Jennifer Koh: *Bach and Beyond*
Bowker Auditorium

Thursday, October 28, 7:30 p.m. ET
Pre-performance panel discussion with Ken Ueno and Hyeyung Yoon at 6:30 p.m.
Post-performance Q & A with the artist
Moderated by Professor Elizabeth Chang and Curator Michael Sakamoto

Sponsored by Daily Hampshire Gazette, Massachusetts Cultural Council,
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University of Massachusetts Land Acknowledgement

In a year-long consultative and deeply collaborative process with respected advisors from local Tribal Nations, the UMass Native Advisory Council co-developed this campus Land Acknowledgement. This Acknowledgement affirms our campus connection and relationship to the land the campus is built upon and our continued connection to the Nations who were the original inhabitants and caretakers of this land. The University of Massachusetts Amherst acknowledges that it was founded and built on the unceded homelands of the Pocumtuc Nation on the land of the Norrwutuck community.

We begin with gratitude for nearby waters and lands, including the Kwinitekw -- the southern portion of what’s now called the Connecticut River. We recognize these lands and waters as important Relations with which we are all interconnected and depend on to sustain life and wellbeing.

The Norrwutuck community was one of many Pocumtuc Indian towns, including the Tribal seat at Pocumtuc (in present day Deerfield), Agawam (Springfield), and Woronoco (Westfield) to name just a few. The Pocumtuc, who had connections with these lands for millennia, are part of a vast expanse of Algonquian relations. Over 400 years of colonization, Pocumtuc Peoples were displaced. Many joined their Algonquian relatives to the east, south, west and north — extant communities of Wampanoag, including Aquinnah, Herring Pond, and Mashpee, Massachusetts; the Nipmuc with a reservation at Grafton/Hassanamisco, Massachusetts; the Narragansett in Kingstown, Rhode Island; Schaghticoke, Mohegan and Pequot Peoples in Connecticut; the Abenaki and other Nations of the Wabanaki Confederacy extending northward into Canada; and the Stockbridge Munsee Mohican of New York and Massachusetts, who were removed to Wisconsin in the 19th century. Over hundreds of years of removal, members of Southern New England Tribes would make the journey home to tend important places and renew their connections to their ancestral lands. Such care and connection to land and waters continues to the present day.

Today, Indigenous Nations in southern New England continue to employ diverse strategies to resist ongoing colonization, genocide, and erasure begun by the English, French, Dutch, Portuguese and other European Nations, and that continued when Tribal homelands became part of the United States. Native Americans from Tribal Nations across the U.S. and Indigenous peoples from around the world also travel into these Pocumtuc homelands to live and work. This land has always been and always will be, Native Land.

We also acknowledge that the University of Massachusetts Amherst is a Land Grant University. As part of the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862, Tribal lands from 84 Native Nations west of the Mississippi were sold to provide the resources to found and build this university.

This Land Acknowledgement is the first step in the university’s commitment to practice intellectual humility whilst working with Tribal Nations toward a better shared future on Turtle Island. We aim to foster understanding, deep respect, and honor for sovereign Tribal Nations; to develop relationships of reciprocity; and to be inclusive of Native perspectives and thriving Native Nations far into the future. Members of Massachusetts-based Tribal Nations who are kin to the historic Pocumtuc contributed their insights in composing this acknowledgement -- namely Tribal representatives from Mashpee, Aquinnah, and Stockbridge Munsee. As an active first step toward decolonization, we encourage you to learn more about the Indigenous peoples on whose homelands UMass Amherst now resides on and the Indigenous homelands on which you live and work.
Program

J.S. Bach/Violin Partita No. 2 in D minor, BWV 1004
Missy Mazzoli/Dissolve, O my Heart
George Lewis/Un petit brouillard cerebral
Ken Ueno/Better Angels

Intermission

Nina Shekhar/warm in my veins
Anjna Swaminathan/a beloved within
Vijay Iyer/For Violin Alone
Missy Mazzoli/Hail, Horrors, Hail

J.S. Bach/Violin Sonata No. 2 in A minor, BWV 1003
About the artist

Recognized for intense, commanding performances, delivered with dazzling virtuosity and technical assurance, violinist Jennifer Koh is a forward-thinking artist dedicated to exploring a broad and eclectic repertoire, while promoting equity and inclusivity in classical music. She has expanded the contemporary violin repertoire through a wide range of commissioning projects and has premiered more than 100 works written especially for her. Her quest for the new and unusual, sense of endless curiosity, and ability to lead and inspire a host of multidisciplinary collaborators, truly set her apart.

Her critically acclaimed series include Alone Together, Bach and Beyond, The New American Concerto, Limitless, Bridge to Beethoven, and Shared Madness. Coming this season to Carnegie’s Zankel Hall, the Kennedy Center, and Cincinnati’s Music Hall, The New American Concerto is Ms. Koh’s ongoing, multi-season commissioning project that explores the form of the violin concerto and its potential for artistic engagement with contemporary societal concerns and issues through commissions from a diverse collective of composers. In February and March 2022, she premieres the sixth commission in the project—Missy Mazzoli’s Violin Concerto with the National and Cincinnati Symphony Orchestras, and gives the New York premiere of Lisa Bielawa’s violin concerto Sanctuary at Carnegie’s Zankel Hall with the American Composers Orchestra. Additional New American Concerto commissions are Tyshawn Sorey’s For Marcos Balter, Courtney Bryan’s Syzygy, Christopher Cerrone’s Breaks and Breaks, and Vijay Iyer’s Trouble.

Ms. Koh unveils two new collaborations this season—Everything Rises with bass-baritone Davóne Tines and Bach 6 Solo with director Robert Wilson and choreographer Lucinda Childs. Everything Rises, whose premiere performances are presented by UCLA and UC Santa Barbara in April 2022, is borne of Ms. Koh’s and Mr. Tines’s own experiences as artists of color in a culture dominated by whiteness. Their collective exploration led them back to their family histories—to the stories of Ms. Koh’s mother, a refugee from North Korea during the Korean War, and Mr. Tines’s grandmother, who holds vivid memories of anti-Black discrimination and violence dating back many years.

In September 2021, nearly a decade after performing the role of Einstein in revival performances of Philip Glass’s Einstein on the Beach from 2012-14, Ms. Koh reunited with director Robert Wilson and choreographer Lucinda Childs for a new work, Bach 6 Solo, that brings to life Bach’s six sonatas and partitas with theatrical elements and dance. The work premiered at the Chapelle Saint-Louis de la Salpêtrière as part of the Festival d’Automne à Paris.

Additional highlights of Ms. Koh’s 2021–22 season are two new recordings on Cedille Records: Alone Together and the complete box set of her Bach & Beyond trilogy. Originally launched as a commissioning project and virtual performance series, Alone Together was developed in response to the coronavirus pandemic and the financial hardship it placed on many in the arts community. The project brought composers together in support of the many freelancers among them—with the more established composers each donating a new micro-work for solo violin, while also recommending a fellow freelance composer to write their own solo violin micro-work on paid commission from Ms. Koh’s artist-driven nonprofit ARCO Collaborative.

Ms. Koh’s Bach & Beyond recording series, originally released by Cedille Records in three installments (2012, 2015, 2020), was released as a three-disc box set in September 2021. These recordings explore the history of the solo violin repertoire from Bach’s Six Sonatas and Partitas to the music of 20th and 21st century composers.
Ms. Koh regularly performs a broad range of concertos that reflects the breadth of her musical interests from traditional to contemporary. Her orchestral appearances have included performances of such traditional repertoire as Bach’s Violin Concerti with Orpheus Chamber Orchestra; Dvořák’s Violin Concerto with the Pittsburgh and RAI National Symphonies; Mozart’s Violin Concerto No. 1 with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and St. Louis Symphony; Tchaikovsky’s Violin Concerto with the Munich Philharmonic; and Vivaldi’s *The Four Seasons* with the Detroit Symphony. She has performed 20th century works including Bartók and Berg concerti with the Milwaukee Symphony; Bernstein’s *Serenade* with the Minnesota and Philadelphia Orchestras; Lutosławski’s *Chain 2* with the New York Philharmonic; and Sibelius’s Violin Concerto with the New Jersey, São Paulo, and Columbus Symphonies, and Suwon Philharmonic in South Korea. An advocate for music from our current millennium, she has performed Anna Clyne’s *The Seamstress* with the BBC Symphony, Chicago Symphony, and Cincinnati Symphony; Esa-Pekka Salonen’s Violin Concerto with the Houston, Nashville, Cincinnati, and Gothenburg Symphonies; and Steven Mackey’s *Beautiful Passing* with the Baltimore Symphony.

Ms. Koh brings the same sense of adventure and brilliant musicianship to her recordings as she does to her live performances. She has recorded more than a dozen albums with Chicago-based Cedille Records, including 2019’s *Limitless*, on which leading composer-performers—including Lisa Bielawa, Vijay Iyer, Missy Mazzoli, Qasim Naqvi, Tyshawn Sorey, Wang Lu, Nina C. Young, and Du Yun—perform duo compositions with Ms. Koh; and *Saariaho X Koh*, a 2018 collection of works by Kaija Saariaho, whose music she has long championed and with whom she has closely collaborated. Her discography also includes *Tchaikovsky: Complete Works for Violin and Orchestra* with the Odense Symphony Orchestra; *Two x Four* in collaboration with her former teacher, violinist Jaime Laredo, and featuring double violin concerti by Bach, Philip Glass, Anna Clyne and David Ludwig; *Signs, Games + Messages*, a recording of violin and piano works by Janáček, Bartók, and Kurtág with Shai Wosner; *Rhapsodic Musings: 21st Century Works for Solo Violin*; the Grammy-nominated *String Poetic*, featuring the world premiere of Jennifer Higdon’s eponymous work, performed with pianist Reiko Uchida; Schumann’s complete violin sonatas, also with Ms. Uchida; *Portraits* with the Grant Park Orchestra under conductor Carlos Kalmar with concerti by Szymanowski, Martinů, and Bartók; *Violin Fantasies*, fantasies for violin and piano by Schubert, Schumann, Schoenberg, and saxophonist Ornette Coleman, again with Ms. Uchida; and Ms. Koh’s first Cedille album, from 2002, *Solo Chaconnes*, an earlier reading of Bach’s Second Partita coupled with chaconnes by Richard Barth and Max Reger. She is also the featured soloist on a recording of Ms. Higdon’s *The Singing Rooms* with the Atlanta Symphony led by Robert Spano for Telarc.

Ms. Koh is also an active lecturer and teacher. She has been on faculty at the Mannes School of Music since 2018, is a Creative Associate at Juilliard, and has held residencies at Brown, Cornell, Duke, and Tulane Universities, as well as at the Curtis Institute of Music, Oberlin Conservatory and College, and University of California, Santa Barbara. She is the Founder and Artistic Director of ARCO Collaborative, an artist-driven nonprofit that advocates for inclusivity in classical music. Established in 2014, ARCO Collaborative commissions, develops, and produces new musical works that highlight artists of color and women composers in collaborations that bring forth stories previously unheard in Western art forms. She is also a member of Composers Now’s Distinguished Mentors Council and the board of the League of American Orchestras.

Born in Chicago of Korean parents, Ms. Koh began playing the violin by chance, choosing the instrument in a Suzuki-method program only because spaces for cello and piano were filled. She made her debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at age 11. She was *Musical America’s* 2016 Instrumentalist of the Year,
and has been recognized as a Virtuoso Award honoree by Concert Artists Guild in 2020 and “A Force of Nature” by the American Composers Orchestra in 2019. She was a top prizewinner at Moscow’s International Tchaikovsky Competition, winner of the Concert Artists Guild Competition, and a recipient of an Avery Fisher Career Grant. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in English literature from Oberlin College and studied at the Curtis Institute, where she worked extensively with Jaime Laredo and Felix Galimir.

For further information, visit jenniferkoh.com.

Composer notes

**Missy Mazzoli: Dissolve, O my Heart**

Dissolve, O my Heart has its roots in a late-night conversation over Chinese food and cupcakes with violinist Jennifer Koh. She told me about her Bach & Beyond project, a program that combines Bach’s Sonatas and Partitas with newly commissioned works, and asked if I would write a piece that referenced Bach’s Partita in D Minor. This request was, to put it mildly, utterly terrifying; the last movement of the partita, the Chaconne, is undoubtedly the most famous piece of solo violin literature in the world. It overwhelmed Brahms, has been subject to hundreds of transcriptions and arrangements over the past two centuries, and is dizzying in its contrapuntal complexity. Something about Jennifer’s enthusiasm was infectious, and I agreed to the project before I realized what I was getting myself into. Jennifer seemed to approach Bach through the lens of contemporary music, and I realized that this was what this new piece should do as well.

Dissolve, O my Heart begins with the first chord of Bach’s Chaconne, a now-iconic d minor chord, and spins out from there into an off-kilter series of chords that doubles back on itself, collapses and ultimately dissolves in a torrent of fast passages. The only direct quote from the partita is that first chord, which anchors the entire piece even as it threatens to spiral out of control. The title comes from an aria in the St. John’s Passion, but has many potential interpretations.

*Dissolve, O my Heart* was commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic and was premiered in 2011 as part of their Green Umbrella Series in Disney Hall.

**George Lewis: Un petit brouillard cérébral**

One of the frequent discussions around composing under pandemic lockdown conditions involved a hopeful, optimistic gloss that tried to overcome the baleful fact that so many commissions and performances were cancelled outright. People very confidently said, “Well, here you are, you’re at home, you can’t go anywhere. So you’re going to get all this work done.” Well, it turned out that many people did not get the work done. For some reason it was difficult to stay tuned in; a French colleague of mine called this simply “la maladie.” This term seemed as good a description as any of what my friends and colleagues around the world were experiencing. There is always somebody who can overcome these things relatively easily, but I was not one of those. In fact, it was only in the last couple of weeks before this short piece for Jenny was due that I was able to think about writing it. I made recourse to the age-old American trope of depiction, from Blind Tom to Amy Beach to Charles Ives to Duke Ellington. The piece itself is an example of Ellington’s tone parallels, providing a sense of what it was like to be swimming around in the brain fog, fighting for focus.

**Ken Ueno: Better Angels**

When Jennifer asked me to compose a solo piece for her *Alone Together* series in April 2021, an initiative in which emerging composers (mostly of underrepresented backgrounds in classical music), are
commissioned alongside their mentors as a response to how the Covid-19 pandemic devastated classical music in 2020. I reflected on how we were at a different cultural moment than when the Alone Together series was initiated a year earlier: the pandemic was beginning to thaw, but a new scourge, that of violence against Asian Americans, was ramping up. In response to the new scourge, my piece starts out with aggressive music that expresses the anger and frustration I felt (and still feel) about violence directed towards us. The music gradually moves towards material from the song I wrote to Everything That Rises Must Converge (an evening-long work for Jennifer and Davóne Tines that narrativizes their family histories as well as their experiences with racism in Classical music as a tome of allyship), Better Angels, a lilting salve, a horizon of hope. It seemed natural to incorporate material from ETRMC, as I had recently been working on it for Jennifer, and a narrative trajectory that heralds allyship seemed apt as well for Alone Together. For Alone Together, I recommended that Jennifer commission my former student, Amadeus Regucera, one of my first doctoral advisees at UC Berkeley. Amadeus is one of my former students of whom I am most proud, not only of the fine composer he has become, but also of how he has become a great teacher. He has overcome so much to accomplish all he has. Is it a measure of age that I feel more satisfaction nowadays from my students’ and former students’ success than my own? I am proud to have shared this premiere with him. For a composer/teacher, isn’t that a measure of hope? The horizon is ever nearer - we can even see a faint marker of land up ahead. Thank you, Jennifer, for helping to move all of us ever closer. Together, we are less alone.

Nina Shekhar: warm in my veins
The title warm in my veins comes from a quote by pioneering American nurse Clara Barton in which she states, “The patriot blood of my father was warm in my veins.” In the face of catastrophe, it is easy to lose sight of our essence of self and being. Our sense of identity is deep and impenetrable – the blood of our ancestors runs warm in our veins, carrying their culture, wisdom, and fieriness of spirit. Our present communities run warm in our veins. Our love for one another runs warm in our veins. And resilience will always run warm in our veins.

Anjna Swaminathan: a beloved within
In reflecting on ideas of loneliness, and specifically the strange feeling of consistent community I have felt in the past month, I have found myself oscillating between fear of being stuck in this place and fear of leaving it. My mental health condition, Borderline Personality Disorder, is rooted in a core feeling of emptiness and a resulting fear of abandonment. In this period, I am at once empty, without the outer structures that have defined me, yet full, because of the sudden presence of collective listening, love and affection. I feel more community than I have ever felt. The part of me that needs these new structures, and the part of me that is finally feeling the constant community I have long craved, fears the end of this period. I turn to Jiddu Krishnamurti’s writings on loneliness, as I face episode after episode about both the endlessness and the nearing end of this strange period. I find myself clinging to people for fear of being left to my own devices, or worse, my own mind. I read along as privileged people callously compared this existence to prison. I read about the stories and habits of people in true solitary confinement, their methods of coping, or the newfound fears they have developed as a result. Loneliness is a punishment, and loneliness is a privilege. The loneliness I feel now, is not what I am experiencing today, but what I have experienced until now, and will likely experience when all of this ends. Krishnamurti talks about the creation of the external noise of love as a way to avoid the love within us. He says that the reason we fear loneliness is that we fail to recognize that we are our emptiness. It is in the recognition of this, and the love of that emptiness, that loneliness can be transformed into something abundant. Thus, I choose to use this time wisely. I choose to resist the temptation to fill this time with noise. I choose to look for the beloved within.
**Vijay Iyer: For Violin Alone**
“For Violin Alone” is a meditative etude in three compact sections: a sequence of chordal phrases, a cycling central pattern with emerging polyphony, and a closing gesture that transforms a descending phrase from “Alone Together,” a standard from the American songbook.

**Missy Mazzoli: Hail, Horrors, Hail**
*Hail, Horrors, Hail* was written at the very beginning of the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic. The title comes from a passage in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*:

Farewell, happy fields,  
Where joy forever dwells! Hail, horrors! hail,  
Infernal World! and thou, profoundest Hell,  
Receive thy new possessor—one who brings  
A mind not to be changed by place or time.  
The mind is its own place, and in itself  
Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.

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**Hyeyung Yoon (panelist)**
Debuting as a violinist in the Chiara String Quartet in 2000, Hyeyung Sol Yoon has strived to form deep bonds with her audience and community. She began “Chamber Music in Any Chamber,” a project that took her and her group to more than fifty clubs and bars across the United States.

**Ken Ueno (panelist)**
Winner of the Rome Prize and the Berlin Prize, Ken Ueno is a sound artist, vocalist, and composer. The Grove Dictionary of American Music has a biographical entry for him. At UC Berkeley, he holds the Jerry and Evelyn Hemmings Chambers Distinguished Professor Chair in Music. Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, MusikTriennale Köln Festival, the Muziekgebouw, Ars Musica, Warsaw Autumn, Other Minds, the Hopkins Center, Spoleto USA, Steim, and the Norfolk Music Festival have all featured his music.

**Michael Sakamoto (panelist moderator)**
Michael Sakamoto is the Performing Arts Curator and Director of the Asian and Asian American Arts and Culture Program at the UMass Fine Arts Center. His work as artist and scholar in dance, theater, photography, media, and culture has been presented throughout the United States and in 15 countries worldwide. Michael has been published in numerous journals and anthologies, and his book, *An Empty Room: Imagining Butoh and the Social Body in Crisis*, is forthcoming from Wesleyan University Press. Michael is former faculty at University of Iowa, CalArts, Goddard College, and Bangkok University, and holds a PhD in Culture and Performance and an MFA in Dance from UCLA.

**Elizabeth Chang (moderator)**
Violinist Elizabeth Chang has established a multifaceted career as performer, teacher, and arts administrator. She has given solo recitals and master classes throughout the United States as well as in Europe, South America, and China, and she has appeared as soloist with orchestras both in the US and in Europe. She is currently a faculty member of the University of Massachusetts Amherst and the Pre-College Division of the Juilliard School.
Upcoming Events:

Martha Redbone: Roots Project
Tuesday, November 9, 2021, 7:30 p.m. ET
Bowker Auditorium

Guittara! Christopher Ladd
Saturday, November 13, 2021, 7 p.m. ET
Old Chapel

To see more events please visit:
fineartscenter.com