



For Immediate Release
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The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Minnesota Public Radio, American Composers Forum and Minnesota Opera announce new season of Composer Conversations Series: *The Heart of Making Music*

Winter/Spring 2015 Composer Conversation Series features Kevin Puts, Bryce Dessner, Fred Lerdaahl, Missy Mazzoli and special guests

SAINT PAUL, MN, August 12, 2014 — The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra (SPCO), Minnesota Public Radio (MPR), American Composers Forum (ACF) and Minnesota Opera are pleased to announce the third season of the Composer Conversation Series, events of which will take place at Amsterdam Bar & Hall in downtown Saint Paul (6th & Wabasha) February 2015 through May 2015. A co-presentation of the SPCO, MPR, ACF and Minnesota Opera, the Composer Conversation Series is intended for music lovers of all stripes. The series is hosted by Classical MPR's Emily Reese and features some of today's most original, prominent and prestigious voices in composition discussing their worldviews, artistic perspectives and how their life experiences have shaped them into the artists they are today. The 2014-15 season includes live interviews with distinctive creators Kevin Puts, Bryce Dessner (with special guests Caroline Shaw and Richard Reed Parry), Fred Lerdaahl and Missy Mazzoli. Each event has a portion devoted to interview-style discussion, with brief musical selections, followed by audience Q&A.

Composer Conversation Series events are **free but reservations are required**. Details at thespc.org/ccs.

2014-15 SEASON SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Kevin Puts

Wednesday, February 18, 2015 at 7:00pm

Kevin Puts brings the raw emotional energy of his compositional style back to Minnesota Opera with the 2015 premiere of *The Manchurian Candidate*. The Minnesota Opera's last commission from Puts, 2011's *Silent Night*, won him the Pulitzer Prize for Music. The award's committee described his work as "displaying versatility of style and cutting straight to the heart." His impactful and thought-provoking music

has been commissioned and performed by leading orchestras and chamber groups across the country and abroad, and he currently serves as a member of the composition department at the Peabody Institute in Baltimore.

“Long ago we entered in an age in which anything goes and value judgments are often to be put aside or at least aggressively relaxed, and we are supposed to accept anything that a composer throws at us, but I think [that] something either works, or it doesn’t.” – Kevin Puts

Bryce Dessner

Thursday, April 2, 2015 at 7:00pm

Cross-genre musical powerhouse Bryce Dessner fuses his rock sensibilities with a ferociously ambitious approach to orchestral composition to create riveting musical experiences. 2014 marks the release of *St. Carolyn by the Sea*. The album is Dessner’s first recording with legendary record label Deutsche Grammophon and is celebrated as “a modern classic” by *PopMatters*. Dessner, also the guitarist of Grammy-nominated band The National, will share how his compositional approach yields what *NPR* describes as “gorgeous full-hearted music” through his own dedication to pushing musical boundaries.

“Those old genre definitions don’t mean as much anymore... [Classical music is] definitely a living culture with lots of exciting musicians doing new programming and composers writing new work...and there’s crossover in really interesting ways.” – Bryce Dessner

Caroline Shaw (special guest of Bryce Dessner)

Thursday, April 2, 2015 at 7:00pm

The youngest composer ever to win the Pulitzer Prize for Music, Caroline Shaw’s youthful and inventive energy reminds listeners of the boundless potential of new music. Recognized for her incredible talent as a composer and performer, Shaw frequently collaborates with today’s premiere musicians and ensembles and is a current doctoral fellow at Princeton University. Shaw’s multifaceted works, celebrated as “dazzling, emotionally gorgeous” by *The New York Times*, make an immediate impact on listeners while also providing a complex network of musical and conceptual details that reward engaged and informed listening.

“I think about the music for a very long time beforehand, without writing a note, and then I write everything rather quickly. Lots of architectural planning in my head, and then I go to town and let the music take over, and then it’s done. Like performing, really. You practice and practice and think and plan so that when you’re actually in a performance situation you can be free and bold to let something larger than you take over.” – Caroline Shaw

Richard Reed Parry (special guest of Bryce Dessner)

Thursday, April 2, 2015 at 7:00pm

Arcade Fire’s Richard Reed Parry is quite literally bringing a new pulse to contemporary classical music. Parry’s 2014 Deutsche Grammophon release, *Music for Heart and Breath*, features compositions performed in sync with the heartbeats and breaths of its performers. Parry’s first recorded foray into the world of contemporary classical music has been described as a “primordial balm” (*NME*) for the genre

and garnered praise for its “palpable aliveness” (*Pitchfork*). Collaborator Nico Muhly celebrates the genius of Parry’s innovative new works, explaining “it’s music based on a system that can produce a huge range of problems and beautiful solutions.” Parry deftly navigates the challenges of such a novel approach to create music that is uniquely natural, immediate and, most importantly, human.

“My vision for [Music for Heart and Breath] was to free the music of certain confines and to bring really fragile and deeply human characteristics out of the music through using this technique. I wanted it to be satisfying and tell a story, or describe a state, with some kind of emotional arc to it, even if it’s an abstract one.” – Richard Reed Parry

Fred Lerdahl

Wednesday, April 22, 2015 at 7:00pm

A dedicated musician and academic, Fred Lerdahl has contributed enormously to the field of cognitive science of music as well as composition. As an award-winning author and professor of composition at Columbia University, Lerdahl combines his fascination with breaking down and investigating traditional musical structures with his desire to create meaningful and impactful music. Lerdahl’s deep well of musical knowledge and compositional skill will engage listeners’ ears and minds as he joins the Composer Conversation Series to share insight into his explorations of musical possibility.

“I have sometimes been relegated as the ‘brainy’ type. This is misleading because I am also the ‘heart’ type. Indeed, the supposed antagonism of heart vs. brain (intuition vs. intellectuality, spontaneity vs. calculation, warm emotion vs. cold reason) seems to me to be a false opposition. Really good theory virtually disappears for the listener if it is employed in an intuitive way.” – Fred Lerdahl

Missy Mazzoli

Thursday, May 7, 2015 at 7:00pm

Dubbed “Brooklyn’s post-millennial Mozart,” by *Time Out New York*, Missy Mazzoli is a new music catalyst, creating, driving and fueling a new contemporary classical movement. Mazzoli’s powerfully inventive compositions have been performed by renowned ensembles such as the Kronos Quartet, Eighth Blackbird, Minnesota Orchestra and her own band, Victoire. Mazzoli brings a “powerful and new” (*Wall Street Journal*) musical energy to a wide variety of outlets as composer-in-residence at Opera Philadelphia, Gotham Chamber Opera and Music Theatre-Group, and as a member of the Mannes College of Music faculty. Mazzoli’s quirky and infectious personality drives her musical endeavors and will be on full display as she joins the Composer Conversation Series in anticipation of her and Victoire’s collaboration with art-pop innovators Glasser and Noveller.

“I think the important task at hand is to create work that challenges people, that makes them confront things they’d rather ignore, but to do it in a way that draws them in and makes them feel connected to the composer and to other listeners.” – Missy Mazzoli

Presenting Partners

The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, entering its 56th season this September, is widely regarded as one of the finest chamber orchestras in the world. In collaboration with a team of artistic partners, its virtuoso musicians present more than 130 concerts and educational programs each year, and are regularly heard on public radio's *Performance Today* which reaches 1.3 million listeners each week on 289 stations, and *SymphonyCast* reaching 250,000 listeners each week on 143 stations nationwide. The SPCO has released 67 recordings, commissioned 139 new works, and performed the world premiere of 49 additional compositions. The SPCO has earned the distinction of 17 ASCAP awards for adventurous programming. Renowned for its artistic excellence and remarkable versatility of musical styles, the SPCO tours nationally and internationally, including performances in premier venues in Europe, Asia and South America. For more information, visit thespco.org.

The **American Composers Forum** enriches lives by nurturing the creative spirit of composers and communities by providing opportunities for composers and their music to flourish, and engage communities in the creation, performance and enjoyment of music. For more information visit composersforum.org.

Minnesota Public Radio® (MPR) operates a 43-station radio network serving virtually all of Minnesota and parts of surrounding states. Reaching one million listeners each week, Minnesota Public Radio produces programming for radio, Internet and face-to-face audiences, and is home to the largest and most experienced radio newsroom in the Upper Midwest. Programs produced by Minnesota Public Radio's parent company, American Public Media™, reach 16 million listeners on more than 800 radio stations nationwide each week. A complete list of stations, programs and additional services can be found at minnesotapublicradio.org.

Minnesota Opera combines a culture of creativity and fiscal responsibility to produce opera and opera education programs that expand the art form, nurture artists, enrich audiences and contribute to the vitality of the community. For more information, visit mnopera.org.

Liquid Music is a concert series presented by The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra that expands the world of classical music through innovative new projects, boundary-defying artists, and unique presentation formats. Liquid Music performances invite adventurous audiences of all ages to discover the new and the fascinating in the colorful landscape of classical music today. thespco.org/liquidmusic.

Amsterdam Bar & Hall (6th & Wabasha, Saint Paul, MN) is the new music venue and bar/restaurant owned by the Oulman family (331 Club). Much like the 331 was at the forefront of the arts boom in NE Minneapolis, the Oulmans are bringing that energy to downtown St. Paul. In partnership with Big Table Studio and Eclipse Records, Amsterdam focuses on making its stretch of Wabasha hopping with entertainment. amsterdambarandhall.com.