

RITUAL PROTOCOL

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5 NEW PIECES FOR MARIMBA

In 1994, **Makoto Nakura** was the first marimbist to win the Young Concert Artists International Auditions. He made acclaimed recital debuts in the Young Concert Artists Series at New York's 92nd Street Y and Washington's Kennedy Center, and performed the Creston Concertino with the New York Chamber Symphony at Alice Tully Hall. He was also featured by the Young Concert Artists Series in a chamber music concert at Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall.

Mr. Nakura has frequently performed the Kevin Puts' **Marimba Concerto**, written for him in 1997, with orchestras throughout the U.S. Applauded for his unique recitals and his enlightening educational residencies, Mr. Nakura has performed for audiences in 38 of the 50 states. He has appeared in New York City as a guest artist with The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, with the American Ballet Theatre Studio Company at the Metropolitan Opera House and at the Kaye Playhouse. A portrait of Mr. Nakura was televised nationally on CBS Sunday Morning.

Born in Kobe, Japan, Mr. Nakura began to play the marimba at the age of eight. He studied with marimbists Michiko Takahashi and Mutsuko Taneya, and earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Musashino College in Tokyo, where he wrote his graduate thesis on the subject of the marimba as a solo instrument. Mr. Nakura also studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London, earning an Artist Certificate with Distinction. In 2000, he was named an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music.

Kevin Puts was honored with a 2001 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship and a 2001-2002 Rome Prize from the American Academy in Rome, and won the 1999 Barlow International Competition, which includes premieres by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and the Utah Symphony. He was awarded a commission by the Institute of American Music, which was premiered by the Boston Pops and conductor Keith Lockhart. As the Young Concert Artists Composer-in-Residence, Mr. Puts wrote **Canyon** for marimbist **Makoto Nakura**, premiered at the 92nd Street Y and **Alternating Current**, premiered by pianist Jeremy Denk at the Kennedy Center. Mr. Puts commissions have also been premiered by the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center, the New York Youth Symphony at Carnegie Hall, the California Symphony Orchestra, (YCA alumna) violinist Chee-Yun at the Seoul Arts Center and the Spoleto Festival USA. The Vermont Symphony Orchestra and Japan's Ensemble Kobe co-commissioned Mr. Puts'

Marimba Concerto for premieres by **Makoto Nakura**.

Mr. Puts received his Bachelor's from the Eastman School of Music as a student of Samuel Adler and Joseph Schwantner, his Master's from Yale University with Jacob Druckman, Martin Bresnick, and David Lang, and his Doctor of Musical Arts from Eastman, studying composition with Christopher Rouse and piano with Nelita True.

CANYON

The symmetrical form of this suite, a central movement flanked by toccatas and "cadences," as well as the suite's symmetrical key-scheme, reminded me of calling into a great chasm and waiting for the echo to come back. To create slow harmonic movement, I decided to write intricate patterns for the marimbist to play, which would keep the bars of the marimba resonating. These patterns are like tiny details on the face of an enormous geological formation, and for the most part each movement features only one such pattern. This likens the suite to a set of preludes, similar to those of Bach.

To create contrasting sonorities, I juxtaposed quiet, introspective movements (nos. 2 and 4) with loud, extroverted movements. The performer's choice of mallets enhances these contrasts. Furthermore, I made large-scale variations intentionally, avoiding certain areas of the marimba during one entire movement, then exploiting these areas in the next. This technique is most obvious between Toccata 1 (generally high and loud) and Cadence 1 (low and soft).

Commissioned by Young Concert Artists for **Makoto Nakura**, Canyon's toccatas are intended to feature his dazzling technique, but all of the music was written with his unique command as a musician and a performer in mind.

- Kevin Puts

RITUAL PROTOCOL with Kevin Puts, pianist

Ritual Protocol was composed for **Makoto Nakura**, after a study of ritual music in various cultures. The work relies upon an evocative, darkly-hued, three-chord progression pervasive throughout all three movements which, through its many repetitions, is intended to bring to mind the solemn and entirely focused behavior characteristic of those involved in many of the rituals I studied. The marimba and piano are often combined to create the illusion of

a single, large keyboard instrument with the timbral possibilities of both instruments. In spite of the dramatic moments within, each movement begins and ends quietly. This suggests the gradual crescendo into ritual frenzy and the subsequent relaxing of tension and energy. It is also my method of imposing symmetry and clarity to the formal design of the entire work.

- Kevin Puts

Jason Eckardt's work has been recognized through commissions from Carnegie Hall, the Fromm Foundation, and the Koussevitzky Foundation; recordings on the CRI and Mode labels; awards from the League/ISCM (National Prize), Stadt Wesel (Symposium NRW Prize), ASCAP, the University of Illinois (Martirano Prize), and Columbia University (Rapoport Prize); and fellowships from the Fondation Royaumont, the MacDowell and Millay Colonies, the Fritz Reiner Center, the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts, and the Yvar Mikhashoff Trust. Mr. Eckardt's music has been performed in Europe, Asia, Australia, and America at festivals including Darmstadt, the ISCM World Music Days, Voix Nouvelles, Musica Nova Sofia, Currents in Musical Thought-Seoul, Musik im 20 Jahrhundert, the International Review of Contemporary Music, and the International Bartók Festival. An active promoter of new music, Jason Eckardt is a co-founder and the Executive Director of the contemporary music group Ensemble 21.

TRANSCIENCE

Transience is music in a perpetual state of change. The title reflects its mercurial surface, whose materials, never able to take root in their surroundings, exist only in the moment. They are pulled by the force of their own momentum into an ever-changing present, which itself is simultaneously destroyed and rejuvenated by the irrepressible flux of transformation.

The work's structure is bound not by referential motifs or programmatic formal designs, but by extended metastatic processes that motivate local and global changes in pitch, rhythm, dynamic, register, and melodic contour. The resulting developmental progressions are either linear, unfolding in a continuous fashion, or fragmented, featuring the rapid succession of disparate materials. In part, the drama of Transience depends on the listener's retrospective assessment of the diverse musical landscapes traversed. Yet the emotive

power of **Transience** is also closely tied to the intense physical demands made upon the performer. **Transience** was commissioned by **Makoto Nakura**, to whom the work is dedicated with great admiration.

- Jason Eckardt

Kenji Bunch was chosen as Young Concert Artists' Composer-in-Residence by a panel of distinguished YCA "Alumni" in 1998. During his two-year tenure, he wrote **Suite for Viola and Piano** for violist Naoko Shimizu, who premiered the piece at New York's 92nd Street Y and at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, and **Paraphraseology**, premiered by marimbist **Makoto Nakura** and violinist Stefan Milenkovich at Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall. Mr. Bunch has also received commissions from the English Chamber Orchestra, which recorded his **Fantasy** for EMI Classics, the St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble, the Ahn Trio, the Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival, the Zoom! Festival of New Music, Collegium Novum-Zurich and the New Juilliard Ensemble. Also a violist, Mr. Bunch is a founding member of the Flux Quartet. A native of Portland, Oregon, Kenji Bunch received his Bachelor's degree from The Juilliard School in viola as a student of Toby Appel, and a Master's degree in composition and viola, with Robert Beaser. He has also studied composition with Eric Ewazen and Stanley Wolfe. Mr. Bunch's honors include the William Schuman Prize for Outstanding Leadership in Music and the Lillian Fuchs Prize for Viola from Juilliard, and grants from ASCAP, Meet The Composer and the Leonard Bernstein Composers' Fund.

PARAPHRASEOLOGY with Stefan Milenkovich, violinist

Paraphraseology reflects my interest in cultural and historical paradox. Indeed, today's concert music world presents us with a remarkable combination of old, new, East, West, high, low, and so on. I wanted to celebrate the fact that simply through the aural persuasion of music, it's possible to erase any need to justify the mixing of cultures, timelines, or traditions.

We find a similar phenomenon in language. Latin, like Western classical music, enjoys a posthumous influence on many languages succeeding it - a foundation for most modern European languages. In today's English we still throw around Latin clichés, quotes, and intimidating legal terms on a regular

basis. Yet no one really questions why we still employ these anachronistic terms instead of their modern translations; they simply “sound right.” I decided the made-up word **Paraphraseology** sounded right as the title for my cheerful celebration of the incongruous. Paraphrase means literally “in other words” and phraseology “the choice of words.” Therefore this amalgam suggests “the choice of other words.” The work is in six short movements that are played without pause.

- Kenji Bunch

Tsuneya Tanabe has written four works for **Makoto Nakura**: *Recollections of the Inland Sea* for marimba and flute, premiered with flutist Marya Martin at Mr. Nakura’s New York debut in the Young Concert Artists Series at the 92nd Street Y; Concertino for solo marimba and two percussionists, premiered in Hong Kong; Masque for solo marimba, premiered in Kobe, Japan; and Rhapsody after ‘Beautiful Dreamer’ for marimba and orchestra, premiered by Mr. Nakura and the Bergen (New Jersey) Philharmonic Orchestra. Mr. Tanabe’s other major works include Seasonal Greetings in the Fall for three pipas, A Pair of Mirrors for clarinet, string quartet and koto, and Portrait for orchestra.

Tsuneya Tanabe studied at the Tokyo University of Fine Arts and Music with Yoshio Hasegawa and Yoshio Ikuma. He is a professor of composition and musicology at the Musashino University of Music, near Tokyo.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE INLAND SEA with David Fedele, flutist

There is a beautiful inland sea called Setonaikai, which lies in the southwest of the Japanese islands. In my teens I lived in a town facing the sea, with a dockyard and a fishing port. Walking down the part from the port, I would enjoy the scenic beauty - the expressive sea spread over the port, and a lot of small capes and inlets in a row.

I composed this music based on the impression of these inlets. However, it is not just a description of the landscape. To me, as an adult, it is the memory of my sensitive young days as well. In the first movement, I express my interior vision of the inlets in the recollection. In the later movements, apart from the memories of the past, I describe the joyful feeling facing the beauty of nature before me.

Makoto Nakura premiered this work at his New York debut in 1995.

- Tsuneya Tanabe

Belgrade-born violinist **Stefan Milenkovich** won the 1997 Young Concert Artists International Auditions and was awarded the Silver Medal at the 1994 Indianapolis International Violin Competition. Through Young Concert Artists, he made debuts at the 92nd Street Y, the Kennedy Center and Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall and as soloist with the New York Chamber Symphony at Lincoln Center.

When Mr. Milenkovich was ten, he played for President Ronald Reagan, and he performed for Mikhail Gorbachev at eleven. At fourteen, he performed for Pope John Paul II, and he gave his 1,000th concert when he was sixteen. He has appeared with the Berlin Symphony Orchestra, the Helsinki Philharmonic, the Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra, the Mexico State Symphony, the Melbourne Symphony, the New York Chamber Symphony and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, among others, has been featured on National Public Radio's "All Things Considered" and Japan's NHK Television. The Dynamic label has released three of his CDs. At eighteen, he was the youngest student to graduate with a music degree from the University of Belgrade. He participated in The Juilliard School's Professional Studies program under the tutelage of Dorothy DeLay, and is currently a teaching fellow at the DeLay Institute.

Flutist **David Fedele** won the 1988 Young Concert Artists International Auditions, and made his New York and Washington debuts on the Young Concert Artists Series. He has appeared as soloist with orchestras including the National Chamber Orchestra, the New York Symphonic Ensemble, the Charlotte, Knoxville and Green Bay symphonies, and in recital throughout the U.S. from Alaska to Florida. Mr. Fedele has appeared abroad in Japan, Argentina, Mexico, France, Italy, and Spain, and in New York with The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. A native of Charlotte, North Carolina, Mr. Fedele is a graduate of The Curtis Institute of Music and The Juilliard School, where he studied with Julius Baker. He is featured on Koch International Classic's recording of Charles Wuorinen's **New York Notes**, a recording of the works of Oliver Knussen for Virgin Classics, and the works of Steve Reich for Nonesuch Records.

All marimba players wish they had a much larger repertoire. As a very new solo instrument in classical music, our repertoire spans only the last sixty years or so. Building up the repertoire for the marimba will take time, but it is a mission for every marimbist. On this CD I am delighted to present five pieces composed for me over the last five years.

I find it very stimulating that today's composers write in widely varying styles, as you will hear on this CD. Some write in serial form, some use minimalism. Folk music derivations and pop-oriented modes are also represented. We are lucky to live in this age of diversity and to have the benefit of a broader range of cultures and ideas.

Since none of the composers on this CD plays the marimba, I was happy to have the opportunity to be closely involved during the composition of the works. I believe that demonstrating the expressive range and technical possibilities of the instrument serves as both a revelation and an inspiration to the composer. Collaboration of this kind is vital in order to give voice to the distinctive personality of the instrument.

In these collaborative sessions, I have enjoyed seeing the music emerge not only for the marimba but with me as a particular performer in mind. The five pieces on this CD have become a part of me and I also feel that characteristics of my playing are reflected in these works.

The solo pieces on this CD challenge technical capacity, but more importantly, create remarkable musical ideas. In the duo pieces, we find not a solo-accompaniment relationship but equal status for each instrument and an exploration of the possibilities of the marimba as an exciting component of the making of chamber music.

-MAKOTO NAKURA
www.makotonakura.com

This CD was made possible by the Young Concert Artists Composer-in-Residence Program, a part of Young Concert Artists, Inc., the international non-profit organization founded in 1961 to discover and launch the careers of extraordinary young musicians. Support for the Composer-in-Residence Program has been generously provided by the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, the Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Ernest Levenstein, the Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation, the Hale Matthews Foundation, and the Young Concert Artists Alumni Association.

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**KEVIN PUTS – CANYON for solo marimba**

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| 1. Toccata | 1:23 |
| 2. Cadence | 2:21 |
| 3. Canyon | 3:05 |
| 4. Cadence | 1:43 |
| 5. Toccata | 3:02 |

KENJI BUNCH – PARAPHRASEOLOGY for marimba and violin

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| 6. Prima facie | 4:36 |
| 7. In Absentia (part I) | 3:14 |
| 8. Persona non Grata | 2:51 |
| 9. In Absentia (part II) | 2:55 |
| 10. Status quo | 1:10 |
| 11. Tempus Fugit | 1:43 |

JASON ECKARDT

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| 12. Transience for solo marimba | 7:03 |
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TSUNEYA TANABE – RECOLLECTIONS OF THE INLAND SEA for marimba and flute

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| 13. Misterioso | 5:39 |
| 14. Allegro con brio | 7:51 |

KEVIN PUTS – RITUAL PROTOCOL for marimba and piano

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| 15. Sempre legato ma ritmico | 3:27 |
| 16. Mesto con moto | 5:54 |
| 17. ♩ = 144 | 3:23 |

Total 61:30**Kevin Puts - Canyon for solo marimba (1996)****Kenji Bunch - Paraphraseology for marimba and violin (2000)****Jason Eckardt - Transience for solo marimba (1999)****Tsuneya Tanabe - Recollections of the Inland Sea for marimba and flute (1995)****Kevin Puts - Ritual Protocol for marimba and piano (1998)****Produced and Engineered by: Gregory K. Squires****Digital Editing and Mastering by: Meridith Capraro****Recording venue SUNY Purchase****Cover photo: Christian Steiner • Package design: J.J. Stelmach**