerous state because one does not know and may be spreading it," and because of this he made the radical decision to shut himself up completely for several weeks, which helped him to work in an oratorio that should have premiered in November 2020. "I think that (the pandemic) did affect the writing of the piece, because it stalled the creative process," he explains, "since it is inspired by a religious feast in the deep south of the country, where I wanted to return, to be there and experience that celebration to nourish myself with material". Like Valle, Silva is a university professor and agrees that the digital way in teaching consumes more time, taking space away from the act of composing.

We can affirm then that, while here in Chile the performers, orchestras, theaters and concert halls are suffering all the ills imposed by the pandemic, the composition itself has remained very rich, accumulating an

enormous amount of music, which would take many years, perhaps decades, to be able to premiere. Music remains alive, but we need to be able to bring it to full fruition, and let us expect that happens in 2021. The hopes of the entire planet are pinned on the year ahead.

###

Álvaro Gallegos is a Chilean music journalist, lecturer and scholar based in Santiago, Chile. He has written for newspapers, magazines, and websites, and also has produced CDs, including two albums for Naxos Records. He has composed some twenty pieces, including for solo instruments and orchestral works.



Tucked away, locked away – Australia under Covid-19

By Anni Heino



Photo by Jason Mowry via Unsplash.com

Why can we only have 5 singing in a choir when 40,000 will scream their way through the NRL [National Rugby League] Grand Final tomorrow?

This seems like a sensible question, posted on social media at the end of October 2020 by Lyn Williams, the founder and artistic director of the [Gondwana Choirs](#). It speaks to the anguish shared by most Australians whose life is in the performing arts. It also gives voice to the complexities and inconsistencies that the arts industries are living with in this federation of six states and two territories, all with their different rules and restrictions.

In the world of Covid-19, Australians—you may or may not have noticed—have withdrawn to

their faraway corner and largely stopped interacting, live, with the rest of the world. Movements across national borders are strictly controlled; you cannot travel here, or leave the country, on a whim, citizen or not. Inside Australia, where each state and territory has its own system of government, barriers have been erected to protect those parts of the country that have, so far, largely escaped the pandemic.

So, in October 2020, we find ourselves in a fragmented reality. In some parts of the country, life seems normal, though with restrictions to audience numbers. In the most populous (7.5M people) state of New South Wales, the first peak of the virus was brought under control with a relatively brief lockdown, followed

by continued restrictions to audience numbers and enforced social distancing anywhere people meet—from pubs and beaches to sports events and concerts.

In Victoria, the second largest state with its population of 6.4M, after an initial lockdown had been lifted, the virus escaped into the community from a quarantine hotel in Melbourne, creating a frightening peak of infections. Because of this, the people of that city have now endured some of the hardest lockdown measures anywhere. After keeping to their homes and immediate neighbourhoods for three long months, after shuttering their businesses, wearing masks, observing curfews and letting their hair grow, they have just recorded zero infections and zero deaths overnight. The result is impressive, but the human cost of the lockdown remains to be counted.

For many large arts organisations—and it's worth remembering that the level of public funding of our orchestras, theatres and opera companies is closer to their American counterparts than those in many European countries—restrictions proved paralysing early on. With no certainty of audiences being allowed in and travel restrictions in every direction, the remainder of the year's programs were quickly cancelled, musicians laid off or pay cuts agreed on. Venues and concert halls, operating on a commercial basis, closed their doors for months.

Individuals and smaller groups, particularly those already used to operating on a shoestring, appeared more agile, quickly organising Zoomed solo or duo concerts, virtual merchandise stands, experimental festivals online. Recently, these same flexible operators have proceeded to perform in front of small audiences in most Australian states, though not yet in Victoria.

Much emphasis has been put on just this agility and the creative spirit of innovation that artists are so capable of. Living room concerts and mini-events have been important for morale and for providing motivation as well as an outlet for creativity. And yes, we've had some really promising developments in Australia, and charity and philanthropy have played an important part in most of these.

A start-up called the [Melbourne Digital Concert Hall](#) is worth singling out. This initiative started during the first lockdown. After a few weeks of Melbourne-based artists' recitals, it proceeded to organise digital concerts from other cities in collaboration with their venues and artists. Out of each 24AUD ticket, \$20 goes to the performing artist, while the rest pays for costs. So far MDH has organised over 150 recitals, with AUD700,000 earned to support artists. Its real value for the artistic community of Victoria in particular has been incalculable.

Many arts organisations and ensembles have made room for small commissioning initiatives designed for online presentation; these have included, for instance, Tura New

Music's [Tura Adapts](#), [Speak Percussion's SD series](#), and Decibel's [2 Minutes from Home](#). The Phoenix Central Park venue in Sydney has supported New South Wales artists in a series of excellent [Behind Doors concerts](#) recorded live and presented on YouTube.

At the Australian Music Centre, where I work, we've redirected our energies into a number of initiatives that provide perhaps a more immediate, direct support to a number of artists compared to our long-term programs – this in addition to producing digital scores and [online-based music education resources](#) instead of print resources. Our [Peggy Glanville-Hicks Commissions](#) scheme provided modest bursaries for 13 artists to create online-based work – the commissions so far launched include several that bring home the reality of artists working under lockdown conditions. Three of these bursaries were funded through a private donation. With the help of generous donors, we've also managed three additional commissions for composers under the [MOMENTUM](#) banner. Bear in mind that the AMC has approximately 650 living Represented and Associate artists.

Some ensembles that usually rely on touring have found other ways of performing and reaching their national audience. In the case of [the Australian String Quartet](#), operating from South Australia, this meant weekly live-stream concerts and a series of new digital recordings released over 2020. [The Australian Chamber Orchestra](#), known for their

extensive national and international tours, has streamed 'homecasts' from musicians' homes, and have a number of socially distanced concerts in a couple of cities over the rest of 2020. The large chamber music organisation [Musica Viva](#), whose annual concert season normally has several international and Australian groups touring the nation, has only just cautiously resumed small-scale concert activity.

At this time of the year, Australian orchestras are usually releasing their season programs for the next calendar year, and some have indeed just come out, with an emphasis on Australian work and artists – partly out of necessity, as no one knows when soloists and guest conductors can again travel freely. Whether they can make it even from the neighbour state is, as yet, unclear.

In Australia, as seems to be the case in many countries, the Federal government has so far failed to find a way—or the will—to support individual artists whose work has, in the past, consisted largely of freelance activities. Here, established arts organisations have been able to make use of a Federal 'jobkeeper' wage support for keeping employees on their payrolls despite diminished business returns. State governments have chipped in with programs tailored to tie artists and arts organisations over the period of state-imposed restrictions. The Australia Council for the Arts revamped and suspended some of its grant programs early in 2020 to free up funds and to make the grant

budget reach more artists and organisations.

[Support Act](#), an existing charity for musicians and music workers fallen on hard times, has provided emergency relief funding and a mental health hotline throughout the pandemic, and some Federal government crisis funding has been channelled through this charity. The AMC has also had the honour of donating AUD 25,000 to Support Act this year.

Artistically - in addition to the very clear threat of musicians choosing to leave the profession as a solution to the impossibility of making a living - it is the indefinite closure of borders that poses one of the biggest challenges for Australian music. Enforcing state border closures has put an immediate stop to national touring, the bread and butter of Australian bands, jazz groups, new music ensembles and freelance musicians; closing the national borders has done the same to all international touring, trade show trips, engagements, recording plans, international collaborations, residencies and exchanges. For international musicians and acts, Australia is closed for business.

And then there is the anomaly of not letting children sing, not even in their own classrooms, while gatherings of highly vociferous sports fans occur. Choristers from Gondwana and other Australian children's choirs have for years sung about their country in videos shot against the backdrop of breathtaking natural beauty. It is telling that these

bright and talented ambassadors should be left asking questions without an answer.

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Anni Heino is a Finnish-born Australian writer and musicologist. She is the Editor of *Resonate*



(online magazine) at the Australian Music Centre in Sydney. Anni studied journalism and musicology at the universities of Helsinki and Tampere, writing her thesis on the public image of Jean Sibelius in the Finnish press. Prior to her move to Australia in 2001, she worked for a number of years at the Finnish Music Information Centre in Helsinki in several capacities, including the Centre's Head of Classical Music. She is the co-author, with her husband Andrew Ford, of *The Song Remains the Same: 800 Years of Love Songs, Laments and Lullabies* (La Trobe University Press, 2019)

Music During Quarantine in the United States

By Frank J. Oteri



San Francisco's Del Sol String Quartet have continued to perform during the pandemic both via virtual concert streams and outdoor events. Photo courtesy Del Sol.

It's hard to believe that more than nine months have gone by since the World Health Organization declared the Covid-19 outbreak a global pandemic. Obviously it has been an immense tragedy for more than a million people who lost their lives to the virus as well as their families, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and on and on. Synchronously the quarantines triggered by the pandemic have also had a cataclysmic impact on the global economy, with some sectors being particularly hard hit as a result of the ongoing inability for large groups of people to interact with one other in person—airlines

and the overall tourist industry, restaurants, dry-cleaners (since so few people go out), the education system, sports, museums, and the entire performing arts. As someone whose life is centered around music and is based in New York City (though prior to this year I prided myself on how much I traveled), I've paid the most attention how the seismic events of 2020 have impacted composers, performing musicians, venues, festivals and conferences, publishers, performing rights societies, music lessons, etc., in New York and throughout the United States.

It has been a surreal environment since most live performances ground to a screeching halt shortly after the marquees on Broadway went dark on March 12. The Metropolitan Opera and most major American orchestras almost immediately followed suit, cancelling the remainder of their 2019-2020 seasons. At first, a few outliers took more of a wait and see attitude, rescheduling events until it was no longer feasible to do so. The remainder of March and most of April was pretty bleak. In addition, to a complete cessation of live music activity, reports kept trickling in about musicians dying from the virus. The jazz community was particularly hard hit. Within that first month, several elder statesmen in the community who had still been active on the scene succumbed to the virus, among them Henry Grimes, Lee Konitz, Giuseppi Logan, and Ellis Marsalis; there were also casualties among younger musicians, including Wallace Roney.

For a while, the only live music most people heard in New York City was an impromptu minute or two of pot-banging from windows around the city every evening at 7:00 p.m. as a gesture of appreciation for urgent care workers who were putting their own lives on the line to treat people who had become infected. I described it to several friends at the time as a Cagean Vespers. We soon learned that nightly noisemaking such as this was happening on a daily basis in various cities around the world, but I imagine the density of New York City's

population made the version of it that happened here particularly exciting for fans of contemporary music. In fact, a group of three composers was so inspired by this nightly cacophony that they co-composed an indeterminate eleven-minute piece specifically for folks with varying musical abilities to play together from their quarantine-induced separate locations. (One of those composers, Frank London, wrote about this project for NewMusicBox: nmbx.newmusicusa.org/for-our-courageous-workers/.)

Although that daily ritual was the only bona fide live music experience to be had for quite some time, within days of the quarantine, several enterprising musicians began regularly concertizing online. The Chicago-based percussion quartet Third Coast Percussion began presenting highly produced new music concerts online (thirdcoastpercussion.com/programs-residencies/digital-tcp/). Jazz pianist Fred Hersch, quarantining from his home in Pennsylvania, played a short piano improvisation every afternoon live on his Facebook feed (www.facebook.com/fredherschmusic/videos?lst=671609770%3A100046781303544%3A1606509532). Violinist Jennifer Koh commissioned short solo pieces from forty composers, ranging from George Lewis and Tania Léon to recent Pulitzer Prize winners Du Yun and Ellen Reid, recording performances of them, and posting them to her YouTube channel for ten

consecutive weeks. (They are all still available to stream from her channel: www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLZZqsrQiRHwOybWSrBIKPiFIKbaPSjmgX.)

Beth Morrison Productions secured the rights to stream a video recording of a different contemporary opera that the company had presented every week. (Links to these streams are no longer active.) But perhaps even more interesting than having an opportunity to revisit these staged performances from previous seasons via these online streams was a brief new opera that was expressly created for the Zoom medium by composer Kamala Sankaram in collaboration with librettist Rob Handel and director Kristin Marting called *All Decisions Will Be Made By Consensus* which debuted online in late April and can still be streamed from the composer's website (www.kamalasankaram.com/press-news/2020/5/4/the-worlds-first-zoom-opera-all-decisions-will-be-made-by-consensus). The opera is a sung version of the ubiquitous Zoom meetings we all now regularly experience, complete with a Zoom interloper. It is a delightful way to spend 12 minutes.



Far more ambitious, as well as much more of a time commitment, have been the six-hour “virtual marathons” that Bang on a Can began presenting on May 3, each featuring a wide array of solo performances including many commissions. To date, BoaC has curated four such six-hour virtual marathons and plans to offer more of them for the duration of the pandemic. Most importantly, while the marathons are free for online audiences, BoaC has welcomed donations and has additionally raised funds which has enabled all the performers featured on these marathons to be properly paid in addition to securing commissioning fees for the composers who have created new material for these events.

Activities such as these have provided music fans here a way to connect with one another and to feel that despite the tragedy unfolding all around us that life and the music that is such a central part of it continued to go on. It has also provided a way for the various siloed new music communities around the country to connect with one another. It is now possible for someone in Los Angeles to experience events in Baltimore, someone in Milwaukee to enjoy a performance in Miami, and on and on. In fact, a fringe performance that might only attract a handful of people in the city in which it is taking place could now theoretically reach hundreds of people around the world. But as exciting as these possibilities

are, the medium has severe limitations. There is a Zoom time zag which makes most musical collaborations between separate computer terminals unwieldy at best, hence the proliferation of so many solo performances, and then there's Zoom fatigue. Staring at the screen of your laptop or phone and listening to music transmitted online through often faulty internet connections is hardly a replacement for a live musical experience. In fact, one of the joys of being in a quiet concert hall is having an oasis free from email, text messages, etc., whereas these online performance just keep us all in front of our screens. And as wonderful as it is for there to be all this free music available online, it further erodes the already fragile gig economy of so many musicians. Many, such as Fred Hersch, soon stopped regularly performing live for free on Facebook and transitioned to a membership platform called Patreon (www.patreon.com/).

In response to the dire situation of musicians whose livelihood was eviscerated by all the live performance cancellations, a group of 14 active members of the new music community—soprano Julia Bullock, flutist Claire Chase, countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo, composers Marcos Balter, Du Yun, Reena Esmail, Judd Greenstein, Nico Muhly, and Andrew Norman, conductors Christian Reif and Christopher Rountree, composer/vocalist/violinist Caroline Shaw, pianist Conrad

Tao, and cellist Seth Parker Woods—joined forces with New Music USA, a national service organization based in New York City, to establish The New Music Solidarity Fund, which granted emergency funding to musicians impacted by COVID-19. The fund ultimately distributed emergency \$500 grants to 1,016 applicants (www.newmusicusa.org/content/solidarity-fund/).

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Then on May 25, an event occurred that further and perhaps irrevocably changed the American cultural landscape. A White police officer knelt on the neck of a Black man he was arresting named George Floyd for more than eight minutes, ultimately killing him. Despite quarantines being in effect in most major American cities, protests against police brutality erupted all over the country. Many performing ensembles and arts organizations began questioning what their purpose was and what causes their missions ultimately served. Classical music as well as new music faced the unpleasant truth that most of the composers featured on concerts, as well as most of the performers and members of the audience, are White. While there have been significant musical contributions by Black composers in the realms of chamber, orchestra, and operatic music, that music is rarely presented.



From the October 26, 2020 rehearsal of Darius Jones's We Can Change the Country which was streamed live from Roulette in Brooklyn on the eve of the United States Presidential Election. Photo by the composer.

Organizations from the largest opera houses and orchestras to the smallest venues and ensembles began making conscious efforts to diversify their repertoire, even in their online offerings. Many of the panel sessions for this year's New Music Gathering, which for the first time was presented entirely via Zoom and Facebook Live, dealt with equity, diversity, and inclusion issues. (A full list of the scheduled events is still available on their website: www.newmusicgathering.org/nmg2020program.)

In June, The Philadelphia Orchestra put together a stunning physically-distanced synchronized online

performance of an exciting fanfare they had commissioned from African American composer Valerie Coleman called *Seven O'Clock Shout*. (Details about the performance as well as a complete video stream of it are available on the orchestra's website: (www.philorch.org/performances/special-performances/seven-oclock-shout/.)

In November, two American orchestras—the Detroit Symphony and the Seattle Symphony—each presented a different concertante work composed by Tyshawn Sorey: *For Marcos Balter*, featuring violinist Jennifer Koh; and *For Roscoe Mitchell* featuring cellist Seth Parker Woods.

Seeing and hearing the performance of the latter work, a rare occurrence of a Black soloist appearing with an American orchestra to play music by a Black composer, felt extremely exhilarating and hopeful, despite seeing the members of the reduced-sized orchestra masked and spread far away from each other performing in an empty hall. But perhaps the most visible example of fundamental change was that when the Metropolitan Opera announced on September 23 that the entire 2020-2021 season would be cancelled, the first time the company has ever cancelled a season since its founding in 1883, they also stated that they would reopen in September 2021 with a work by a living composer, Terence Blanchard. It will shockingly be the first opera by a Black composer ever to be performed at the Met.

At this point, nine months into our current state of musical purgatory, it is difficult to conceptualize that in-person opening night less than ten months from now. Can it happen? Will it happen? While performances by most major American institutions have either been cancelled or replaced with virtual offerings through at least June of next year, there have been a few attempts at small distanced groups, including members of the New York Philharmonic, performing mostly outdoor events and a few venues and ensembles have even continued playing live indoors for greatly reduced audiences. (On a personal

note, in January, a somewhat scaled-down version of the South Dakota Symphony will give the premiere performance of a new work I wrote for them, though thankfully the performance will be streamed as well.) But most events, from festivals to music conferences, have transitioned to digital transmission exclusively. This year's Boston New Music Festival was entirely online (www.bostonnewmusicfestival.org/) as was the annual Midwest Clinic, the largest gathering for wind band and educational music in the United States, for the first time in its 75 year history (www.midwestclinic.org/). The even larger biennial American Choral Directors Association National Conference, which was next supposed to occur in Dallas in March 2021, will also be exclusively online. (For further details, see: my.acda.org/s/lt-event?id=a1Y3i000000b4wqEAA#.)

The choral community has arguably faced the greatest challenges within the music community since the very act of performing choral music is dangerous in the current climate. (There is an article by choral composer, conductor, and publisher Fahad Siadat that describes various distanced-singing strategies that some choruses have explored to continue to perform: nmbx.newmusicusa.org/innovations-and-experimentations-in-distanced-choral-singing/.)

It should be noted that several national service organizations have made valiant efforts to help their constituencies during this extremely difficult time. Chamber Music America instituted a pay as you wish membership for this year and the 2021 CMA Conference, which will be held virtually in January, is free for all current CMA members (conference.chamber-music.org/).

OPERA America, which has been offering invaluable webinars throughout the year (www.operaamerica.org/programs/events/conference-webinars/webinars/), has also waived its annual fees for all organizational members as well as individual artists, thanks to a generous donation from the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation. (In addition to his business and philanthropic activities, Gordon Getty is an active composer.)

In addition to the aesthetic pleasure from hearing extraordinary music at festivals or performances at these various conferences, one of the main attractions of these in-person musical events has been the ability to meet and interact with like-minded musicians from around the country, and around the world. These meetings often lead to performance opportunities and commissions as well as, even more importantly, life-long friendships.

Despite the elaborate efforts the coordinators of some of the events have made to create spaces for people to meet each other, e.g. being randomly shuffled into Zoom break-out rooms, it's difficult to conceive that such virtual meetings can create bonds that are ultimately as meaningful and long lasting. But for now, and for the foreseeable, at least we have this.

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The Corona Crisis, as seen from the point of view of a freelance musician in Switzerland

by Javier Hagen



Photo by Priscilla Du Preez via Unsplash.com

Let them work, then they can pay all their bills

Let's not beat around the bush: with the corona-related lockdown, which was imposed in Switzerland on February 28, 2020 (ban on events with more than 1000 people) and March 16, 2020 (ban on all private and public events) respectively, a de facto professional ban has been in place for musicians in Switzerland to date; the cultural sector clearly speaks of a catastrophe.

On May 30, 2020, the ban on gatherings was relaxed (gatherings of up to 30 people were then permitted), and as of June 6, 2020, private and public

events with up to 300 people were permitted again (including family events, church services, concerts, theater performances or cinema). In June 2020, the borders to all states within the EU/EFTA area opened completely, and as of June 22, events with up to 1,000 people were again possible, provided that the required hygiene measures (distance, hand disinfection, contact tracing, etc.) were observed. However, the joy lasted only for a short time. Since the end of October, the Swiss music scene has once again been in lockdown. According to surveys by the Swiss Music Council and the Association of Swiss Freelance Musicians Sonart (both are active in the

Taskforce Culture at the Federal Assembly in Bern), the music sector expects losses of between 64 and 91% in income for 2020 alone, despite the end of the event ban and some of the restrictions. The reasons: missing, delayed or too-low compensation payments, a significant decline in orders, hesitant audience attendance and a lack of financial resources, as invested reserves have been used up in the meantime.

Even if the public sector - and this must be explicitly stated here - is extremely efficient and provides a respectable amount of aid by its standards, Swiss politicians and the public are not sufficiently aware of the precarious financial situation of freelance musicians in Switzerland: freelance musicians in Switzerland, like their peers abroad, are extraordinarily flexible, agile, and creative and thus escape the mills of social welfare, but they also live at - and many below - the minimum subsistence level. Or to put it another way: they work a lot, earn little, and their main income often comes from side jobs. But they manage without debt collection, without criminal records, without going to the social welfare office. They usually pay their taxes late, but still pay. In view of the meager income, there is no thought of building up a significant occupational pension plan. The categorical ban on events and its long-term consequences are thus the worst thing that can happen to them. The simplest, fastest, and best measure against it: Let them work - then they can pay all the bills.

Income replacement payments with a delay of several months in the amount of 80% of an income below the minimum subsistence level are certainly more than no support at all, but this only works for citizens with an income of more than 120% of the minimum subsistence level and minimal reserves to bridge the gap. Freelancers can only generate the subsistence minimum by working. Therefore, once again: The categorical ban on events and its long-term consequences are the worst thing that can happen to freelancers.

Going virtual

In Switzerland, too, online offerings mushroomed during the lockdown: courses, individual and group lessons, choir rehearsals via Zoom, streaming concerts, and much more.

Swiss radio and television SRF broadcast living room concerts by well-known Swiss musicians to all parts of the country starting in late March. Fee? None. The musicians gave away their work to give us a bit of courage during this difficult time. The visibility was huge, the socio-political message catastrophic.

But SRF had already done better: Shortly before the lockdown, rock musician Nadja Zela sent an open letter to the program managers. She demanded more songs from Switzerland in the program. The pressure worked. SRF increased the proportion of Swiss music in all programs. Although the artists can hope for more royalties, only a few can live on it.

Going virtual also revealed other, more fundamental problems: computers, tablets, or cell phones were and are often not available for all family members, software is incompatible due to outdated and/or different operating systems, budgets for updates are not available, Internet performance was and is insufficient for an entire family due to overload or too little money for potent data subscriptions, sound quality during digital transmission is insufficient due to too poor microphones and speakers, data compression and lack of recording know-how. Moreover, latencies in digital transmission created and continue to create additional difficulties in communication and classroom behavior. Data protection? The protection of privacy is severely compromised in the home office: all data such as working time, work form and efficiency are traceable and can be evaluated with previously unimaginable accuracy in retrospect.

In short: Even if, in the summer and early fall of 2020, the opera houses in Zurich and Geneva stream the orchestra and opera choir in real time from a corona-compliant rehearsal room or transmit pre-recorded tapes to the flesh-and-blood soloists on stage - fortunately, most of the jobs can be kept - no one here will warm to online solutions.

An opportunity for the Saudis

Festivals are now postponing their acts until next year. And some organizers are capitalizing on the anticipation: "We'll be back bigger and better next year," claims Openair

Frauenfeld, which has already sold 10,000 tickets for an extra day in 2021.

Since recorded music sales have brought in almost nothing, the music business has revolved around concerts. Thousands of festivals shot out of the ground and the fees skyrocketed. The big promoters vie for the same few headliners. For the fans, this means ever more expensive tickets and similar line-ups.

This has long since attracted international corporations to Switzerland as well: Multinationals like Live Nation or CTS Eventim swallow everything, from small agencies to lucrative ticketing. In 2017, Live Nation took over Openair Frauenfeld, and in early 2020, CTS Eventim got in on OpenAir St. Gallen. But the Corona crisis is now causing liquidity problems even for the multinationals. Live Nation's CEO says, "The glass is half full." And he has a new junior shareholder: the Saudi sovereign wealth fund. So stars from Madonna to U2 will soon be performing with the capital of a regime that executed more people last year than ever before, according to Amnesty International.

Next year, in addition to the postponed acts from this year, hundreds of additional bands will be on tour. Gigs are what they all need. The commercial promoters will have to make up for this year's losses - will that encourage them to experiment? Or will they be more likely to just play it safe? And how will all this affect ticket and drink prices? According to the promoters' association SMPA, the Swiss

concert industry has already been suffering for years: thousands of tickets are not sold; concert halls remain half empty; festivals lose millions. After Corona, the problem could get even worse.

Problematic reporting

The inconsistent public reporting in the spring was not really helpful. Among other things, it did not consistently distinguish between people who actually had contracted the virus and those who simply tested positive for it. The increasing number of positive testers is not accompanied by a parallel increase in hospitalizations and intensive care treatments or deaths, which raised broad doubts about the usefulness of the tests and the daily reports of new positive tests. Further, incidences of SARS-CoV-2 were reported almost exclusively as absolute numbers without reference. Moreover, the disclosure of the total number of positive testers and deaths was cumulative, which contradicts the basic principles of presenting epidemiologic data - and perpetuates anxiety and stress.

What remains? Political activism and lobbying. In the second half of September, the Culture Task Force, in which all important Swiss music associations work together with the Swiss Music Council and Sonart, obtained nationwide measures from the parliament in Bern, such as an increase in the budget for compensation for loss of income from CHF 80 to 100 million, the continuation of important mechanisms such as Corona income

compensation or the short-time compensation for temporary employment contracts. Personal contacts between creative artists and the conservative politicians were in demand here and have been worth their weight in gold. However, major players such as orchestras, opera houses, the big festivals, clubs and cinemas also have an advantage over freelancers. They receive the lion's share of the cake, as they are strongly staffed administratively. Freelance artists, the special cases, are much harder to deal with. They receive little, too little, the little with delay, or nothing at all, on the one hand due to the system, or because they do not have the means or the organizational skills to get these funds in time.

On the other hand, the Swiss cultural foundation Pro Helvetia set a good example by opening special funding initiatives to support cultural projects in times of the Corona crisis. This was an important step, especially for the independent scene, since most notable Swiss foundations follow its mission statement.

Short-term, smaller, local

And what else? The choral world began tentatively to rehearse in September, insofar as it had sufficiently large rehearsal rooms. In the churches people sang in small groups, but since the beginning of November people have largely been in lockdown here again, and rehearsals and performances are forbidden. Large events such as choir and brass band festivals will probably not be able to take place in 2021.

Theaters are putting small-scale pieces on the schedule, orchestras are stepping up chamber music activities. Bright prospects look different.

But there are also glimmers of hope—and new music should be mentioned here: The Swiss section of ISCM, for example, kept up its ISCM Collaborative Series project and sent the Hyper Duo on tour in Germany in September; the Valais section of ISCM - just in time before the reintroduction of travel restrictions - successfully held the Forum Valais with the participation of ensemble recherche from Germany and Klangforum Wien from Austria at Schloss Leuk in August, and Swiss ensembles such as Contrechamps, Vortex, Phoenix, ENMZ, UMS 'n JIP, proton, Le NEC resume their schedule as committed as ever, but now even more circumspect and cautious.

Short-term, smaller, more local - that seems to be the watchword at the moment, i.e. the new survival strategy.

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Goebbels, Wolfgang Rihm, Roland Hermann, and Nicolai Gedda. As a singer he has premiered more than 300 works worldwide and has served as the presiding officer for ISCM Switzerland since 2014. <http://javierhagen.ch>

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In Memoriam

[Ed. Note: The following music creators died between the ISCM's General Assembly in Tallinn in May 2019 and the publication of this magazine in December 2020. Sadly, it is a significantly larger list than usual, in part because several people mentioned here succumbed to the Coronavirus that has shut down the whole world. – FJO]

Marcello Abbado (7 October 1926 – 4 June 2020)
Italian composer, conductor, and pianist

Carl-Bertil Agnestig (7 March 1924 – 14 July 2019)
Swedish composer and music teacher

Ruth Anderson (21 March 1928 – 29 November 2019)
Pioneering American electroacoustic composer
and wife of New Zealand-born American experimental composer Annea Lockwood

Blas Emilio Atehortúa (22 October 1943 – 5 January 2020)
Colombian composer, conductor, and music teacher

Ginger Baker (19 August 1939 – 6 October 2019)
British rock and jazz drummer

Vytautas Barkauskas (25 March 1931 – 25 April 2020)
Lithuanian composer and music professor

Roman Berger (9 August 1930 – 21 December 2020)
Slovak composer, music educator, and theoretician

León Biriotti (1 December 1929 – 10 October 2020)
Uruguayan composer, conductor, and oboist

Roger Boutry (27 February 1932 – 7 September 2019)
French composer and conductor

Paul Bouman (26 August 1918 – 28 April 2019)
American choral composer of primarily sacred music

Harold Budd (24 May 1945 – 8 December 2020)
American minimalist/ambient composer and poet (died from Covid-19)

John Joseph Burke (10 May 1951 – 18 January 2020)
Canadian composer and music teacher

Gonzalo Castellanos Yumar (3 June 1926 – 10 January 2020)
Venezuelan composer, orchestral and choral conductor, organist, and teacher

Chou Wen-chung (28 July 1923 – 25 October 2019)
Chinese-born American composer, music teacher, and cultural ambassador
[ISCM Honorary Member]

Sonny Chua (2 November 1967 – 9 September 2020)
Malaysian-born Australian composer, pianist and music educator

Michael Colgrass (22 April 1932 – 2 July 2019)
American composer & educator who spent the latter part of his life in Canada

Stanley Cowell (5 May 1941 – 17 December 2020)
American jazz composer/pianist and co-founder of Strata-East Records

Noah Creschevsky (31 January 1945 – 3 December 2020)
American electroacoustic composer of “hyperrealist” music

Wolfgang Dauner (30 December 1935 – 10 January 2020)
German jazz, rock, film, radio, and television composer and pianist

Mario Davidovsky (March 4, 1934 – August 23, 2019)
Argentinian-born American composer, composition teacher & electroacoustic music pioneer

Reinbert de Leeuw (8 September 1938 – 14 February 2020)
Dutch conductor, pianist, and composer

Nancy Bloomer Deussen (1 February 1931 – 16 November 2019)
American composer and advocate for accessible contemporary music

Frédéric Devreese (2 June 1929 – 28 September 2020)
Netherlands-born Belgian composer and conductor

Manu Dibango (12 December 1933 – 24 March 2020)
Cameroonian saxophonist and composer who merged jazz, funk & traditional African music
(died from COVID-19)

David Dorward (7 August 1933 – 31 January 2020)
Scottish composer and music producer for BBC Radio Scotland

Stephan Dunkelman (1956 – 6 November 2020)
Belgian electroacoustic composer and sound installation artist

Kenes Duysekeyev (10 February 1946 - 9 July 2020)
Kazakh composer of numerous works including film scores

Donna Kelly Eastman (26 September 1945 – 12 January 2020)
American composer and choral director

Zusaan Kali Fasteau (9 March 1947 – 20 November 2020)
American free jazz / world music composer and multi-instrumentalist

Jack Fortner (2 July, 1935 – 25 June 2020)
American composer & founder of the California-based Orpheus Chamber Music Ensemble

Arthur Frackenpohl (23 April 1924 – 8 June 2019)
American composer and music educator

Hugh Fraser (26 October 1958 – 17 June 2020)
Canadian jazz composer, trombonist, pianist, and bandleader

Wesley Fuller (13 December 1930 – 24 September 2020)
American composer of works involving live musicians and computerized sound

André Gagnon (2 August 1936 – 3 December 2020)
Canadian composer, arranger, and conductor who fused classical and popular music styles

Federico García Vigil (5 January 1941 – 27 May 2020)
Uruguayan composer, conductor, and pianist

Jon Gibson (March 11, 1940 – October 11, 2020)
American composer, flutist/saxophonist, and founding member of the Philip Glass Ensemble

João Gilberto (10 June 1931 – 6 July 2019)
Brazilian bossa nova singer and songwriter

Andy Gill (1 January 1956 – 1 February 2020)
British singer-songwriter, co-founder/lead guitarist for the post-punk band Gang of Four

Janet Grice (2 October 1955 – 31 March 2020)
American jazz composer and bassoonist

Stephen T. Griebing (10 December 1932 – 20 March 2020)
American composer and cellist

Henry Grimes (3 November 1935 – 15 April 2020)
American free jazz double-bassist and composer (died from Covid-19)

Onaje Allan Gumbs (3 September 1949 – 6 April 2020)
American jazz composer, pianist & bandleader (died from Covid-19)

Erich Hartmann (26 January 1920 – 6 July 2020)
German composer and double-bassist

Sorrel Hays (6 August 1941 – 9 February 2020)
American composer and pianist

Jimmy Heath (25 October 1926 – 19 January 2020)
American jazz saxophonist, composer, arranger, and bandleader

René Hemmer (27 December 1919 – 9 Sept 2019)

Luxembourgish composer and founder / conductor of the Chamber Orchestra of Luxembourg

Jerry Herman (10 July 1931 – 26 December 2019)

American musical theater composer and lyricist

Toots Hibbert (8 December 1942 – 11 September 2020)

Jamaican singer-songwriter whose group The Maytals established reggae (died from Covid-19)

Derek Holman (16 May 1931 – 20 May 2019)

British-born Canadian composer, organist, and choir director

Zoran Hristić (30 July 1938 – 12 November 2019)

Serbian composer and artistic director for the BEMUS and Mokranjac Days festivals

Pierre Huwiler (12 May 1948 – 22 December 2019)

Swiss composer and conductor active in choral music

Enrique Iturriaga (3 April 1918 – 23 November 2019)

Peruvian composer and music theorist

Zoltán Jeney (4 March 1943 – 28 October 2019)

Hungarian minimalist composer

Jiri Jirmal (24 April 1925 – 11 December 2019)

Czech composer and classical guitarist deeply immersed in jazz

Giya Kancheli (10 August 1935 – 2 October 2019)

Georgian composer of symphonic, chamber, and film music

Sukhi Kang (22 October 1934 – 16 August 2020)

Korean composer who created Korea's 1st electronic music in Korea & Pan Music Festival founder
[ISCM Honorary Member]

Mory Kanté (29 March 1950 – 22 May 2020)

Guinean singer-songwriter and kora player

Nikolai Kapustin (22 November 1937 – 2 July 2020)

Ukrainian-born composer and pianist of jazz-influenced works based for many years in Russia

Matthias Kaul (29 January 1935 – 1 July 2020)

German composer and percussionist

Lauren Keiser (13 June 1945 – 22 May 2020)

American composer and music publisher

Gershon Kingsley (28 October 1922 – 10 December 2019)

German-born American composer and electronic music pioneer

Volker David Kirchner (25 June 1942 – 4 February 2020)

German composer and violist

Jan Krenz (14 July 1926 – 15 September 2020)

Polish composer and conductor

Lee Konitz (13 October 1927 – 15 April 2020)

American bebop jazz saxophonist and composer (died from Covid-19)

Arthur Digby Kurtz (7 May 1929 – 20 August 2019)

American composer and music teacher

Garrett List (10 September 1943 – 27 December 2019)

American-born, Belgian-based jazz and experimental composer and trombonist
and member of Musica Elettronica Viva

Dirk Lüken (1 November 1932 – 1 January 2020)

German composer, organist, and choir music director

Giuseppi Logan (22 May 1935 – 17 April 2020)

American free jazz multi-instrumentalist & composer (died from Covid-19)

Harold Mabern Jr. (20 March 1936 – 17 September 2019)

American hard bop jazz pianist and composer

Mary Mageau (4 September 1934 - 9 January 2020)

American-born Australian composer and harpsichordist

Ivo Malec (30 March 1925 – 14 August 2019)

Croatian-born composer and conductor based for many years in France

Johnny Mandel (23 November 1925 – 29 June 2020)

American composer and arranger of popular songs, jazz, and film music

Ellis Marsalis (14 November 1934 – 1 April 2020)

American jazz pianist, composer, and educator (died from Covid-19)

Colin Mawby (9 May 1936 – 24 November 2019)

English composer, organist, and choral conductor

Lyle Mays (27 November 1953 – 10 February 2020)

American jazz pianist and composer who worked extensively with Pat Metheny

Ian McKinley (21 August 1929 - 9 May 2020)

Australian choral composer, conductor, and music educator

Paul Méfano (6 March 1937 – 15 September 2020)

Iraqi-born French composer and conductor

Thanos Mikroutsikos (13 April 1947 – 28 December 2019)

Greek composer of concert and popular music

Jacques-Louis Monod

(25 February 1927 – 21 September 2020)

French modernist composer, pianist and conductor active in the U.S.A. & the United Kingdom

Ennio Morricone (10 November 1928 – 6 July 2020)

Italian composer/conductor known for his film scores who also composed many concert works

Diane Moser (29 July 1957 – 17 December 2020)

Pianist, composer, bandleader & music educator whose music fused birdsong and jazz

Beni Nagari

(5 October 1950 – August 24, 2019)

Israeli film composer and conductor

Octavian Nemescu (29 March 1940 – 6 November 2020)

Romanian experimental composer

Nguyễn Văn Tý (15 March 1925 – 26 December 2019)

Vietnamese composer of numerous popular songs

Ib Nørholm (24 January 1931 – 10 June 2019)

Danish composer and organist

Ricardo Ojeda (9 June 1926 – 4 June 2020)

Argentinian composer

Kees Olthuis (28 November 1940 – 16 October 2019)

Dutch composer and bassoonist

Juan Orrego-Salas (18 January 1919 – 24 November 2019)

Chilean-born American composer, musicologist & founder of the Latin American Music Center

Joseph Pehrson (14 August 1950 – 4 April 2020)

American composer and co-founder of Composers Concordance

Krzysztof Penderecki (23 November 1933 – 29 March 2020)

Polish composer/conductor whose output includes 8 symphonies & numerous choral works
[ISCM Honorary Member]

Vadim Petrov (24 May 1932 – 7 December 2020)

Czech composer of nearly 1300 works spanning concert repertoire, popular songs & film scores

John Prine (10 October 1946 – 7 April 2020)

American country-folk singer-songwriter (died from Covid-19)

Markéta Procházková-Lutková (25 September 1963 – 2 June 2020)
Czech composer, poet, and music teacher

Georg Ratzinger (15 January 1924 – 1 July 2020)
German choral composer and conductor of sacred music

Sally Reid (30 January 1948 – 21 December 2019)
American composer and music educator

Eric Richards (8 August 1935 – 20 April 2020)
American experimental composer

Marga Richter (21 October 1926 – 25 June 2020)
American composer and pianist

Wallace Roney (25 May 1960 – 31 March 2020)
American jazz trumpeter and composer (died from Covid-19)

Christopher Rouse (15 February 1949 – 21 September 2019)
American composer and composition teacher

Sven-David Sandström (30 October 1942 – 10 June 2019)
Swedish composer particularly known for his operatic and choral works

Boguslaw Schaeffer (6 June 1929 – 1 July 2019)
Polish composer and musicologist

Florian Schneider (7 April 1947 – 21 April 2020)
German musician who was a founding member of the synthesizer band Kraftwerk

Gerard Schurmann (19 January 1924 – 24 March 2020)
Indonesian-born composer/conductor who lived in the Netherlands, the U.K. and the U.S.A.

Joseph Shabalala (28 August 1940 – 11 February 2020)
South African singer-songwriter, founder/director of the group Ladysmith Black Mambazo

Myroslav Skoryk (13 July 1938 – 1 June 2020)
Ukrainian composer and teacher

Dmitri Smirnov (2 November 1948 – 9 April 2020)
Russian-born composer based for many years in the United Kingdom (died from Covid-19)

William O. Smith (22 September 1926 – 29 February 2020)
American composer/clarinetist who worked in both experimental classical music and jazz

Claudio Spies (26 March 1925 – 2 April 2020)
Chilean-born American serial composer and music educator

Eric Sweeney (15 July 1948 – 21 July 2020)
Irish composer, conductor, and music educator

Erzsébet Szönyi (HU 25 April 1924 – 28 December 2019)
Hungarian composer and music teacher

Duane Tatro (18 May 1927 – 9 August 2020)
American composer who worked extensively in television but also released a seminal jazz album

Richard Teitelbaum (19 May 1939 – 9 April 2020)
American electroacoustic composer and improviser and co-founder of Musica Elettronica Viva

Frederick C. Tillis (5 January 1930 – 3 May 2020)
American experimental composer, jazz saxophonist, music educator, and poet

Keith Tippett (25 August 1947 – 14 June 2020)
British composer/pianist active in contemporary experimental music, jazz, and progressive rock

McCoy Tyner (11 December 1938 – 6 March 2020)
American jazz composer and pianist who worked extensively with John Coltrane

“Blue” Gene Tyranny a.k.a. Robert Sheff (1 January 1945 – 12 December 2020)
Composer and pianist who frequently collaborated with Robert Ashley

Theo Verbey (5 July 1959 – 13 October 2019)
Dutch composer, orchestrator, and music theory teacher

Alexander Vustin (24 April 1943 – 19 April 2020)
Russian composer of dodecaphonic music (died from Covid-19)

Frank Wallace (22 Nov 1952 – 2 June 2020)
American composer and classical guitarist

Peter Westergaard (28 May 1931 – 26 June 2019)
American composer and music theorist

Charles Wuorinen (9 June 1938 – 11 March 2020)
American modernist composer, pianist, and conductor whose output spans over 270 works

John Zdechlik (2 May 1937 – 21 May 2020)
American composer of concert band repertoire

Isidora Žebeljan (27 September 1967 – 29 September 2020)
Serbian composer whose music was performed during the 2005, 2009 & 2017 ISCM WNMD

Hans Zender (22 November 1936 – 22 October 2019)
German composer and conductor

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Rethinking Composing in the Time of Coronavirus

By Paco Yáñez



Photo by Engin Akyurt via Unsplash.com

The Black Death, one of the most lethal pandemics in human history, left us a masterpiece of literature written when the disease was still killing thousands of people, which made the plague itself part of its contents: *The Decameron* (1351-53), by Giovanni Boccaccio. *The Decameron* is, quite possibly, the most popular artistic creation related to a pandemic, although we must add an important number of works that were set or were written during various historical pandemics, such as descriptions of typhoid fever in the 5th century B.C. by Thucydides and Sophocles; that of the Antonine Plague in the 2nd century, related by

the emperor Marcus Aurelius; the Bubonic Plague in the 6th century, narrated by Procopius of Caesarea; the Great Plague of London in the 17th century, detailed by Daniel Defoe in his *Journal*; or the cholera outbreaks that ravaged Europe during the 19th century, a pandemic of which François-René de Chateaubriand provided very specific details in his *Memoirs from Beyond the Grave* (1848) and that, decades later, killed Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky in Saint Petersburg. Precisely, French colonization could be at the origin of the great cholera epidemic that struck Oran in the 19th century: inspiration for another essential book whose

action is set in times of pandemic: *The Plague* (1947), by Albert Camus, a novel that, in turn, inspired Robert Gerhard's cantata *The Plague* (1963-64), one of the musical scores most strongly related to a pandemic.

In the field of classical music, we lack as detailed records on the various pandemics that have plagued humanity as those offered by literature. The Spanish Flu (1918-1920) is, for sure, the one which provides us with a more detailed historical framework. In an article published on April 22, 2020 in the WQXR blog¹, Heather O'Donovan echoes how the Spanish Flu affected European and American composers, such as Igor Stravinsky, himself ill with the flu in 1919, having composed months earlier, on a small scale, *The Soldier's Tale* (1918), conditioned by the low availability of musicians caused by the First World War and the pandemic itself. "To fly from the Bolsheviks to die from Spanish Flu! What sarcasm!" were the words of Sergei Prokofiev, which, upon arrival in New York, saw how the concert seasons were limited by the Spanish Flu, disrupting his plans in the United States, but taking advantage of the slowdown imposed by the pandemic to compose his opera *The Love for Three Oranges* (1918-19). Among other illustrious composers who felt ill during the Spanish Flu, O'Donovan includes Sergei Rachmaninov, Ottorino Respighi, Karol Szymanowski, Béla Bartók (of whom she says that, after twenty-three days in bed, he defined his experience of

the Spanish influenza as "Small ants scratching and causing an irresistible itching in depth of my ears") and Charles Tomlinson Griffes. Like Griffes, the Spanish Flu also killed, in the artistic field, the English composer Hubert Parry, the Austrian painter Egon Schiele, and the French writer Guillaume Apollinaire.

In any case, extraordinary scores were composed during the Spanish Flu, the greatest pandemic of the 20th century: such as *Amériques* (1918-21), by Edgard Varèse; *La Valse* (1919-20), by Maurice Ravel; or *The Miraculous Mandarin* (1918-19), by Béla Bartók; although it is the Sonata for Flute, Clarinet, Oboe and Piano, Op. 47 (1918), by Darius Milhaud, which most explicitly echoes the pain caused by the disease, seen with Milhaud's own eyes in Brazil, the country where he had arrived in 1918. According to Heather O'Donovan, the latest movement of this Sonata is really a funeral march in memory of the dead, as Milhaud related in his memoirs: "The supply of coffins gave out, and you constantly saw cartloads of corpses that were thrown into the common graves in the cemeteries."

However, the experience of composition under lockdown is not exclusive to pandemics, and extends to imprisonment. In this case, we have a good number of examples, such as Olivier Messiaen, who during the months he spent in Görlitz's Stalag VIII-A composed his *Quartet for the End of Time* (1940-41), or Viktor Ullmann, who wrote the opera *The*

Emperor of Atlantis (1943) in the Nazi concentration camp of Theresienstadt. In both cases, seclusion turns the space into an echo of memory, something that is reminiscent of the conceptual and musical approaches of a contemporary work, *Kaiolan* (2010), a sextet by the Basque composer Gabriel Erkoreka inspired by *Cells* (1986-2008), a series of installations by the French-American sculptress Louise Bourgeois. Blaise Pascal argued in his *Pensées* that "All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone." This is a thought that Paul Auster quotes in *The Invention of Solitude* (1982), an exercise in self-reflection in which a composer lives confined in a minimal space, drawing up utopian musical projects that transcend the barriers of a suffocating room. *Kaiolan* (translatable as "In the cage") will remind us of these references, in which Erkoreka's creative self-dialogues with some of his previous compositions, rescues them, modifies them, and tends to new spaces: an interiority that forces the self to expand in time, to yearn for breaking the confinement, becoming the space, dreamlike sounds that combine the static with an internal dynamism that seeks to transcend the limitations of the physical, seek escape points and disintegrate the sextet in multiple directions. Building, therefore, a musical space that is, at the same time, memory and projection into the future: some of this has been in the confinements motivated by the Spanish Flu, such as

in those in prison, and, now, in our lockdowns in 2020.

Once these historical references are quoted by way of introduction, we could ask ourselves what characterizes the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of musical creation, as well as the activities and thoughts of the composers of our time, some of which have written to us about it.

Undoubtedly, the great difference in this pandemic of the year 2020 is that it has erupted in the internet era, which makes possible to maintain formerly unfeasible activities, such as online teaching, which has allowed many composers to continue their classes in real time over the network to different parts of the world. Something similar has happened with rehearsals, when concerts have returned to the stage, after the months of stricter lockdown. Toshio Hosokawa has told us how he has guided online, from Yokohama, the rehearsals of his octet *Texter* (2020), premiered at the Berlin Philharmonie on June 6th and broadcasted live through the Digital Concert Hall: another novelty regarding past pandemics, being able to attend concerts with live audiovisual broadcasting; although Hosokawa himself stated in his emails that "It was not so nice. I would like to listen to my sounds live." Centuries after Plato's Cave, we still prefer the original to its shadows.

Another good example of online audiovisual artistic creation related to

music during the COVID-19 pandemic is *Plan B* (2020), a medium-length film by Russian director Sergey Nurmamed in which the instrumentalists of musicAeterna and their conductor, Teodor Currentzis, participate from different countries in Europe to recount their experiences during their respective confinements, rehearsing and online playing Ludwig van Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (1822-24). Together with the members of musicAeterna, internationally renowned composers and artists, such as Marina Abramović, Peter Sellars and Helmut Lachenmann, take part in *Plan B*, joining together with the Ninth's rehearsals their thoughts on this pandemic and the challenges of art and humanity in 2020: challenges that go beyond a health emergency, and which include environment, culture, social justice and many global challenges often hidden under what in 1967 Guy Debord already described as *The Society of the Spectacle*.

It is precisely this critical position that is most frequently repeated and highlighted in the emails that we've have received from composers such as Helmut Lachenmann, Beat Furrer, Pierluigi Billone, or Ramon Lazkano. In addition, the reflections of the Russian composer Elena Rykova and the Chilean composer Pablo Vergara talk about the social revolts that, in parallel to COVID-19, have mobilized the populations of the United States and Chile (countries in which they live) in favor of non-discrimination and social democracy. It's something

referred, as well, by Helmut Lachenmann from his confinement in Italy, when he says that he feels himself "a citizen of a society that is contaminated not only by the coronavirus, but also by irresponsible demagoguery and stupidity, violence and social indifference, and in which the actual crisis, however terrible it may be, is only a harbinger of coming catastrophes, I get in touch with composers and freelance musicians to discuss and reflect on their existential threat and irritation. We have to remind our politicians again and again of their duty to protect art and its institutions as well as the artists, men and women who serve them, because art and its power are more than ever indispensable, indispensable like fresh air [...] in a civilization which is hypnotized by fun manipulated by commercial interests."

A very similar line of critical thinking is expressed by Beat Furrer, who wrote to us from Austria: "What many artists took as an opportunity in this crisis, was not seen or considered as such on a political level: on the contrary, no efforts were spared to restart exactly the same machinery that was the original cause of this crisis, if anything, to accelerate the process. Objections and further questions are not intended: we have been demoted to be spectators. Today's global protests against racism, social injustice, unprecedented destruction of the environment and other forms of violence show how deeply rooted this crisis has unearthed a sense of

urgency in many people: criticism of an inhumane system, a system that ostracizes, monitors and forcibly levels everything which gets in the way. The object of this criticism, whether it be a production of art, or a direct political commitment is namely a search for alternative opportunities, a search for a language that might enable to understand or explain this unparalleled, incomprehensible... that is happening right now. Google, Facebook and Amazon, to name but a few, are the ones who benefit from and even amplify an even more radical pandemic in these times of crisis and they will come out on top of this state of emergency. In these times, when politics and policy makers are being downgraded to a mere Punch and Judy show is, when we need art, new and contemporary art, in order to make sense of what is happening."

In the case of Pierluigi Billone, the Italian composer thinks that "whoever was not directly touched by the pandemic has experienced an unpredictable and unique occasion to get free from the usual *wheel of the actuality*. It could have been the moment to consider again and from other points of view our situation of workers, the actual sense and the limits of our activity, exactly because in such a moment the only source of necessity lies in ourselves and no more in the external influences. I am quite sceptical about it. Soon everything will turn back where it stopped, in the same way, with the same sense (or non-sense...),

reproducing the same movement, as if the only possible wish (almost a prayer...) should be *the show must go on.*"

This overload of external stimuli motivated by the hyperconnectivity (even in times of lockdown) causes that, in the words of Elena Rykova, "the months of pandemic are not easy indeed: each day is on one hand very similar to any other during the quarantine, but, on the other hand, each day is very different in terms of the mental state, amount of energy, being able to focus and work and think creatively. Self-care demands a lot of mental work in order to balance myself." The extreme of this situation is exposed by Pablo Vergara, when he affirms that "another effect of confinement has been at times a loss of meaning of composing as a result of the existential disorientation that all this causes and entails."

As a result of the hyperconnectivity and the disorientation that Rykova and Vergara referred, the myth of the ivory tower to which the composer retired to work isolated from the crowd has collapsed in the 21st century. The Basque composer Ramon Lazkano refers to the same ideas in this way: "In our trenches, overwhelmed by the staves on the paper, we used to think that homes and studios were protective capsules for our activity, which to us musicians seems to require a necessary introspection. But suddenly, they've become bunkers facing a looming threat, an impalpable virus spreading

a far more intimidating way to relate to the world - enslaving us even more roughly than the structures slyly displayed by a new social and technological order. Without a doubt, the mental confusion, the disorientation and the ideological shock will not leave us unscathed. The mechanisms of paranoia and hypochondria are the new norms: usages entering into effect. There is a vertigo to the swiftness of the process and to the unreality of its consequences; a vertigo acting as an elusive wall that intends to turn us blind to the proliferation of pain, of the unemployed people, the hopeless migrants, the devastated nature. Never has our survival been more compromised, let alone our activity as composers in this limited, peculiar, and brittle milieu with its very own difficulties: we looked like archaisms, we glide towards fossilization."

However, there is a margin to take a distance in this pandemic, even in the case of a collective, that of internationally renowned composers, whose life used to be a continuous journey. That is something which Toshio Hosokawa recognizes: "It is a very important time for me. I was too busy before the coronavirus crisis. I did too much travelling and had no time to think about my life," a situation that allows the Japanese composer "to walk to my atelier by finding new ways in nature. I found beauty in small flowers and grasses, which I couldn't see before the corona crisis." In addition, Hosokawa is using this free time for reading

Yasunari Kawabata's books and "maybe, I will make an opera on his text in the near future." In the case of Elena Rykova, she says: "I'm currently working on deepening my understanding of sound, reading books on architectural acoustics, micro-sound, and sketching ideas for the three upcoming projects," while acknowledging that "it's especially important for me to engage with the world and try to understand what place and role new music and I as a composer play in these days [...] Right now is the time when I am able to feel change happening as we speak - a time of global transformation. If the world is undergoing some, I believe, inevitably each of us will go through our own personal transformation as well as we are an inherent part of it. [...] I can't just continue on thinking about music without re-contextualizing my musical practice and without re-thinking its values for the society I live in."

Elena Rykova, Pablo Vergara, and Toshio Hosokawa all agree on the need to seek silence, take a breath, rethink themselves as composers in their social contexts, and shape all of this in the new scores they are working on. All three recognize that rethinking is not easy, but it is, as well, a hope in these difficult times. Creation, therefore, is an opening and a liberation. Space, as Gabriel Erkoreka pointed out in *Kaiolan*, is a form both of memory and projection of a utopia, something which Helmut Lachenmann affirms when he says: "Writing my music: trying to create

situations as a composer that could remind us that we are creatures gifted with spirit and creative energies that have been given to us to discover our possibilities and in order to open the prison of our aesthetic habits. And, by the way, to remember that each of us is approaching its end and therefore should enjoy life with all its beauties, adventures and challenges.”

A very similar wake-up call to composition as a way of reinventing ourselves and expanding our vision of the world is shared by Ramon Lazkano, when he affirms: “Our way of understanding our commitment to the world, exploring alternative imaginations, searching a meaning to existence that is both serene and provocative, is to resist; one more resistance, the notches subtly and secretly inlaid with blocking the wheelwork of oppressive trivialization. With the unexpected that emerged while I was wondering about desolation, I fueled the energy needed to fill up my staves.”

Despite his strong criticism, Beat Furrer also expresses one last glimpse of hope in his emails to us: “Global protests and marches feed a delicate hope for a new kind of solidarity. Let them find a common voice!” as Pierluigi Billone does: “I want to believe that somewhere a new beginning arises in some individuals. For sure, it will take time to appreciate this difference” and Toshio Hosokawa: “This experience would change my life a lot.”

To change our lives, to transform our societies, and to do it from and with music, even in our confinements! If Gabriel García Márquez entitled his 1985 novel *Love in the Time of Cholera*, in 2020 we spoke, in time of coronavirus, of the need to rethink composing as a human, sympathetic, and utopian process.

NOTE:

¹ O'Donovan, Heather: Music in the Time of Pandemic: Brilliant Compositions Written in the Years of the Spanish Influenza, WQXR Blog, April 22nd, 2020
www.wqxr.org/story/pandemic-music-spanish-1918-influenza/.

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Paco Yáñez
 (Santiago de Compostela, Spain, 1974)
 is a classical music critic,



specializing in contemporary music, as well as a novelist. His reviews are published in eight languages in different international magazines; his principal collaboration is with the Spanish web journal mundoclasico.com, where many of his interviews with renowned composers are available as well as his coverage of conferences on culture, arts and music. Poems by Paco Yáñez have been set to music by composers in Europe and the Americas.

Hong Kong Contemporary Music Festival 2020: Asian Delights

[Ed. Note: Although they were not about to presents concerts for a live audience this year, the Hong Kong Composers Guild, which is the ISCM HONG KONG SECTION, still managed to produce a festival this year with five events, two featuring soloists with electronics, two featuring unaccompanied vocal groups, and one involving a traditional Chinese instrument ensemble performing newly-created compositions. The events were streamed online for five consecutive weeks and they are still available to see and hear via YouTube. All in all, the Hong Kong Contemporary Music Festival 2020: Asian Delights presented a total of 25 compositions and 2 arrangements, including 8 world premieres of newly-commissioned works, by composers from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and Finland, involving musicians from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan. Below is a complete list of the programs with YouTube links and specific time-points for each piece. – FJO]

HONG KONG CONTEMPORARY MUSIC FESTIVAL: ASIAN DELIGHTS
香港當代音樂節：亞洲薈萃

online virtual concerts 網上音樂會

CHINESE ENSEMBLE CONCERT WITH CHAI FOUND MUSIC WORKSHOP
中樂合奏音樂會 — 采風樂坊
21.11.2020 | 8PM

COMPOSERS 作曲家
Cheng Cheng-nam Hippocorates 鄭成仁
Chris Hung 洪經綸
Leung Chi-chauing 梁志強
Pan Hoang-long 潘煥龍
Lenny Shuen 陳健輝
Tang Man-ngai 鄧文藝
Austin Yip 葉漢忠

PERFORMERS 演奏者
Chai Found Music Workshop 采風樂坊

a cappella concert WITH resonance and sregnie singers
無伴奏合唱音樂會 — 雷聲樂團與合唱俠
12.12 & 19.12.2020 | 8PM

COMPOSERS & ARRANGERS 作曲家及編曲家
Cheng Zen-in Michelle 鄭心恩
Lee Pui-shan Sandy 李佩珊
Leung Pak-hai 梁柏海
Ng Wah-hoi 吳華海
Pang Kwan 彭冠恩
Tam Chin-fai Samuel 譚陳子非
Tang Chau-yen 鄧卓恩
Viola Yuen 阮慧珊
Helen Yuweli 鄧宇威
Sakina Tjahjoevun 蘇 恩

PERFORMERS 演奏者
Resonance 雷聲樂團
Sregnie Singers 合唱俠

ELECTROACOUSTIC CONCERT WITH FLUTE AND VIOLIN
電子音樂會 — 長笛和小提琴
28.11 & 5.12.2020 | 8PM

COMPOSERS 作曲家
Au Tin-yung Alex 歐天恩
James Buzone 賈澤恩
Anthony Cheng 鄭汝海
Lee Cheng 鄭重立
Angus Lee 李一暉
Leung Ka-tung Tony 梁家禧
Yu Tzu-kong 余時強
Joji Yuasa 湯澤雄二
Kaiza Searaho

PERFORMERS 演奏者
Reiko Maruya (Flute) 關部千子 (長笛)
Patrick Yim (violin) 嚴天威 (小提琴)

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Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
Programme Enquiries 節目查詢: 2877 3982
Programme and artists are subject to change. 主辦機構保留更改節目及表演者權利

1. Chinese Ensemble Concert and Workshop (21 November 2020)

<https://youtu.be/IS0c-lwp4-Q>

Chai Foud Music Workshop (Taiwan)

Hippocrates Cheng (Hong Kong): *ling4-ling4-ling4* [starts at 00'54"]

Chris Hung (Hong Kong): *Bald Mountain · Echoed Sound* [starts at 08'50"]

Tang Man-ngai (Hong Kong): *Birds singing by the brook* [starts at 15'24"]

Leung Chi-cheung (Hong Kong): *Breakthrough* [starts at 23'00"]

Larry Shuen (Hong Kong): *Together as One We Breathe* * [starts at 29'04"]

Austin Yip (Hong Kong): *Here is Wind, There is Tree, But They Never Meet* *
[starts at 38'13"]

Pan Hwang-long (Taiwan): *Wandering in a Labyrinth* [starts at 47'13"]

2. Electroacoustic Concert with Violin (28 November 2020)

<https://youtu.be/Ve2x2cqSINU>

Patrick Yim (Hong Kong), Violin

Leung Ka-tung Tony (Hong Kong): *Lunar Luminance* [starts at 01'00"]

Au Tin-yung Alex (Hong Kong): *Self-talk* * [starts at 09'55"]

Kaija Saariaho (Finland): *Frises*: I. Frise jaune, II. Frise de fleurs [starts at 19'09"]

Angus Lee (Hong Kong): *Palimpsest* [Lapsus memoriae VIII] * [starts at 29'09"]

3. Electroacoustic Concert with Flute (5 December 2020)

https://youtu.be/XqpEgizl_ZQ

Reiko Manabe (Japan), flute

James Boznos (Hong Kong): *Zoon* [starts at 1'07"]

Anthony Cheng (Hong Kong): *Hybridity I* * [starts at 10'35"]

Joji Yuasa (Japan): *Domain* [starts at 19'20"]

Yu Tsz-long (Hong Kong): *Torrent* [starts at 29'09"]

Lee Cheng (Hong Kong): *Shanshui* * [starts at 38'33"]

4. A Cappella concert (12 December 2020)

<https://youtu.be/9bBqsYsxiDM>

Resonance (Taiwan)

Tam Chin-fai Samuel (Hong Kong): *Qiang Jin Jiu* * [starts at 02'14"]

Sakinu Tjakisuvun (arranger) (Taiwan): *Sigh of not being with you*
[starts at 09'14"]

Cheng Zen-in Michelle (Hong Kong): *Anyone here?* [starts at 15'08"]

Hsieh Yu-wai (Taiwan): *Alone* [starts at 20'14"]

Leung Pak-hei (Hong Kong): *Rain Fragments* [starts at 26'39"]

Sakinu Tjakisuvun (arranger) (Taiwan): *Song of Puyuma* [starts at 33'28"]

5. Unaccompanied Choral Concert (19 December 2020)

<https://youtu.be/Plrkg3r4zLs>

The Sregnis Singers (Hong Kong)

Pang Kwan Kevin (Hong Kong): *Ave Maria* [starts at 00'57"]

Viola Yuen (Hong Kong): *A Way Out...* [starts at 07'18"]

Ng Wah-hei (Hong Kong): *Winter* * [starts at 12'30"]

Tang Chak-yan (Hong Kong): *Stroll* [starts at 18'31"]

Lee Pui-shan Sandy (Hong Kong): *One Step* [starts at 25'39"]

* Commissioned work

John Davis Leaves Australian Music Centre after 32 years

By Glenda Keam



Photo by Anna Dorota Władyczka

The ISCM has been alerted to the resignation of John Davis from his position of CEO of the Australian Music Centre (AMC). Over 32 years working for the organization, the last 25 of which he held the position of CEO, John has actively facilitated transformation and fostered strength in the new music sectors across Australia and internationally.

In announcing his resignation, the AMC Board notes John’s contribution to the organization’s “excellent shape” and healthy financial position, and his support and promotion of the “diversity and richness of Australian music”. We wish to join the AMC staff in acknowledging John’s “natural curiosity and rare people skills” that have contributed to his initiation and development of many strong music

relationships with and between composers, performers, ensembles, festival directors, researchers, music networks, and arts organizations. As a person he has demonstrated many times his deep kindness, wisdom, and trustworthiness; as a leader he has demonstrated great insight, vision, a listening ear, and a commitment on a daily basis.

The ISCM enjoyed many years of far-sighted contribution from John, particularly during the five years he was ISCM President (2008-2013), during which he spearheaded some substantial changes and very healthy growth, reaching out to a more diverse range of members and encouraging wider stylistic inclusiveness. Many of us in the ISCM have benefited from John's wisdom and thoughtfulness; certainly I personally feel a deep gratitude to him for his timely and positive mentorship over many years, and his very generous friendship.

We look forward with curiosity to finding out what new projects and ventures he will be drawn towards.

###

ISCM President **Glenda Keam** is a composer, music analyst, lecturer, educational



leader, new music advocate, and festival organiser. Glenda lectured in Music at the University of Auckland from 1995-2006, and was Senior Lecturer and inaugural Programme Director for Music at Unitec, Auckland from 2006-2013. From 2013 to 2020, she served as Associate Professor and Head of Music at the University of Canterbury. Glenda co-edited the 2011 Pearson publication, *Home, Land and Sea: Situating Music in Aotearoa New Zealand*, which included her chapter "Attachments to place: locative aspects of New Zealand art music." Glenda's musical compositions have been performed in Australasia, the US, Canada and the UK. In 2019, she was elected first female President of the ISCM, and in December 2020, she was appointed a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit "for services to music and music education."

Introducing the ISCM Virtual Collaborative Series

By Irina Hasnaş



The COVID-19 pandemic has made online activity more crucial than ever before by hindering numerous live events, many concerts included. Now is the right time to strengthen the online presence of contemporary music!

The goal of the ISCM Virtual Collaborative Series is to foster presence and coverage of contemporary music online via the ISCM website and social media. We should not bear with just being overshadowed by popular and commercial music. Instead, let's tease and entertain an audience looking for a new musical experience into getting acquainted with the best contemporary music available.

We hope that our project will, in its small way, help to motivate accessible discussions online, keeping our community more engaged. We also hope that our showcases will build bridges between different types of contemporary music, composed and performed in various regions of the world.

We look forward to making available internet-wide all this exciting music and to nurturing a new audience for it!

###

Irina Hasnaş studied in Bucharest at the Academy of Music "Ciprian Porumbescu" at the Composition Department with Aurel Stroe, Stefan Niculescu, Alexandru Pascanu, Nicolae Beloiu - all composers belonging to the generation who founded the idea of the national musical school in the Romanian and international cultural space. Irina has served as editor for Romanian National Radio since 1987. She has been a member of ISCM ExCom since 2019.



ISCM Virtual Collaborative Series Repertoire Since Launching in November 2020

Petra Strahovnik (b. 1986, Slovenia):

Prana for orchestra (2018)

[Submitted by ISCM – NETHERLANDS SECTION]

Tomi Räisänen (b. 1976, Finland):

L'homme armé for saxophone and two percussionists (2003/2010/2020)

[Submitted by ISCM – FINNISH SECTION]

Franz Martin Olbrisch (b. 1952, Germany):

Schichtwechsel - radio installation (2008)

[Submitted by ISCM – GERMAN SECTION]

Manuela Kerer (b. 1980, Italy):

Gletscherquartett for string quartet (2018)

[Submitted by ISCM – AUSTRIAN SECTION]

Adrian Iorgulescu (b. 1951, Romania):

Retorts for flute and piano (2018)

[Submitted by ISCM – ROMANIAN SECTION]

Klaus Huber (1924–2017, Switzerland [ISCM Honorary Member]):

Tenebrae for large orchestra (1966-67)

[Submitted by ISCM – SWISS SECTION]

Alicja Gronau (b. 1957):

Multidram for soprano, clarinet/bass clarinet, string quartet, double bass, and
Yamaha Disklavier (2016)

[Submitted by ISCM – POLISH SECTION]

Isabel Urrutia (b. 1967):

Haziak (*Seeds*) for “live” cello solo and an ensemble of digitized folk
instruments on support audio (2018)

[Submitted by Musikagileak]

Trevor Grahl (b. 1984, Canada):

Brennendes Geheimnis, novella for orchestra after Stefan Zweig (2019)

[Submitted by ISCM – NETHERLANDS SECTION]

João Madureira (b. 1971, Portugal):
Open Enclosure for flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello, and piano (2019)
[Submitted by ISCM – Portuguese Section]

Hui Ye (b. 1981, China):
‘it was so quiet that the pins dropped could be heard...’
- sound installation with mixed media (2011)
[Submitted by ISCM – AUSTRIAN SECTION]

Andris Dzenītis (b. 1978, Latvia):
Trataka.Point Noir for string quartet (2011)
[Submitted by ISCM – LATVIAN SECTION]

Ayal Adler (b. 1968, Israel):
Double Concerto for a Single Guitarist and Large Orchestra (2016)
[Submitted by ISCM – ISRAELI SECTION]

Cecilia Ardito (b. 1966, Argentina):
Tissue for orchestra (2019)
[Submitted by ISCM – NETHERLANDS SECTION]

Sarah Nemtsov (b. 1980, Germany):
Seven Colours for amplified ensemble (2018)
[Submitted by ISCM – GERMAN SECTION]

[Ed. note: All ISCM Sections and Associate Member Organizations in good standing are invited to submit up to 6 works by composers in their region to be considered for inclusion in this newly launched ISCM Virtual Collaborative Series. There was a new work posted every day during the first week of the launch and thereafter new works have been posted twice per week.

All of the works can be accessed via www.iscm.org/iscm-activities/collaborative-events/iscm-virtual-collaborative-series-2020/ and are being promoted via www.facebook.com/hashtag/iscmvirtualcollaborativeseries. Many additional works will be posted in 2021.]

