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INTERNATIONAL
CONTEMPORARY
ENSEMBLE
DIGITAL PREMIERE



COMPOSER PORTRAITS: IRANIAN FEMALE COMPOSERS ASSOCIATION (IFCA)

Performed in Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival at the
Bruno Walter Auditorium, New York Public Library for the
Performing Arts on August 5, 2019



When Niloufar Nourbakhsh decided to fully dedicate herself to a lifetime of composition, she found few mentors to look up to in Iran. After moving to the US, she discovered many other Iranian female composers working throughout the world and eventually connected with Anahita Abbasi and Aida Shirazi, forming IFCA in 2017. IFCA acts as a platform to support, promote, and celebrate Iranian women in music through concerts, public performances, installations, interdisciplinary collaborations, and workshops.

The association was established in an entirely virtual space, which has resulted in a welcoming network, a site of connection and community. Those relationships are heard with this program curated by Aida, Anahita, and Niloufar as a three-part event featuring a documentary portrait video of each founding member, one of their works, followed by a work by another IFCA member.

PROGRAM

Niloufar Nourbakhsh: Firing Squad

Shiva Feshareki: Venus/Zohre

Aida Shirazi: longing for a
distant memory

Bahar Royaei: Tombstone*

Farzia Fallah: ...und dann
befreit..?

Anahita Abbasi: Seven Impressions

**Not in broadcast.*

Can be viewed at www.vimeo.com/iceorg.

PERFORMERS

Alice Teyssier, voice

Christa Robinson, oboe

Joshua Rubin, clarinet

Campbell MacDonald, clarinet

Rebekah Heller, bassoon

Ryan Muncy, saxophone

Ross Karre, percussion

Josh Modney, violin

Michelle Ross, violin

Kyle Armbrust, viola

Kivie Cahn-Lipman, cello

Maciej Lewandowski, fixed media





Niloufar Nourbakhsh: Firing Squad

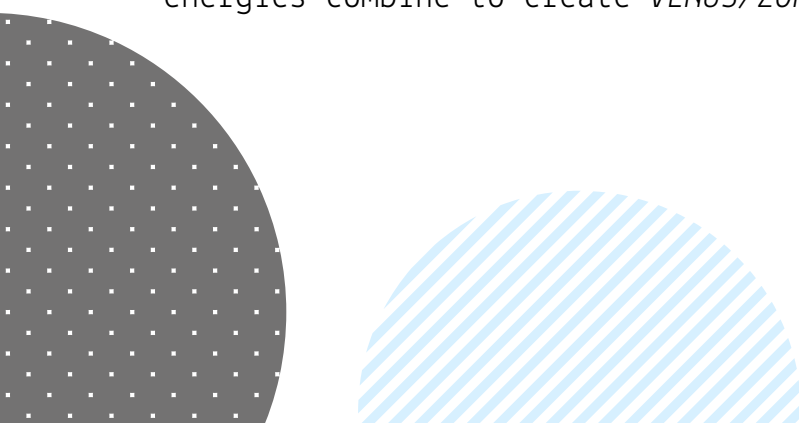
"Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendía was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice."

— *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

The compelling opening of Gabriel García Márquez's masterpiece, constructs an intense moment of reflection on the past by digging into a childhood memory while facing a firing squad: his first encounter with ice. The technique of constructing such an intense moment that is reflecting on the past was uniquely inspiring to me. *Firing Squad* is structurally inspired by this sentence, exploring the intense moment of confronting death and expanding the moment into all possible feelings and memories one might go through before saying farewell to life.

Shiva Feshareki: Venus/Zohreh

VENUS/ZOHREH is one exponential crescendo in volume, intensity, speed, and pitch exposure. Within this expansion a rich array of direct expression is exposed. After collaboration with the Venus expert and geologist Dr Philippa Mason (envision mission 2029), the composition was crafted using the same methods used to extrapolate information about Venus through what we know about Earth. The emotional journey behind the piece is inspired by my mother, Zohreh. Zohreh in the Persian language translates to Venus, or 'the morning star'. Therefore, the scientific journey behind the composition is forged through the collaboration with Dr Mason, and the spiritual journey is from my mother Zohreh. These energies combine to create *VENUS/ZOHREH*.



Aida Shirazi: longing for a distant memory


longing for a distant memory... is about the vague memory of a piece I had heard once in my childhood. I forgot most of the piece, but fragments of it remained in my mind and I would hum them every now and then. Years later, I happened to find the recording of the piece. It came as no surprise that my version of the piece, which was mainly the result of guessing, imagination and filling the gaps, was dramatically different from its original version. *longing for a distant memory...* is an imitation of the process I had used to preserve and restore the melody of the piece I heard as a child. I am fascinated by the phenomenon of "filling the gaps," especially when memory falls short of recollecting an aural or visual event, and imagination takes over. Where is the border between imagination and memory if there is any? How conscious, controlled and creative are our choices when the process of "filling the gaps" is essentially a desire to reach a distant memory?

Bahar Royae: Tombstone*

سنگی برای سیمین
... و مرگ را کودکی دیدم .
سراسیمه
که میگریزد از مرگ
(یدال رویایی ، هفتاد سنگ قبر)

A tombstone for Simin:
...and I saw the "death," like a child,
frightened,
running away from the death
(Yadollah Royae, Seventy Tombstones)

*Not in broadcast
Can be viewed at www.vimeo.com/iceorg.
Check out ICEensemble's world premiere
performance of Royae's new work at
Time:Spans Festival this August.

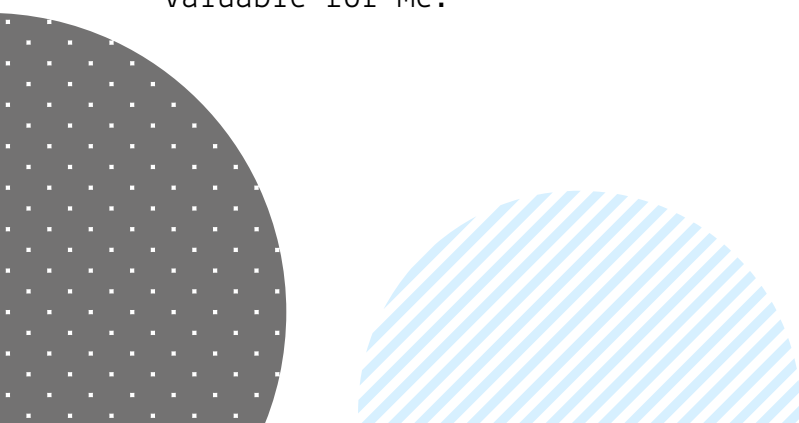


(Bahar Royae: *Tombstone* continued)

There are sounds in the horizon. They are far, yet so close; They are known-unknown sounds: So intimate to the instrument to be known yet so reserved to be perceived by us. There are sounds in the horizon; and in the horizon of sound there is silenced noise. *Tombstone* is about Death as a child, who runs away from herself. It tries to deconstruct that noise with the viola's "known-unknown" timbres, and reconstruct the horizon with repetition, embracement of the body and deployment of errors. *Tombstone* is made economical by its materials. In each movement, the piece develops specific timbres through repetition. The repetitions are in gestures. Repetition of accents in all three movements are there to rebuild. The repetition is not there just to repeat, but to morph and re-shape. The gesture repeats to awake the visceral sounds of the body, the instrument's body. There is death; running away in the horizon, in the vibration, in the space; running away from itself (the known-unknown).

Farzia Fallah: ...und dann befreit..?

I composed this piece (*... and then free ...?*) almost 10 years ago. I worked on it in many intense and long working periods, and it took a lot of time, till I could finish it. I was searching for a way to become free, not only in the musical context of the piece, but also in everyday life. Eventually, I finished the piece after more than a year working on it, although I was still not sure about the end of it. It's now a great feeling, looking back and discovering that I did reach something valuable for me.



Anahita Abbasi: Seven Impressions

"The only journey is the one within" by Rainer Maria Rilke
Seven Impressions is an observation of an inner pilgrimage. A journey of thoughts and various stages of emotions in search of oneself. Overcoming the obstacles from the internal and external world is not easy, but we are all seeking to find the truth of divine love and knowledge through a personal experience. As Rumi said: "it is a way to the heart of hearts, to the utmost direct intense experience of one's sacred identity." The seven sections/impressions in this piece are based on and inspired by Ritual ceremonies in Mithraism.

NILOUFAR NOURBAKHSH

Described as "stark" by WNPR and "darkly lyrical" by the New York Times, a winner of 2nd Hildegard competition and a recipient of 2019 Opera America Discovery Grant, Niloufar Nourbakhsh's music has been commissioned and performed by numerous ensembles at venues such as Carnegie Hall and Washington Kennedy Center and Lincoln Center. A founding member and co-director of Iranian Female Composers Association, Nilou is a strong advocate of music education. She is currently teaching piano at Brooklyn Music School while finishing her doctorate at Stony Brook University. www.niloufarnourbakhsh.com

SHIVA FESHAREKI

Shiva Feshareki is an internationally acclaimed composer & turntablist, and NTS Radio DJ. Her diverse output explores acoustic, context perspective and the sound of electricity through wide ranging practices that incorporate classical craft and experimental methodology. In 2017, she was honoured with the British Composer Award for Innovation from BASCA. 2018 saw a host of stunning performances from Feshareki across Europe including at the Moscow Museum of Modern Art (VAC), BBC Proms and London Jazz Festival. Her solo turntable performances fuse together sonic palettes using hyperphysical manipulations and sampling techniques. Cuts from drum and bass, garage, gabber, deep minimalism and classical orchestral works are yielded to create complex live compositions that are as kinetic as they are delicate. Her compositional work for orchestra is equally transformative, exploring the physicality of sound in relation to light, sculpture and movement. Feshareki obtained a Doctorate of Music from the Royal College of Music and her experience as a researcher was central to her work on 'Still Point' by Daphne Oram (1949). www.shivafeshareki.co.uk

AIDA SHIRAZI

Born and raised in Tehran, Iran, Aida Shirazi is a composer of acoustic and electroacoustic music. Shirazi's music is described as "well-made" and "affecting" by *The New Yorker* and "unusually creative" by *San Francisco Classical Voice*. In her works for solo instruments, voice, ensemble, orchestra, and electronics she mainly focuses on timbre for organizing structures that are often inspired by Persian or English languages and literature, as well as Iranian classical music. Shirazi's music has been featured at festivals and concert series including Manifeste, Mostly Mozart, MATA, New Music Gathering, Direct Current, and Tehran Contemporary Music Festival in venues such as Maison de la Radio France, Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, National Sawdust, and the DiMenna Center. Her works are performed by Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Miranda Cuckson, International Contemporary Ensemble, Ensemble Dal Niente, Left Coast Chamber Ensemble, Emyrean Ensemble, and Bilkent Symphony Orchestra among others. Currently, She is a Ph.D. candidate of composition at the University of California, Davis and works with Mika Pelo. She has studied with Pablo Ortiz, Kurt Rohde, Yiğit Aydın, and Hooshyar Khayam, and attended masterclasses by Kaija Saariaho, Raphaël Cendo, Mark Andre, Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf, and Riccardo Piacentini among others. Shirazi will be attending the Cursus Program on Composition and Computer Music in the academic year 2020-21 at IRCAM, Paris. soundcloud.com/aida-shirazi

BAHAR ROYAEI

Born and raised in Iran, Bahar Royaei is a composer of concert and incidental music. In 2019 she received Pnea Projects prize to make an electroacoustic piece for Clair Chase's Density 2036 part vi. Recognized as runner-up in National Sawdust's 2018-19 Hildegard Competition, in 2017 Bahar was awarded from the Krourian Electroacoustic Competition in Iran, and won the Roger Sessions Memorial Composition Award - the top composition prize at Boston Conservatory. In the realm of concert music, Bahar's compositions have been performed worldwide, through various festivals including ICMC (NYC), Cortona (Italy), Banff (Canada), Splice Festival (USA), and Off Borders (Greece), among others. Her compositions, both acoustic and electronic, are a mixture of timbral and sound based atmospheric structures, interspersed with lyrical influences derived from her Iranian background(mostly Iranian lullabies). Bahar has studied with Dr. Marti Epstein and Dr. Felipe Lara. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in composition from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York where she studies under Suzzane Farrin and Jason Eckardt. Back in Iran, Bahar studied and was practicing electrical engineering. soundcloud.com/bahar-royaei

FARZIA FALLAH

Farzia Fallah was born in 1980 in Tehran (Iran) and grew up there in a literary environment. Since 2007 she has been living in Germany, where she studied Composition at the University of Arts Bremen (with Prof. Younghy Pagh-Paan and Prof. Jörg Birkenkötter) and at the University of Music and Dance in Cologne and University of Music in Freiburg (with Prof. Johannes Schöllhorn). The spectrum of her work includes solo pieces, chamber music and pieces for ensemble and for orchestra. She occasionally expands her works by using electronics and including video art. She is a member of Kollektiv3:6Koelen and has worked with Aventure, Mixtura, Musikfabrik, New Babylon, S201, Ensemble 20/21, Trio Abstrakt, and Hypercube Quartet, among others. In 2019 she was named the composer in residence at Künstlerhaus Lauenburg. soundcloud.com/farziafallah

ANAHITA ABBASI

Anahita Abbasi's music has been described by the Guardian and Classical Voice America as "adizzingly sophisticated reverie, colorful and energetic. It embodies tremendous timbralexploration and multilayered performance gestures." Her music has been commissioned and performed by distinguished soloists and ensembles such as M. Esfahani, Steven Schick, International Contemporary Ensemble, Ensemble Modern, Quatuor Diotima, Mivos Quartet, Schallfeld Ensemble and has been showcased frequently at numerous venues and festivals all around the world among which: Mostly Mozart Festival, The Kitchen, Kennedy Center, Lincoln center, Time Span (USA), Darmstadt Ferienkurse (Germany), Tectonics (Glasgow), Akademie der Künste (Berlin), Klangspuren Schwaz (Austria), Tongyeong International music festival (Korea), Ircam - Manifeste Academy (France), Sound State festival (London), Klang Festival (Copenhagen) among others. Ms. Abbasi was also nominated in 2017 as one of the "women composers of our time" alongside K. Saariaho and I. Mundry. Aside from teaching composition and giving workshops on fundamentals of creation, she is also a founding member of Schallfeld Ensemble in Graz, as well as IFCA (Iranian Female Composers Association) in NYC; where she is curating concerts, creating platforms and advocating for young composers and acts as their ambassadors in presenting their music to others. Anahita Abbasi (1985) a world citizen, was born and raised in Iran. In 2005 she moved to Austria and pursued her bachelor with C. Gadenstätter, B.Furrer and P. Billone; while working closely with G.Aperghis, F.Bedrossian and Ph. Leroux. Abbasi is currently residing in San Diego and finishing her Ph.D. under the supervision of Rand Steiger at the University of California San Diego. soundcloud.com/anahita-abbasi

INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY ENSEMBLE

The International Contemporary Ensemble is an artist collective that is transforming the way music is created and experienced. As performer, curator, and educator, the Ensemble explores how new music intersects with communities across the world. The Ensemble's 36 members are featured as soloists, chamber musicians, commissioners, and collaborators with the foremost musical artists of our time. Works by emerging composers have anchored the Ensemble's programming since its founding in 2001, and the group's recordings and digital platforms highlight the many voices that weave music's present.

OpenICE, made possible with lead funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, offers free concerts and interactive, educational programming wherever the Ensemble performs. As the Ensemble in Residence of the Nokia Bell Labs Experiments in Art and Technology, the International Contemporary Ensemble advances music technology and digital communications as an empowering tool for artists from all backgrounds. Curricular activities include a residency and coursework at the New School College of Performing Arts, along with a summer intensive program, called Ensemble Evolution, where topics of equity, diversity, and inclusion build new bridges and pathways for the future of creative sound practices. Yamaha Artist Services New York is the exclusive piano provider for the Ensemble. Read more at www.iceorg.org and watch over 350 videos of live performances and documentaries at www.digitice.org.

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Jennifer Schantz, Barbara G. and Lawrence A. Fleischman Executive Director
Evan Leslie, Artistic Producer of Public Programs
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CREDITS

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