



MAKI NAMEKAWA · DENNIS RUSSELL DAVIES
TWO-PIANO WORKS OF SHOSTAKOVICH & STRAVINSKY



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2019, 4PM
TAUBE ATRIUM THEATER, SAN FRANCISCO



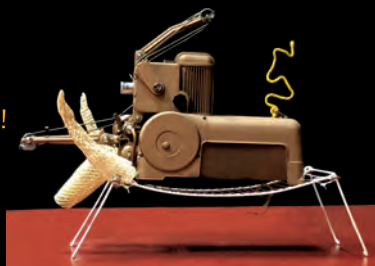
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The rich sonorities of multiple pianos hold a special place in music history. Whereas most orchestral instruments play one line at a time, a keyboard allows one player to essay melody, harmony, counterpoint, and rhythm to form a more nearly complete range of expression. In the case of the organ, the timbres approach orchestral proportions, with each stop representing another timbre. The pianoforte (literally, “soft-loud”) was a big step up in heft from the smaller projections of the virginal or harpsichord with their plucked strings, barely audible in a hall seating 3000.

But with emergence of the modern pianoforte, ca. 1867, all the heroism and sonic grandeur of a superhero, aka Franz Liszt, could inhabit vast reaches of big halls, and an entire category of concert artists was born. Adding a second instrument enlarges the resonance and intensity even more, and composers were eager to write for the combination, sometimes expanding into arrangements for four, eight or ten instruments for more sensational theatrics. (See Louis Moreau Gottschalk, the New Orleans-born eccentric, 1829-1869, whose monster concerts were popular in the U.S. and even Cuba.)

Ah, the piano. In the decades before every budding musician adopted the guitar, the instrument reigned supreme in the American household. In my childhood home in Fresno, my mother Eleanor played many times a week at night after her two kids had gone to bed, and it was a great joy for my sister Jane and me to be able to request selections by Brahms, MacDowell, Chopin or Mendelssohn as our lullaby for a given evening.

photo from the collection of Charles Amirkhonian



Our phonograph played us many things classical, from Mahler's Fourth Symphony to Hovhaness' *Mihr* for Two Pianos. But my favorite was a set of 78rpm discs devoted to the playing of Vitya Vronsky & Victor Babin, two Russian émigré players living in New Mexico who brilliantly recorded Rimsky-Korsakov's *Dance of the Tumblers*, and Stravinsky's *Circus Polka*. There was something undeniably bewitching about the swirl of excitement achieved in their arrangements and performances.



I had become familiar with the sonority of multiple pianos from concerts given at our local institution of higher learning, Fresno State College, where the Music Department had a class in Piano Ensemble, dating back to the Thirties. The idea was to train multiple players at the same time by massing in the same room four or more instruments and have them perform arrangements of Romantic tone poems or other symphonic repertoire with two or four players at each of the various keyboards. (At left from the 1937 *Campus* yearbook is an image of my mother alongside her fellow students alongside their imperious and fearsome teacher Miriam Fox Withrow, who brooked no nonsense and whose scowling disapproval could wilt a palm tree.)

Given my history, it's with special relish that I look forward to performances by our friends **Dennis Russell Davies** and **Maki Namekawa** who will introduce to San Francisco the rare arrangements we'll hear on tonight's program. Thanks to both for another inspiring appearance on our stage.



Charles Amirkhanian
Executive and Artistic Director
Other Minds

PIANISTS DENNIS RUSSELL DAVIES AND MAKI NAMEKAWA



photo by Andreas H. Bitesnich

TONIGHT'S PROGRAM

February 10, 2019 4:00pm
Taube Atrium Theater, San Francisco

Dennis Russell Davies and Maki Namekawa play
Two-Piano Works of Shostakovich and Stravinsky

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

Symphony of Psalms, arr. by Shostakovich

- I · Psalm 38, Exaudi orationem meam, Domine
- II · Psalm 39, Expectans expectavi, Dominum
- III · Psalm 150, Alleluia. Laudate Dominum

INTERMISSION

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

Symphony No. 4, Op. 43, arr. by Shostakovich

- I · Allegretto poco moderato
- II · Moderato con moto
- III · Largo-Allegro

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Other Minds Festival 24: Pitch Perfect**Concert 1 – Arditti Quartet Plays Wyschnegradsky**

Saturday, March 23, 2019, 8pm @ Taube Atrium Theater

Visionary composers are so often easily ignored by the changing currents of musical taste. Ivan Wyschnegradsky (1893-1979) led a life characterized by geographic and cultural isolation. His singular compositions reflect his personal and lifelong determination to honor his deeply idiosyncratic, microtonal muse. The Arditti String Quartet of London, champions of Wyschnegradsky's work, will perform his complete microtonal pieces for strings. They make a compelling case for Wyschnegradsky's quartets, exploiting the expressive capabilities inherent to strings. The expanded scalar and harmonic palettes, and variety of timbres lead the way to reforming a repertoire long confined to 12 equal-tempered tones.

**Concert 2 – Brian Baumbusch: The Pressure
Featuring the Lightbulb Ensemble & Friction Quartet**

Friday, June 15, 2019, 7:30pm, at YBCA Theater

For OM 24, Other Minds has commissioned California-based composer and instrument builder Brian Baumbusch to write a new evening-length work for instruments and tunings of his own devising. The work, entitled *The Pressure*, features more than 20 players including the composer's own Lightbulb Ensemble, a flexible group of 11 percussionists, along with the San Francisco-based Friction String Quartet, 2 keyboardists, four singers, and the composer as narrator. The music will explore the sound-palates of the mixed ensemble, ranging from the shimmering tones of his homemade gamelan to rich tonal palette of the strings.

Concert 3 – Wyschnegradsky: Music for Four Pianos in Quarter-Tones

Saturday, June 16, 2019, 7:30pm, at YBCA Theater

OM presents the first-ever American retrospective of the piano works of Ivan Wyschnegradsky. Charles Amirkhonian, who knew the composer, curated this program which featuring *Ainsi Parlait Zarathoustra*, a four-movement 30-minute work for four grand pianos, two of them tuned down a quarter-tone, and other works for piano ensemble. Martine Joste, director of the Wyschnegradsky Association in Paris, will perform the composer's solo piano pieces. She'll be joined by the piano duo HOCKET from Los Angeles, along with soloists Vicki Ray and Steven Vanhauwaert, conducted by Donald Crockett, in numerous American premieres.

For further details, visit otherminds.org.

Igor Stravinsky's Symphony of Psalms *arranged for two pianos by Dmitri Shostakovich*

To celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of The Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1930, music director Serge Koussevitsky commissioned Igor Stravinsky to compose the *Symphony of Psalms*. A work of his neoclassical period, the Symphony was originally written as a three-movement choral symphony with orchestra. The symphony derives its name from the use of psalm texts in the choral parts. In Stravinsky's words, "it is not a symphony in which I have included *Psalms* to be sung. On the contrary, it is the singing of the *Psalms* that I am symphonizing." This evening it is played in Shostakovich's two piano arrangement (*without voices*).

According to Stravinsky, the commission for the work came about from "a routine suggestion" from Koussevitzky, who was also Stravinsky's publisher, that he compose something "popular" for orchestra without chorus. Stravinsky, however, insisted on the psalm-symphony idea which he had had in mind for some time.

Substantial portions of the piece were written in fugal counterpoint, used widely in the sacred music of the Renaissance and Baroque periods to portray the serious and religious nature of the text. The original version was composed for chorus and orchestra without the customary violins, violas, and clarinets, giving the orchestra an unusually cool and dark caste. In the version for two pianos, the musical architecture and the rigorous contrapuntal and fugal writing are without orchestral coloring and as such, are naked for all to hear.

The transcription of *Psalms* was written for Shostakovich's composition students at the Leningrad Conservatory but was never publicly performed during his lifetime. It joins other examples of pianized Stravinsky: *The Firebird*, *Pétroushka*, *Les Noces*, and *The Rite of Spring*, works otherwise unavailable in the years before modern recordings.

Shostakovich made his four-hand piano arrangement of Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* shortly after its composition in 1930. He thought well enough of his transcription that he personally presented the manuscript to Stravinsky during his historic 1962 visit to the Soviet Union. Shostakovich's arrangement reflects his admiration for the work in that it succeeds in preserving both the ecclesiastic ambiance and choral textures

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Igor Stravinsky, 1920s

Photo © George Grantham Bain Collection (Library of Congress)

Dmitri Dmitriyevich Shostakovich, 1959

Photo by Ida Kar, © National Portrait Gallery, London



of the original. From contemporary accounts, Stravinsky's reception of the score was tepid at best. Shostakovich's relationship with Stravinsky could be termed as deeply ambivalent and thorny. In his own words, "Stravinsky the composer I worship. Stravinsky the thinker I despise."

— Randall Wong

Shostakovich's Fourth Symphony
arranged for two pianos by the composer

There are many examples of major symphonies having complicated premieres but none are more intriguing than the purgatory to which Shostakovich's Fourth Symphony was sentenced back in 1936.

To say his work, which was composed in 1936 when the composer was 30 years old, met with official disapproval would be an understatement. In his novel *The Noise of Time*, Julian Barnes attempted to capture and portray the horrifying conditions of Shostakovich's life in 1936. The truth is much better served with the hard facts in Elizabeth Wilson's wonderful biography *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered* or with stark dramatic action in Oliver Becker and Katharina Bruner's film *Into the Cold Dawn*.

The stage was set with the grand success that Shostakovich experienced in 1934 with his opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. It was an unqualified success until it was infamously denounced by Stalin himself in early 1936. It is generally accepted nowadays that the fear that was implanted in Shostakovich at that moment was the principle reason for the withdrawal of his Fourth Symphony. This grotesquely choreographed dance with the authorities, which defined much of the composer's artistic life, really began with the *Pravda* condemnation of *Lady Macbeth* and the charade around the premiere of the Fourth Symphony.

In a very basic way it was obvious what the authorities wanted from the Fourth Symphony. As was almost always the case, what the authorities demanded was a work that espoused the "Social Realism" that Shostakovich so cleverly gave them in his Fifth Symphony. However, what the composer, the orchestra, and the Soviet Composers Union discovered during the rehearsals in Leningrad of the Fourth Symphony was that its gnarled, morbid and terrifying grandiosity would simply not pass muster and would undoubtedly meet with official condemnation. After the *Pravda* episode, Shostakovich could not afford another

accusation of “Formalism.” Such a failure could, without exaggeration, be tantamount to a death sentence.

There are various accounts blaming the conductor Fritz Stiedry for a number of bad rehearsals of the work. Those accounts seem to be contradicted or supported by musicians in the orchestra. What we do know is that at one point during the rehearsals Shostakovich and the director of the Leningrad Philharmonic I.M. Renzin were summoned to a closed-door meeting at the Soviet Composers Union. After that meeting it was “decided” that the premiere would not go forward.

Adding to the mystery behind this tale is that in advance of the premiere, the symphony had been played by Shostakovich on one piano for people including Otto Klemperer who declared that he would be programming it himself in future seasons. After the *Pravda* review, and after the rehearsals for the Fourth took place, Shostakovich wisely fell on his own sword by simply stating that the symphony needed to be reworked to be playable. Ironically, when the work finally did have its premiere almost a quarter century later in December 1961, not a note had been changed.

Furthermore, in the intervening years between 1936 and 1961 the full score to Symphony No.4 had been lost. The piece ended up in the hands of the conductor Alexander Gauk. It’s believed that Gauk lost the manuscript in a suitcase during World War II (along with the manuscripts for Symphonies Nos. 5 and 6 as well). Other people believe that the scores were burned for heat during the Siege of Leningrad, the most desperate and destructive episode of World War II. The possibility does remain that the manuscripts still exist locked away in some archive but they have yet to be rediscovered. In the meantime, with his Fourth Symphony in purgatory for decades, the music only existed in the orchestral parts that had been used in rehearsals (thankfully saved), and Shostakovich’s own arrangement heard here for two pianos. From these two sources the piece was reconstructed and given its premiere in Moscow on December 30, 1961 under Kirill Kondrashin.

SHOSTAKOVICH'S *LADY MACBETH OF MTSENSK* WAS AN UNQUALIFIED SUCCESS UNTIL IT WAS INFAMOUSLY DENOUNCED BY STALIN HIMSELF IN EARLY 1936. THE FEAR THAT WAS IMPLANTED IN SHOSTAKOVICH AT THAT MOMENT WAS THE PRINCIPLE REASON FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF HIS FOURTH SYMPHONY.

The Symphony is an unknown treasure of the two-piano repertoire. Much of this has to do with the scandal around its non-premiere, but also in 1945 after Shostakovich and Moisey Vainberg performed the piece privately, and



Dmitri Shostakovich, 1958
Lev Ivanov/RIA Novosti



Dmitri Shostakovich, 1925

only 300 copies of the two-piano version were printed. It wasn't until 1960, when Shostakovich and Boris Tishchenko performed the piece in the two-piano version, that it was heard publicly for the first time.

In 1961, Symphony No.4 had its orchestral premiere. It would be another 39 years before the two-piano version was officially published, perhaps the principle reason for it not being better known. Cast aside in 1936, officially banned in 1948, the Symphony has survived to this day through sheer luck. Indeed, in all its versions Symphony No. 4 has a very checkered past.

The Fourth Symphony is a terrifying piece in a most honest way. It was initially thought to be too grandiose, but in fact portends the scale and grandeur of Shostakovich's later symphonies. The music itself is grand and tragic even when the orchestra is removed from the equation. Shorn of orchestral coloring the dissonances take on a more acerbic, edgy quality. At the end of Symphony No. 4, we are left with a morbid somberness that documents the actual reality in which the composer lived. It does so in a way that nothing besides music could attempt to do.

Wave upon wave of ups and downs faced Shostakovich's life as a creative artist. The story behind the symphony and its suppression, triumph, and final acceptance is inextricably linked to the condemnation of his opera. During these tumultuous years of Shostakovich's life, the authorities wanted art and music which portrayed the Triumph of Socialist Realism; they finally received it when Shostakovich gave the world his Fifth Symphony. Without the artistic miscalculation of the Fourth, we would never have gotten the Fifth Symphony. Trial, suffering, and bitter triumph. That, in a nutshell, is the story of the life of Dmitri Shostakovich.

— Richard Guérin and Randall Wong



photo by Andreas H. Bitesnich

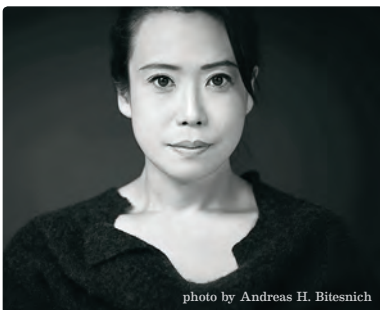


photo by Andreas H. Bitesnich

Pianist Maki Namekawa and conductor Dennis Russell Davies (backstage husband and wife) have been performing as a piano duo since 2003, with numerous appearances at the Piano Festival Ruhr in Germany, Ars Electronica Linz, and Other Minds Festival in San Francisco.

Their extensive recorded repertoire includes Philip Glass' *Four Movements for Two Pianos* (composed for them by Glass and commissioned for them by the Piano Festival Ruhr), the piano four-hands versions of Stravinsky's *The Firebird*, *Pétrouchka*, and *The Rite of Spring*, Zemlinsky's four-hand arrangement of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, Beethoven's *Fidelio*, and Haydn's *The Seasons* and *The Creation*. In 2015 the Namekawa-Davies Duo was awarded the Piano Festival Ruhr Prize together with composer Philip Glass for their lasting contributions to the Festival and the two-piano repertoire.

Maki Namekawa is a leading figure among today's pianists, bringing to audiences' attention to contemporary music by international composers. As a soloist and a chamber musician equally at home in classical and contemporary repertoire, Maki Namekawa performs regularly at international venues such as Suntory Hall Tokyo, Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center New York, Davies Symphony Hall San Francisco, Barbican Centre and Cadogan Hall London, Cité de la Musique Paris, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Salzburg Festival, Ars Electronica Linz, the ZKM Karlsruhe, and the Ruhr Piano Festival. She performs and records frequently for the major German radio networks in Munich, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Cologne, Saarbrücken, Musik Biennale Berlin, Rheigau Music Festival and Ruhr Piano Festival.

Maki Namekawa records and performs frequently for major radio networks in Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and France. Orchestra engagements include the Royal Concertgebouw Orkest Amsterdam, Münchner Philharmoniker, Bamberger Symphoniker, Dresdner Philharmonie, Bruckner Orchester Linz, American Composers Orchestra, and Seattle Symphony.

In 2013 she performed the world premiere of the entire cycle of Philip Glass' 20 Etudes for Solo Piano at the Perth International Arts Festival with the participation of Glass himself followed by concerts in 13 countries. Maki Namekawa studied piano at the Kunitachi Conservatory with Mikio Ikezawa and Henriette Puig-Roget. In 1994 she won the Leonid-Kreuzer-Price. In 1995 she continued her studies with Werner Genuit and Kaya Han at Musikhochschule Karlsruhe, where she completed her diploma as a soloist with special distinction.

The year 2018 will mark 49 seasons that **Dennis Russell Davies** has held music directorships of prestigious international orchestras, while frequently guest conducting with major orchestras and opera companies worldwide. As Music Director and Chief Conductor of the Bruckner Orchester Linz and of the Linz Opera, he presided over the opening of the new Linz Opera House in April 2013, conducting the world premiere of Philip Glass' opera *The Lost*, commissioned for the occasion. He has served as Music Director and Chief Conductor of the Basel Symphony Orchestra, Chief Conductor of the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, Brooklyn Philharmonic, Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra and Beethovenhalle Orchestra, and as Music Director of Orchestre Français de Jeunes, St Paul Chamber Orchestra, Norwalk Symphony Orchestra, Stuttgart State Opera, Bonn Opera, International Classical Music Program of the Philadelphia at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center.

Davies has worked with major orchestras and opera companies around the world, including the Cleveland and Philadelphia Orchestras, San Francisco and Boston Symphonies, the New York Philharmonic, and the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony on tour. In Europe he has worked with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Dresden and Munich Philharmonics, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Accademia of Santa Cecilia Roma, Filharmonica della Scala Milan, Spanish National Orchestra, St. Petersburg Philharmonic and Bamberg Symphony.

Throughout his extensive career, Davies has been the music director/conductor for major opera productions in prestigious venues worldwide in Bayreuth, Chicago, Houston, Lisbon, Madrid, Paris, Salzburg, Vienna, the Niki Kai Opera in Tokyo, and at the Metropolitan Opera.

Dennis Russell Davies was born in Toledo, OH and studied piano and conducting at the Juilliard School, New York. He is Professor Emeritus of Orchestral Conducting at Salzburg's Mozarteum, a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the French Ministry of Culture has appointed him "Commandeur des Arts et Lettres" and in 2017 Davies received the *Österreichische Ehrenkreuz für Wissenschaft und Kunst 1. Klasse* from the Austrian Government.

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MARCH 8, 2019 – ASHLEY BELLOUIN & BEN BRACKEN | GABRIEL MINDEL SALDMAN
MAY 2, 2019 – TONGUE DEPRESSOR | CASPAR SONNET & KOZUE MATSUMOTO

↑ otherminds.org/latitudes



otherminds.org/nature-of-music ↓

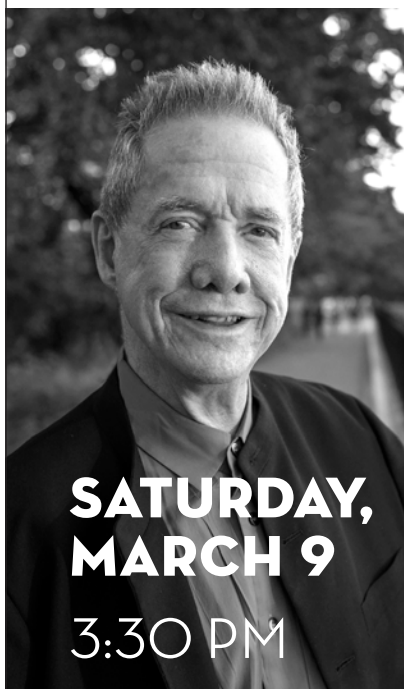
MATTHEW BURTNER: GLACIAL MUSIC
ECOACOUSTIC WORKS FOR INSTRUMENTS & ICECAPS

THE NATURE OF MUSIC

A CO-PRESENTATION OF OTHER MINDS & THE DAVID BROWER CENTER

SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 2019, 7:30PM
GOLDMAN THEATER, 2150 ALLSTON WAY, BERKELEY

THOMAS BUCKNER



**SATURDAY,
MARCH 9**
3:30 PM

Joseph Kubera - *Piano*

William Winant - *Percussion
and Vibraphone*

Melanie Genin - *Harp*

James Ilgenfritz - *Bass*

Program

MICHAEL BYRON

Tenderness in Late Afternoon Light
(poem by Anne Tardow)

VOICE AND PIANO

STEED COWART

[where the late sweet] *BIRDS SANG*
(poem by Stephen Ratcliffe)

VOICE AND PERCUSSION

CHRISTIAN DACHEZ

Stimmen
(poem by Rainer Maria Rilke)

VOICE, HARP AND VIBRAPHONE

JAMES ILGENFRITZ

Apophenia IV: A Bell on Every Finger
(poem by Steve Dalachinsky)

VOICE, PIANO, PERCUSSION AND BASS

ROSCOE MITCHELL

because it's, this, and dim
(poems by E. E. Cummings)

VOICE AND PIANO

CHRISTIAN DACHEZ

Vers toi les étoiles

SOLO HARP

ST. JOHN'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

2727 COLLEGE AVENUE, BERKELEY

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ARDITTI QUARTET • FRICTION QUARTET

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