

The Chicago Premiere of Mischa Zupko's Brass Knuckles



Rebecca Oliverio



Stephen Burns



Momoko Hasselbring Seko



Kevin Harrison



Robyn Smith

ONE TREE, MANY
BRANCHES
PRESENTS
FULCRUM POINT NEW MUSIC
PROJECT

SATURDAY,
FEBRUARY 10, 2024
4:30 PM - 5:30 PM

CHURCH OF THE
ASCENSION

460 SUNSET RIDGE RD.
NORTHFIELD, IL 60093

FREE !

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NEW MUSIC PROJECT

One Tree, Many Branches

Presents

Fulcrum Point New Music Project

Stephen Burns, Artistic Director

Feb. 10, 2024 4:30 p.m.



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Brass Fantasy

Colchester Fantasy

Eric Ewazen

The Rose and The Crown

The Marquis of Granby

The Dragoon

The Red Lion

Brass Quintet #1

Jorge Amado

Adagio

Moderato Grazioso

Drammatico – Allegro Vivace

Brass Knuckles

Mischa Zupko

Sucker Punch

Shadow Boxing

Stephen Burns & Rebecca Oliverio, trumpet

Momoko Hasselbring Seko, French horn

Robyn Smith, trombone

Kevin Harrison, tuba

Welcome to Fulcrum Point's second celebration of brass chamber music—"Brass Fantasy"—as part of "One Tree, Many Branches" concert series at Northfield's Lutheran Church of the Ascension. We are honored to present these performances of dramatic new art music by contemporary composers Jorge Amado, Eric Ewazen and Mischa Zupko.

"Brass Fantasy" is a celebration of chamber music, in neo-romantic style, inspired by British pub-songs, Renaissance music, Cuban dance rhythms, and the dynamic complexities of brass knuckles, sucker punches and boxing speed bags. Featuring premieres by Jorge Amado: Brass Quintet No. 1 and Mischa Zupko: "Brass Knuckles" this concert packs a punch and will send you reeling with the power of this new art music! We welcome first time collaborators French hornist Momoko Hasselbring Seko and trombonist Robyn Smith on this adventure in new art music.

The concert opens with Colchester Fantasy, about which the composer writes:

Colchester Fantasy was written while I was teaching at the Estherwood Music Festival, held in Colchester, England, during the summer of 1987. Colchester is among the oldest cities in Britain. It has an old Roman wall, a massive Norman castle, picturesque homes and churches, and, as in all decent English towns, colorful old pubs. Each movement in this work is named after one of those old Colchester pubs.

The first movement, "The Rose and Crown," is filled with bright, sonorous chords, energetic rhythmic patterns, and constantly changing and fluctuating motives. The second movement, "The Marquis of Granby" (a name I associated with distant, faded aristocracy), is a stately, chorale-like movement with somber, plaintive themes. The third movement, "The Dragoon," brings forth the sounds of battle with dissonant, clashing harmonies, agitated rhythms and fragmented melodies. To close the work, the fourth movement, "The Red Lion" (a name with its intimations of royalty and nobility) is a resonant fugue, propelled forward with motoric motion and a rapid, spinning fugue theme.

The old English pubs of Colchester were a fine source of inspiration. Their names brought to my mind images of ancient and historical traditions and impressions of the grandeur and majesty of times past. The beer was good, too! —Eric Ewazen

Jorge Amado's *Brass Quintet #1* was composed in 2021 with the first two movements premiered at the Havana Contemporary Music festival in 2023. This

performance will be the US premiere of the whole work with a World premiere of the 3rd movement. The first movement is an Adagio. Contemplative and laid back, this elegant and stately opening sets the stage for the second movement Moderato, con grazia. A delightful scherzo, it pairs the instruments in syncopated dances, redolent of Cuban jazz and lyricism. The 3rd and final movement opens with dramatic and pungent harmonies, followed by a lively exposition of the fractured motifs, which eventually coalesce to create a triple meter fugue, whose theme is inspired by the traditional Cuban 3:2 rhythm made famous in Leonard Bernstein's "America." This joyful finale is occasionally interrupted by staccato flourishes reminiscent of Stravinsky's "Rite of Spring"—the composer's favorite work—only to drive the work to a rousing, polytonal, pentatonic conclusion.

Brass Knuckles for Brass Quintet is in two movements. This work is a reaction to the increasingly anxious times in which we now find ourselves, surrounded by heightened tensions and senseless violence. It may be a source of debate as to why this climate exists at this particular time, but much like my work "Occupy" for piano quartet, which derived inspiration for the Wall Street protest, this work is not meant to be a form of political or social commentary but rather a way to express raw emotions by association.

The first movement, "Sucker Punch", conveys the sense that one is blindsided by events; that the proverbial wind has been knocked out. This movement explores the division of the quartet into two groups; those that produce the attacks of the sounds and those that quietly sustain the impact, contributing to a constantly changing coloristic palette where the duration of any given sound is ultimately the combined effort of two or more instruments. The second movement, "Shadow Boxing", embodies the hypervigilant self-protectionism of these tumultuous times where forces that would harm us seem to be coming from everywhere. A lightning quick and persistent, asymmetrical rhythm of alternating 17/16 and 14/16 bars is used as a perpetual element, like the thumping of a speed bag, as jagged melodic lines dart in and out. The lines come to predominate in the middle of the movement and are "shadowed" by a muted trumpet. Ultimately the perpetual rhythm returns in full force and undergoes a process of truncation, producing a sense of unprecedented speed and ferocity.

Please join us on February 18th at 7:30 p.m. at Epiphany Arts for "Social Sounds"; our second collaboration with the ~Nois Saxophone Quartet. This concert shines a spotlight on our latest Walder Foundation commission in our innovative program Hindsight/Foresight: Amplifying the Voices of Underrepresented Composers. The World Premiere of "Black Music" by Shawn Okpebholo explores the brilliance and

virtuosity of Motown and Chicago horn bands, through a kaleidoscopic chromatic lens of polytonal creative composition. We hope you will consider making a donation to Fulcrum Point in support of these amazing creative artists. Text FPMusic to 44321 and you'll be directly connected with us at www.fulcrumpoint.org

Bios:

Conductor, composer and trumpeter **Stephen Burns** is the Founder and Artistic Director of the Fulcrum Point New Music Project in Chicago. He has been acclaimed on four continents for his virtuosity and interpretative depth in recitals, orchestral appearances, chamber music, and multi-media performances. He has worked closely with composers John Corigliano, Osvaldo Golijov, Gunther Schuller, Jacob TV, and La Monte Young. Native to Wellesley, Massachusetts, Mr. Burns won the Young Concert Artists International Auditions, Avery Fisher Career Grant, the NEA Recital Grant, the Naumburg Award, the Charles Colin Award, the Meier Arts Achievement Award, and the Maurice André Concours International de Paris. Mr. Burns is on faculty at DePaul University's School of Music and The Bienen School of Music at Northwestern University. An artist faculty member of The Center for Advanced Musical Studies at Chosen Vale and a certified teacher in The Art of Practicing and Performing Beyond Fear, Prof. Burns is a Visiting Lecturer with Amici della Musica in Florence, Italy. With CDs at Naxos, MHS, Dorian, Delos, Essay, Kleos, & Innova, Stephen Burns is a Yamaha performing artist.

A native of Kansas City, **Kevin Harrison** is the former tubist with the Axiom Brass. He received a Bachelor of Music from Truman State University and graduated with distinction with a Master of Music degree from DePaul University. His principal teachers have included Steve Seward (Kansas City Symphony), Warren Deck (New York Philharmonic, retired), and Floyd Cooley (San Francisco Symphony, retired) in addition to private studies with such distinguished artists as Gene Pokorny, Charlie Vernon, Daniel Perantoni, Jennifer Montone, Michael Sanders, and Roger Oyster among others. A highly sought after freelance musician, Kevin has established himself in Chicago and throughout the Midwest as a chamber musician, orchestral musician, educator, clinician, and music coach. He is currently Principal Tuba of the Northwest Indiana Symphony and has performed with the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra, Saint Louis Symphony, Kansas City Symphony, and many other orchestras throughout Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Iowa. Kevin is an alumnus of both the Eastern Music Festival and School (2001) and Aspen Music Festival and School where he was a student from the

summers of 2003-2006. In Aspen, he received instruction from Warren Deck, gained world-class orchestral experience with some of today's leading artists, and worked closely with members of the American Brass Quintet in solo and chamber music performance. Mr. Harrison has gone on to perform and record with several quintets including the Lincoln Park Brass, Chicago Classic Brass, and Fulcrum Point New Music Project. He has also made solo appearances with the Northwest Indiana Symphony, American Academy of Conducting Orchestra at Aspen, and both the Truman State University Orchestra and Wind Symphony.

French hornist **Momo Hasselbring Seko** adventures for unique and meaningful co-creation. Committed to artistic integrity as a classical musician while evolving an authentic and personal approach to DEI values, she is expanding vocabulary on the French horn by drawing repertoire and stylistic, technical, and conceptual principles from world folk and contemporary genres. Momo programs and performs with a joyous abandon described by her friends as inventive, irreverent, and inimitable. She has performed with the Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra, Folks Operetta, Rockford Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Oistrakh, and Music of the Baroque, as well as Ensemble Dal Niente, The Grossman Ensemble, The Shins, Chico Freeman's Legacy Project, Mik Nawooj Hip Hop Orchestra, the Pocket Philharmonic, and the Braeburn Brass quintet. In 2023 Momo won the wind fellowship of the Chicago Luminarts Foundation. She published her debut record titled *In The Meantime* with guitarist Alvin Santner in 2023. An Evanston native, she received her BM summa cum laude at DePaul University and her master's degree in horn performance from Northwestern University in 2023. Momo teaches a full studio of French horn students at several local high schools. Committed to artistic integrity as a classical musician while evolving an authentic and personal approach to DEI values, Momo is expanding vocabulary on the French horn by drawing repertoire and stylistic, technical, and conceptual principles from world folk and contemporary genres. Inspired by feminist theories of musical collaboration and interconnection, she has spent the last three years curating duet repertoire for French horn and jazz guitar through a series of local performances and published recordings of co-arranged and co-composed pieces. Momo

Rebecca Oliverio is currently a member of the Chicago Lyric Opera Orchestra. Prior to joining the Lyric Opera, Ms. Oliverio spent one season with the New World Symphony in Miami Beach. She received her Master of Music degree at Northwestern University where she studied with David Bilger, Channing Philbrick, Thomas Rolfs, Michael Sachs and Robert Sullivan. During her undergraduate degree at Boston University she studied in London at the Royal College of Music with Mark Calder and Paul Sharp on natural trumpet. Her teachers at BU were

Terry Everson, Thomas Rolfs and Thomas Siders. Summer engagements during her studies included fellowships at the Tanglewood Music Center, Music Academy of the West and the National Repertory Orchestra. In addition, she was a member of the New England Brass Band as a front row cornet player and soloist. She has also performed with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Boston Philharmonic.

Robyn Smith is the newly appointed Principal Trombonist of the Chicago Sinfonietta Orchestra and former Second Trombonist of the Detroit Opera. Robyn graduated with a Master of Music from the New England Conservatory studying under the tutelage of Toby Oft, principal trombone of the Boston Symphony. In her most recent engagements, Robyn has played, as a substitute, with the St. Louis Symphony, The Boston Pops and has toured internationally with the Boston Symphony. She has also previously performed as a fellow with the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra, The New World Symphony, National Repertory Orchestra, American Repertory Theatre, Dee Dee Bridgewater Big Band at the Detroit Jazz Festival and with the artist Lizzo at the 62nd Annual Grammy Awards. She performs with a variety of ensembles and is an associate artist with the Rodney Marsalis Big Brass. Robyn's solo work includes a performance at Michigan State University's MLK tribute concert and as a featured soloist on New England Conservatory's Contemporary Ensemble concert. Her awards extend internationally as she was the winner of the 2018 International Trombone Association's Marsteller Solo Competition. Robyn is an advocate for the dismantling of oppressive structures that contribute to the lack of black and brown faces within high art forms. She teaches privately while also teaching through the Sistema Ravinia program that targets underrepresented youth in music. Robyn also mentors young black and brown musicians with goals of becoming professional musicians in various programs across the country.

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Fulcrum Point New Music Project is supported by a CityArts Grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events. This program is made possible by the Walder Foundation's support of Fulcrum Point's *"Hindsight/Foresight: Amplifying Voices of Under Represented Composers."* The Aaron Copland Fund for New Music, The Diston Fund, the Illinois Arts Alliance, The Driehaus Foundation, The Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, The Bucksbaum Family Foundation, The Harris Family Foundation, The Neisser Family Foundation, The Reynolds Family Foundation, The Earl and Brenda Shapiro Family Foundation, and The Zuckerman Family Foundation.

Special thanks to the Chicago Philharmonic for their partnership in new art music.

Created in 1998 by Stephen Burns, **Fulcrum Point New Music Project** pushes the boundaries of the musical experience globally by supporting new compositions, creating and performing new music experiences, and educating audiences to imagine the possibilities of music. Its programs are influenced by popular culture, literature, film, dance, jazz, Latin, and world music. Through multi-disciplinary programs, Fulcrum Point encourages audiences to make cross-cultural connections between new music, art, and technology, gaining greater insight into today's diverse world. Fulcrum Point's *AuxIn: Connected* and *Discoveries: Hear & Be Heard* are co-curated by Caitlin Edwards and Angelo Hart.

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