

Thursday Nights at the Greater Denton Arts Council

presents

Sounds Modern

performing

“Feel Good” Modern Music

Thursday, November 30, 2023, 6:00 pm
Patterson-Appleton Arts Center, Denton

Asumani (2012) by **Kamran Ince** (b. 1960)

The Memory Palace (1990) by **Elizabeth Brown** (b. 1953)

Spiegel im Spiegel (1978) by **Arvo Pärt** (b. 1935)

Circle Music II (1988) by **Cindy McTee** (b. 1953)

Cendres (1998) by **Kaija Saariaho** (1952-2023)

Jeff Lankov, piano

Elizabeth McNutt, flute and alto flute

Kourtney Newton, cello

“Feel Good” Modern Music

Modern music is all too often presented with a wincing apology for its strangeness and difficulty – even though it’s all just music, and all you must do is listen! Some pieces, though, truly are more challenging to the listener because of deliberate transgression of norms of “traditional” music – a focus on noise rather than pitch, an unusually high or low density of information, sudden “jump scare” contrasts, extremes in one or another dimension of sound, and so forth. For this concert, we’ve chosen works that are more gracious than challenging to the ear – a “feel good” concert of music that invites you to revel in the beauty of its sound.

In Ottoman Turkish, *Asumani* means “according to the skies”-- as in reaching to the skies, to become enveloped completely with the love of the almighty. – **Kamran Ince**

The Memory Palace was inspired by Jonathan’s Spence’s book on the life of Matteo Ricci, a sixteenth-century Jesuit missionary to China. Ricci developed a system of mnemonics that he called the memory palace in which material to be memorized was linked to locations within elaborate, imaginary architectural structures; someone’s own palace would be built, or imagined, with a layout and furnishings that were especially resonant for them. ... My memory palace ... is a small, personal palace, and I imagine Ricci walking through it; he had a limp from an old foot injury that makes some of the rhythms lopsided. Then, I imagine him floating along as his vivid imagination, along with his faith, lets him soar. – **Elizabeth Brown**

Spiegel im Spiegel (mirrors in the mirror), one of **Arvo Pärt**'s most celebrated and influential works, takes its title from the endlessly repeating reflections of an infinity mirror. Like the McTee and Ince works, this work has several versions featuring different instrumentations.

Circle Music II is indeterminate with respect to form, requiring the performers to make spontaneous decisions as to which of approximately 15 musical fragments will be heard at any given moment. The order of events and the resulting relationships between the two parts are therefore different each time the piece is performed. – **Cindy McTee**

While writing ***Cendres***, I was mainly concentrating on the interpretation of musical ideas by the three different instruments of the trio, each of which has its unique character and palette of colours. Musical tension is created and regulated by sometimes bringing the instruments as close together as possible in all ways (pitch, rhythm, dynamics, articulation, colour etc.), or, at the other extreme, letting each of them express the music in their most idiomatic fashion. ... The consciousness of this variety was the rope on which I was balancing whilst working on the piece. – **Kaija Saariaho**

Sounds Modern

The most up-to-the-minute and least predictable concert music series in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, Sounds Modern has been exploring links between contemporary music and visual arts for over a decade. Conceived and directed by virtuoso flutist Elizabeth McNutt in collaboration with The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Sounds Modern adds a sonic dimension to the ideas represented in the galleries, and brings the artwork to life in the concert hall. McNutt also directs the Nova new music ensemble at the University of North Texas, where she teaches in the flute and composition areas. Sounds Modern assistant director Andrew May is on the UNT composition faculty.

Acknowledgments

Funding from the U.S. Department of Treasury American Rescue Plan Act funding through the City of Denton has contributed to making this program possible.

Our next concert is scheduled for January 20, 2024, 2 pm, at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth. Keep up with the latest Sounds Modern news at www.soundsmodern.org, www.facebook.com/SoundsModern, and Instagram [@soundsmodern](https://www.instagram.com/soundsmodern).