Welcome/Introduction (Ross Karre & Jennifer Kessler)

- Ross Karre: My name is Ross Karre. I'm the Artistic Director and percussionist of the International Contemporary Ensemble. And I'm really excited that you all could join us tonight for this info session. This session is a follow up to our open forum where we had a q&a and feedback session about calls for proposals/scores.
  - We've had a long history of that kind of work in our ensemble. We're looking for new ways to make it more open, more inviting, and welcome as many people in as possible. So I'll talk more about our ideas behind that and welcome your continued feedback or questions. You can always send us an email at icicle@iceorg.org for sending the whole organization an email. I'm joined by a lot of my colleagues on the staff. Thank you all to them. Bridgid Bergin, Maciej Lewandowski, who co-produced a lot of these Tuesdays at seven series with me and with the members of the International Contemporary Ensemble, but also our General Manager Karla Brom, Eddy Kwon. And also, I want to introduce now to say a brief introduction is Jennifer Kessler.

- Jennifer Kessler: Thank you, Ross. Welcome, everybody. It is such a joy to see all of you together here. And we're so excited to welcome all of you. In fact, I think we had so many people respond to this info session that we're offering a second info session. So we're really excited to see so much interest in this program.
  - I'm the Executive Director of the International Contemporary Ensemble and just wanted to give you a quick background for those of you who are new to the organization. The Ensemble is a collective of musicians, digital media, artists, producers, and educators who are committed to creating collaborations built on equity, belonging, and cultural responsiveness. We strive to cultivate a mosaic musical ecosystem that honors the diversity of human experience and expression by commissioning, developing, and performing the works of living artists. So we do a lot of different things. But this commissioning program is really central to who we are and working with composers. And not just composers but people who identify as sound artists and have a wealth of different expressions to work on new pieces of music together. This info session is about our annual call. We look forward to getting to know you.

Structure of Session

- Ross Karre: So the structure of today is really simple. I'm going to give a brief presentation about the history of our development of new works and open calls. And then I'm going to talk about a few example projects. And then we'll open it up to your questions.

History of Development of New Works & Open Calls (Ross Karre)

Note: a lot of our old initiatives that we had still have the old acronym of “ice”, but we are dissolving it.

- From 2010 to 2014, we started the most ambitious version of our commissioning project, which is called icelab, and invited six composers per year for four years each to create half a program or a whole program of works. It involved a lot of extensive workshops,
sound laboratories, recording sessions, and media creation. All along the way, the project built our digitice.org archive, which helps us to commit to not only developing new works and performing those works at various stages around the world, but also recording and documenting them for posterity in our archive, so you can check out that archive at www.digitice.org.

- As we moved from the icelab program to openice – which was to invite the audience into our process – we also kept the commissioning program going and commissioned on average four projects per year, with the exception of 2016. In 2016 we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Mostly Mozart Festival where we commissioned 50 pieces that were performed over the course of that summer's festival at Lincoln Center.
- Along the way, we started this new concept called icecommons.org, which is currently under construction, but continues in spirit. The concept was that artists could submit work samples not necessarily for a new commission. But for us to play existing works and to become aware of existing works. That project still continues and has a lot of different manifestations. We're hoping to partner with a few organizations to bring the website back in a more robust and reliable way.
- As we took feedback for how the icecommons.org project was unfolding this last fall, we came up with ideas for the “call for ____.” Originally, that was a kind of playful title, we thought this would be a way to sort of prompt for people to think of what that blank could be filled in with as we were designing the q&a forum in the fall to see what the project would be. And it stuck. We liked the name, we liked the openness. And that's indeed what we're trying to evolve in our organization is more openness, more of an inviting quality so we can become more of a resource to artists, with artists for artists in the coming years in our third decade (we're turning 20 this next fall!).
- So that history is now sort of coalescing into a broad umbrella, which we're calling our invitation to collaborate. We're trying to make it not just call for scores, commission type programs, open calls, but instead our “call for ____” which is what we're talking about today. What we'll talk about in February and March is Ensemble Evolution and digitice studios.
  - **Ensemble Evolution** is a Summer Intensive, which invites performers, composers and performer-composers to work together to create new projects from all over the world. Previously at the Banff Centre, now hosted by the New School’s College of Performing Arts.
  - **Digitice studios** is an extension of the spirit of Ensemble Evolution for the whole year. It's something we're going to be launching in the coming seasons and really deepening as we build a system that allows artists to find their process and realize it with the collaboration of our Ensemble in the organization.
  - There are many opportunities to collaborate with our organization. And so we invite you all, to join us not only for this call, but for all future endeavors, and ways of collaborating.

**Anecdotes/Previous Projects**
- I think that anecdotes are a good way to show what we have done and what it's possible for us how we can evolve those stories into the next iterations.
• Collaboration with Tyshawn Sorey
  ○ It starts mostly with the projects with individual members of the Ensemble, people like Cory Smythe (pianist), Josh Rubin (clarinetist), and Peter Evans (trumpeter).
  ○ When we invited Tyshawn to make projects with us for the icelab program, there were several workshops, and he composed four new works, which were premiered at Roulette, and several other works, which were premiered at Lincoln Center.
  ○ The collaboration continued, to create works like *Autoschediasms*, and his opera *Perle Noire*. So most of the projects through the icelab program have resulted in continuing collaborations and friendships and really meaningful connections with artists that will last our lifetimes. That's something that happens at small and large scales. So Tyshawn composed a brass quartet and percussion piece, with guitar, as well as a duet for himself and Jennifer Curtis, but also a full scale chamber opera of 70 minutes long, which has been performed on various stages. **So this scale, possibilities in our collaborations are all over the place. And we welcome that.**

• Bergrun Snaebjornsdottir - icecommons AiR
  ○ We performed three of her works that were submitted to the icecommons.org database: *Drive Theory* at Nordic Music days; *Areolae Undant* at Abrons Art Center; and *Esoteric Mass* at Lincoln Center.
  ○ Her newest work is commissioned through our icecommons air program which is similar to the program we're speaking about tonight. It’s a little bit delayed but will premiere at Dark Music Days in the coming months.

• Exclusive/Or - Sam Pluta & Jeff Snyder
  ○ We want to make sure that small collectives are also welcome to submit work samples and apply for this project.
  ○ Exclusive/Or composed a piece for brass, percussion and electronics. That piece evolved and became its final form which is released on an album with Architeuthis Walks on Land, which is Amy Cimini and Katie Young's project.

• Projects tend to evolve in organization, sometimes they expand, sometimes they scale down, they go from large ensemble to solo with electronics and vice versa. That's something you can also imagine in collaborations with our organization – projects that have yet to be premiered.

• Kate Gentile
  ○ Here’s an idea of a sequence which commissions can experience – Kate Gentile Kate has written a piece for septet, where she plays drums and the six members of the International Contemporary Ensemble play with her. We recorded it in the kind of quarantine style. So each person layered their own track on top of another as a way of workshopping the piece. That happened over the course of April and May of 2020. Each person recording in their own bedroom or studio or whatever was at hand. And then she layered that in post production in Pro Tools. She has now basically a half album length of material that she’s using to help revise her
work, and to write two new movements, which will be recorded, along with the entire set of works in April at Oktaven Audio.

- **What starts as an idea becomes a conversation** between Kate after she submitted her project. The panel selected her, she talked with our Ensemble about what the kind of scale would be, who's interested in this kind of working relationship and style, and we assembled that group to record it sequentially. And now we'll assemble in person when it's safe to do so at Oktaven Audio. As soon as April of 2021 we will release that album on Bandcamp or maybe with a label partnership, that's to be determined.

- That kind of sequence of experiences is what we're hoping to do more and more and more, there's exploration, workshop performance, and also recording and archiving.

- **Murat Colak**

  - We paused progress on this project pretty significantly due to the pandemic at Murat's request. So that's another aspect of this – **we're really acknowledging the artists goals and not trying to force a project that really has an acoustic in person experience into the current sort of quarantine version of things, some projects scale well to that, and some projects don't.** So we're honoring the artists wishes. The current hope is that we'll continue some remote workshops and do a test recording in April 2021. We already have a beautiful score, you can see a little sample of that here. And we would hope to premiere that in December of 2021 in Zurich.

- So those are some samples of our history with this project of commissioning and developing new works. New works for our ensemble come in lots of different forms, especially in the environment of places like Ensemble Evolution, so stay tuned for an announcement about that.

**The Application**

*Ross Karre verbally talks through the webpage (English / Spanish) and application forms (English / Spanish)*

- One of our goals is that the form doesn't take very much time to answer. It's not asking for a substantial proposal, it's asking for work samples.

- Production scenographic lighting video instrument design support is also included as there are some instrument makers in the group and those who can create custom configurations of sounds.

- Performance of the work by members of the International Contemporary Ensemble and its collaborators means that your project might involve you playing.

- Documentation in full multi camera HD is consistent for all of our new projects. And it becomes the property of the artist. If artists are willing, we put it onto our digitice.org archive.

- Artist Statement: not necessarily a project proposal, but a check-in as to what you're interested in doing. It's not necessarily to say “this is what I would like to do specifically with trumpet and harpsichord and guitar,” but to say, **what are your artistic goals?** And how can we help you with those.
● The review panel will consist of ensemble artists and artists outside of our field will consist of racial and gender diverse group of people from both our organization and from outside the organization.

● Uniquely this year, instead of having written feedback, we're going to offer feedback sessions. So if your project wasn't accepted or commissioned this year, we would love to still chat with you. So we're going to offer feedback sessions by appointment during a specific span in the third week of April.

● The score and sound instructions that you submit will not be made available to the public automatically. But if you would like they'll be added to our crowd sourced database, which is currently under construction.

Questions

Ross Karre verbally reviews FAQ section on website

● Work Samples: if you're wondering, what work samples should I put in here? The answer would be which ones represent where you'd like to go? Which ones would you like to have our help in expanding or our collaboration to realize in a more expanded way or over a longer period of time? The list goes on for the reasons why you might be interested in that. So specifically, these fields are not for project proposals. But they could be for partially completed work. So you have a sketch, something you're not quite done with, but you are really excited about, feel free to share a screen capture of it or a sound sample of it. And project proposals are not required in this application.

● Timeline: March deadline, April notification, April feedback session, a May public announcement, which means we'll have a press release featuring the commissioned artists. Then in June, we'll have workshops and as early as Fall of 2021, rehearsals and performances and recordings, more likely to give ourselves the best chance of maybe being in person, winter 2022.

● Scope and Scale: These aren't limitations, but points of comparison. So for us, $4,000 is a commission, for example, a solo piece with electronics, it's about 12 minutes long or less. It could also mean that $4,000 commission is for an instrumental duo. And maybe you are one of the players in that duo, like with Jen Curtis and Tyshawn Sorey, seven to nine minutes in length. Anything larger in scale than that will be a larger commission. We just wanted to give you a little benchmark of what $4,000 means for our commissioning scale.

● “I'm sure you see many, many submissions, what makes someone successfully stand out to you?”
  ○ What we're looking for specifically, is ultimately going to be adjudicated by a panel of members and outside panels. So it might shift from year to year. There's obviously taste involved in the inner panels adjudication, but we also advise the panel to look for artists who have a distinctive voice, and for whom a collaboration with the International Contemporary Ensemble would expand their artistry. That's what we're looking for. So the projects that stand out really speak to that a really distinctive artistic voice, and for whom this would be really valuable experience.

● “Is this for artists only if they compose?”
○ What we mean by artists here are people who make work in sound. We’re trying to be as broad and inclusive as possible. If you find yourself creating an expressive work in sound, and you would like collaborators, then this is the right thing for you to apply to. So names that people sort of put in their byline is not as important to us, but sometimes that means you might be a composer, a performer, a sound artist, a performance artist, people whose for whom sound is their precious medium, but also interdisciplinary artists who work in sound and other things are welcome as well.

● “For artists outside the US, will ICE offer any travel and lodging funding outside of the commission fee?”
○ The shorter answer is yes, but not for several visits. Instead, we'll do a lot of our work remotely. This isn't just for economic purposes, though, that's the main one, we try to reserve as many resources for artists fees, and not so much for logistics. To that end we have built a really robust way of collaborating remotely. And it's been quite successful.

● “Would you consider proposals that include a singer?”
○ Absolutely. We have worked on many amazing projects with singers Carla Kihlstedt, Sasha Siem, from icelab projects who are singer-songwriters who wrote for our ensemble.

● “How about multimedia projects, like for example, a person who creates sound pieces that are designed with video in mind?”
○ Love it. We have several people in our ensemble who create visual media in the temporal way – filmmakers, visual artists – and we have an entire collaborative group, a collective called the digitice media team, who are filmmakers and video artists in and of themselves specializing in projection design. So that can be another aspect of your work.

● “Can the whole 18 month collaboration process be made remotely? Not only due to the pandemic, but also for any other “life happens” circumstances?”
○ Yes, yes, and yes.

● “Can the work samples be of completed works that I just want performed live? And are the work samples what I want performed or any other?”
○ The work samples are just examples of your working process. They aren't necessarily the art works that we might be performing later, they are works that we will become aware of and then consider for future programming. But we’re looking for these work samples as a kind of example of the kind of work that you would like to do and the kind of work you'd like to expand with our collaboration and help.

● “Is there a length limitation to the work submissions?”
○ Nope, it's a link. So if you want to submit a link to a perpetual infinite drone for soundscape, we welcome that as well. So anywhere between one second of sound and infinite seconds of sound, welcome.

● “Since you are looking to expand forms and possibilities of collaboration I wonder how you appoint the panel that eventually decides on who is chosen”
The panel will be artists, practitioners, who at least come from a performer/composer background, and some of them will have interdisciplinary experiences as well. That's true of our panelists last year from the outside and the inside of our group included video artists and filmmakers, electro acoustic musicians, and also the composers Marcos Balter and Wang Lu, both of whom work in interdisciplinary projects. Those were the outside panelists last time.

- "How do you accommodate artists whose work takes time to grow in your application process?"
  - For this particular process, that time to grow is only limited by this rough 18 month guideline, it's not a restriction. So if something needs further time to grow, it might not be this particular project where we collaborate, but something further down the road. So for example, working with Tyshawn Sorey, back in 2012, wrote pieces over that span of a year or so. And then we've also done projects with Tyshawn that spanned several years. So it's really about meeting in this way and then expanding for future projects.

- "Can I bring a percussion player who is a specialist in a traditional instrument and write let's say, a piece for them and the ensemble?"
  - Yes

- "Are projects that are by-design meant to be performed remotely of interest, or is there a requirement that the work happen in a specific location?"
  - Let's actually dive into both of those things – I'm going to call one location specific or site determined work. So in other words, the venue, and you write specifically for the acoustic properties, the spatial properties, the layout of the audience. The other is digital site specificity, which means we're writing work that exists, is created digitally, and it's performed digitally. And we're looking for proposals and are for collaborators to work in that realm as well. Recently, we asked Nicole Mitchell for a piece that would be well suited for the ins and outs, the latency, the problems, the virtues of digital collaboration, and that was super meaningful for us. So we look forward to repeating that kind of work.

- "Could you please provide some details regarding the Ensemble's past relationship to the Jerome Foundation? What distinguishes an artist who is commissioned traditionally from someone who is supported by the foundation? Are there past recipients that can be cited?"
  - For our last call with Jerome Foundation funding, three of the artists who applied were living in New York City or Minnesota, and the other three did not. So out of all six commissions, about half of them fulfilled that requirement.
  - The specific region that you have to come from to apply for this is just Earth. That's the most important criteria is that we have no geographical limitations.
  - We are not dictated by funding guidelines in regards to artistic practice at all. It really just comes down to two of the people we offer a commission to need to come from New York City or Minnesota. So two of the people we choose will need to come from those places. But again, we want to meet as many people as possible, and therefore this is an open call.

- "Are installations or site-specific projects ok?"
○ Yes. Although site specific projects where you want to realize this important thing where you're going to put transducers on Stonehenge? Well, that's a cool idea. I think it's also something that needs to be scaled and we need to think about how we'd work together to translate the concept of that site specificity into a site that's a part of our relationships with venues. So for example, in the conversations with Murat Colak —what would it be like to realize the work at the Queen's Lab venue, that's a part of The Kitchen's programming for the year. That changes the artistic outcome, but the spirit of the piece is made site specific through that conversation.

○ Other examples are works that have outdoor performance for a digital performance practice. So we welcome all of those, you can get specific if you'd like in your submission in your application. But again, the specificity will come by way of conversation with our ensemble after the selection.

• “Is it okay to bring in a narrative/theatrical component — i.e. avant-garde performers, puppet-makers, opera singers?”
  ○ Yes, there will be a scale at some point. However, this isn't a project to create a full opera with a librettist, scene designer, and production and stage managers. That's not what these projects are going to scale to be. That being said, I'd love to hear about it. If you have a specific idea, we can talk through it. And maybe that's just something that gets produced through a different mechanism of our organization.

• “Would non-digital visual art that involves text and also functions as a sort of score be acceptable?”
  ○ Absolutely.

• “Is there a length limitation to the work samples, and how do you judge works that have a long slow build or form in the application process?”
  ○ Please feel free to describe that. What we recommend is to make a note of that for listeners in the SoundCloud entry or you submit a google document with a link to a SoundCloud entry that says, “pay specific attention to the development that happens over this period of time.” In other words, this work can't be experienced with what I'm calling a drop deedle or a quick visit to the piece. It needs a listen to a longer version of it.

• “How does the ensemble feel about collaborative works meant to be staged in a way that invites non-professional audience participation?”
  ○ Yes. Our favorite projects were mostly with Michael Pisaro and his works, *Rice Fall* and *A Wave and Waves* where we created a 100 person hybrid ensemble plus audience members performing with grains of rice and beans and other small objects being dropped onto sound makers. Those were really meaningful collaborations because we really got to meet our audience and get to know them in a way that's very different than the usual performance practice. So we'd love those projects.

• “Can you expand on how an artist collective might participate? Would a group of multiple composer/performers (5 or 6) be able to apply as a singular entity?”
I'm not sure that an ad hoc group would find an advantage in your application by assembling in order to apply. But if you are a part of a pre-existing collective that would find yourselves working with our organization in a creative way, that's what the collectives aspect is aimed toward. So if you're in a band, or in a collective of artists who share a studio somewhere, or you have a troupe that shares writing text and music. In a lot of cases, those projects might be large in ambition and scale and that might be a different mechanism of our organization that helps realize that kind of project, not necessarily in this call. That being said, we don't want to discourage you from applying. And the best example would be exclusiveOr (Sam pluta and Jeff Snyder's project) which is from a collective and helped us actually merge with a different collective for that project.

- “This past year was intended to be a year filled with recording pieces I have written; however the pandemic had not permitted those events. Are midi/samples looked down upon as a substitute for live performance? (For the Proposal)”
  - No, they're not looked down upon.
- “As to remote collaboration with Ensemble artists, is there the possibility for ‘real time’ interaction? For example: Working on a duet together without latency. Just wondering if you have access to a tech solution for collaboration beyond Zoom and other current options”
  - Yes. There's no no latency answer. Sonobus works quite well for lower latency, extremely high audio fidelity, peer to peer sort of collaborations for small groups. And we combine that with a high fidelity video pickup system that's routed into Zoom. So Zoom becomes the video, and audio can happen over some of us on the same machine. That works pretty well.
- Is it ok for the same individual to apply multiple times as a member of different partnerships?
  - Yes, no problem.
- “Is there a target number of commissions to be awarded?”
  - The short answer to that is that we are always commissioning new works. But that doesn't answer the number. So this year we are hoping to be able to do five. And the reason I can't give a specific answer is because our commissions come through partnerships that aren't always known at this stage, but they are known over the next few months. And that'll help us to answer that question more specifically.
- “Do you have committed venues/concerts that would limit what kind of submissions would/wouldn't work?”
  - We're not going to let the venue limit that so much. We scale projects to different venues in partnership with the artists. So no matter what venue you have in mind, in your mind's eye, as you're dreaming, and being creative, there's a way that we can help make it work and venues that are part of our big network of partnerships in New York City and beyond. And similarly, working in a recording studio, to realize the work for an album is a venue that we can always work on.
- “I appreciate the accessibility and ease of the application form and process. Is the application review limited to the information and materials included in the form or will
there be other evaluations made (website, media, name recognition, etc.)? I ask because I wonder how applicants are compared in regards to how this opportunity would benefit their artistry?"

  ○ There is an opportunity for you to put your website and or social media handles into the application. It's not the primary point of adjudication as we don't want to limit this to only people who have a web presence, but nevertheless you can add it and it will be taken under consideration.

- “Can we submit work samples where we are co-creators, not the sole creator?”
  ○ Yes, absolutely

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at icicle@iceorg.org with any further questions.