

UMassAmherst | Fine Arts Center

CODEMAKERS: Jenifer Koh, Davóne Tines, Ken Ueno, and Kee-Yoon Nahm



Thursday, September 30, 7 p.m. ET
Virtual presentation co-moderated by Hyeyung Yoon

Sponsored by Daily Hampshire Gazette, the Massachusetts Cultural Council and UMass Auxiliary Enterprises

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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.

About Codemakers

Codemakers, a conversation series highlighting socially engaged artists of color (formerly entitled Bodies at Risk), continues with world-renowned violinist Jennifer Koh, opera singer Davóne Tines, composer Ken Ueno, and dramaturg Kee-Yoon Nahm. Co-moderated by violinist Hyeyung Yoon, the panel discusses their experiences and challenges as Asian American and African American artists, and their new anti-racist performance collaboration, *Everything That Rises Must Converge*.

JENNIFER KOH

Violinist

Jennifer Koh is a forward-thinking musician dedicated to exploring a broad and diversified repertoire while supporting equity and inclusivity in classical music. Known for dramatic, forceful performances performed with dazzling virtuosity and technical assurance, Jennifer has premiered over 100 compositions written expressly for her and has broadened the contemporary violin repertoire through a variety of commissioning efforts. Her thirst for the unique, her insatiable curiosity, and her ability to lead and inspire a diverse group of partners set her apart.

DAVÓNE TINES

Bass-baritone

Heralded as a "singer of immense power and fervor" and "[one] of the most powerful voices of our time" by The Los Angeles Times, the "immensely gifted American bass-baritone". "Davóne Tines has won acclaim, and advanced the field of classical music", (The New York Times) through his work that blends opera, art song, contemporary classical, spirituals, gospel, and songs of protest, as a means to tell a deeply personal story of perseverance that connects to all of humanity. Called a "next generation leader" by Time Magazine, Mr. Tines is a path-breaking artist at the intersection of many histories, cultures, and aesthetics.

KEN UENO

Artist, Professor in Music at UC Berkeley

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. *Shiroi Ishi*, Ken's piece for the Hilliard Ensemble, was in the ensemble's repertoire for over ten years, with performances at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in England, the Vienna Konzerthaus, and on Italian national radio, RAI 3.

KEE-YOON NAHM

Assistant Professor in Theatre Studies at Illinois State University

Kee-Yoon Nahm, D.F.A. works as a dramaturg and theatre translator in the United States and South Korea. His translations have been staged at the National Theatre Company of Korea, the Seoul Performing Arts Festival, Illinois State University, and Yale Cabaret. His dramaturgy work includes productions at the Illinois Shakespeare Festival, Yale Repertory Theatre, Yale Cabaret, the National Gugak Center, and the National Dance Company of Korea. Nahm has published articles in *Theater*, *Performance Research*, *Situations: Cultural Studies in the Asian Context*, and *The Journal of American Drama and Theatre*, among other academic journals and essay collections. His research interests include the self-conscious appropriation of cultural stereotypes, avant-garde performance, and renegotiations of Korean national and transnational identity in the twenty-first century.

HYEYUNG YOON

Violinist

Debating 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. The Chiara Quartet's endeavor of remembering and performing most of their concert repertoire, including the Ravinia Festival performances of Bela Bartok's Complete String Quartets in 2016, arose from the same ambition. The audience could sense the music more vividly because there were no stands or sheet music in the way, as though they were on stage with the performers. She founded Asian Musical Voices of America (AMVA), a platform that aims to foster community among Asians working and creating in classical music in the United States, as well as to elevate BIPOC experiences in the profession. She co-founded Open Space Music with cellist Gregory Beaver, a music event series whose purpose is to create a multicultural space that blurs the lines between artists and audiences

Michael Sakamoto (co-moderator) is 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.

About the film

This video contains graphic images, an unflinching look at the present violence against Asian Americans.

The song “Strange Fruit” was chosen for this video because of its history of courage, truth, and allyship. It was written by Abel Meeropol—a white man—after he saw a photograph of the 1930 lynching of Thomas Shipp and Abram Smith in Marion, Indiana. The song—written in response to the pervasive horrific lack of humanity in this country—became a vehicle for Billie Holiday to expose the truth of violence against Black Americans. Holiday was persecuted for singing “Strange Fruit” not only because of its graphic depiction of lynching, but because it revealed painful truths. The history of this song—its creation in an empathic space, its unflinching honesty, and the courage and defiance of Holiday to continue to perform it at great personal cost to herself—is a testament to the capacity of art and music to give space for humanity. For this video, I believed it was important to include photographs of current violence against Asian Americans because of the urgency to tell and show the truth, a way to truly honor the history of this song.

It is the commonality of racism in this country that is most disturbing. An image of the largest mass lynching in the United States is included in this video. That lynching was of Chinese men in 1871 in Los Angeles. Also included are the historic images of caricatures of Asians that validated the mass killings, violence, exclusion, and internment that has plagued Asian Americans from their first influx into this country in the 1850s. This history is often ignored because of the current designation of Asians as the successful “model minority.” This myth

weaponizes Asian Americans against Black and Brown people, hiding the white-supremacist belief that there are inherent deficits in Black and Brown people. It also disguises current truths. Presently in New York City, the largest ethnic group living below the poverty line is Asian American.

This video also shows current Black and Asian activists, paying homage to a long history of Afro Asian alliance and activism in this country. As early as the 1800s, Frederick Douglass exposed the mistreatment of Asian Americans. The alliances between Black and Asian activists continued with Malcolm X, the Black Panthers, and the Third World Liberation Army, as well as through the present day. It is this shared humanity that brings us here today—I, myself, would not be here without the Black Civil Rights Movement. Their sacrifices enabled the change in immigration policy in 1965, finally allowing immigrants like my parents—people born without European blood—to become citizens of this country.

In the end, this work is about creating empathic space for all of us. In an act of true humanity and solidarity, my co-creator Davóne Tines gave me and the Asian American community this space and platform to urgently reveal the truth of the violence targeted against us and the genuine fear with which we presently live. We both believe that “Strange Fruit” is a bridge between our lineages of oppression. We invite you to see and share this truth, and actuate true solidarity.

—Jennifer Koh

Upcoming Events:

[**SUGAR SKULL! A Día de los Muertos Adventure!**](#)
[**Sunday, October 17, 2021, 3 p.m. ET Virtual Ticketed Event**](#)



For more information about these and all UMass Fine Arts Center Events and to get your ticketing link please visit:

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