

Guest Artist Recital:  
Keith Kirchoff,  
piano and electronics

Friday, February 2, 2024 · 7:30 PM  
Rock Hall Auditorium  
1715 N. Broad Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19122



# Program

*Papillons, Op. 2* (1831) Robert Schumann

*Enchantment* (1927) R. Nathaniel Dett

- I. Incantation
- II. Song of the Shrine
- III. Dance of Desire
- IV. Beyond the Dream

*Funerailles* (1849) Franz Liszt

*Antiphony* (2019, rev. 2022)<sup>‡§</sup> Caroline Louise Miller

*Los Murmullos* (2021)<sup>§</sup> Per Bloland

<sup>§</sup>Commissioned by Keith Kirchoff

<sup>‡</sup>This commission has been made possible by the Chamber Music America Classical Commissioning Program, with generous funding provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

# Program Notes

*Papillons, Op. 2*

Robert Schumann

Schumann was a great lover of literature. Many of his works have a narrative background, and *Papillons* (Butterflies) is no exception. The work is inspired by Jean Paul's novel *Flegeljahre*, particularly the final chapter which centers around a set of twin brothers (Walt and Vult Harnisch) competing for the affection of a young woman (Wina) at a masked ball. In a letter to his friend Ludwig Rellstab, Schumann writes: "You remember the last scene in *Flegeljahre* - masked ball - Walt - Vult - masks - Wina - Vult's dancing - the exchange of masks - confessions - anger - revelation - the hurrying away - the closing dream and then the departing brother. I often turned to the last page, for the end seemed like a fresh beginning, and almost unconsciously I found myself at the piano, and thus one *Papillon* after the other came into existence."

The entire piece is a series of twelve dances, all of varying character and style. The final dance culminates with a quotation of *Grossvateranz*: a popular German song from the 17th thru 19th centuries that was commonly used to conclude a ball.

- Note by Keith Kirchoff

*Enchantment*

R. Nathaniel Dett

"What seek you? Say! And what do you expect?"

"I know not what; the Unknown I would have!

What's known to me is endless; I would go

Beyond the end. The last word still is wanting."

I. Incantation

A soul obsessed by a desire for the unattainable, journeying on an endless quest, wanders into a pagan temple, and there yields to an overpowering impulse of the moment to utter an Incantation before the shrine of an unknown goddess.

II. Song of the Shrine

From somewhere far within the shrine a mysterious voice answers – a

“voice of molten melody

Singing love that may not be.”

### III. Dance of Desire

A drum beats, and a gong sounds; strange shapes assemble for a carnival of passion, into whose company and revelry the soul finds itself drawn irresistible. In the urge of the music the Incantation mingles with the now mocking Song of the Shrine.

After a mad swirl, there is a final crash, at the sound of which the apparitions vanish.

### IV. Beyond the Dream

And, as in a vision, the soul sees itself transfigured, appearing unto itself as an ever-shifting shoal of pale, opalescent fire, from which there rises in a visible exhalation, like smoke from smoldering incense, the still unsatisfied longing for the unattainable.

- Note by R. Nathaniel Dett

### **Funerailles**

**Franz Liszt**

*Funérailles* is the seventh movement in *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* (*Poetic and Religious Harmonies*), a collection of ten piano pieces by Liszt published in 1853. The cycle was inspired by the poetry of Alphonse de Lamartine, and explores the relationship of humanity to the divine.

Subtitled “October 1949,” *Funérailles* is an elegy written in response to the crushing of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848 by the Habsburgs. Some have speculated that the piece is a tribute to Liszt’s friend Frédéric Chopin (who died on October 17, 1849), due to the extended octave section in the piece’s climax which is thought to allude to Chopin’s *Polonaise in A-flat major, Op. 53*, written seven years earlier. However, Liszt refuted this claim and often stated that it was intended as a tribute to three of his friends who suffered in the Revolution: Prince Felix Lichnowsky (beaten to death by a mob), Count László Teleki (forced into exile for over ten years), and the Hungarian Prime Minister, Count Lajos Batthyány (executed on October 6, 1849).

- Note by Keith Kirchoff

*Antiphony* is a revision of the first movement of *Ansible* which was composed for the SPLICE Ensemble and is dedicated to the memory of Ursula K. Le Guin.

Ursula K. Le Guin coined the term “Ansible” in her 1966 science fiction novel *Rocannon’s world*. The Ansible is a device that enables instantaneous interstellar communication, alleviating the significant time lag between the transmission and receipt of messages that could previously only travel at the speed of light. In Le Guin’s *Hainish Cycle*, a loosely connected group of sci-fi novels that take part within the same universe, the Ansible is sometimes present and sometimes absent – for a variety of reasons, economic, political, or because it hasn’t been invented yet. In circumstances where the Ansible is absent, communication between entities is often frustrated or inflected by vast distances of time and space, causing interstellar political troubles as messages received 50 or 100 years later lose their relevance. The Ansible, an open-source, open-science communications device invented by an Anarchist physicist, is conceived by Le Guin as having utopian potentials, enabling a peaceful interstellar coalition called the Ekumen. In spite of its Utopian potential, its presence produces conflict as well, a rich metaphor for globalization. Struggles are waged for control of the Ansible technology itself, by entities who wish to capitalize on exclusive rights to its use. The rapid exchange of information across galaxies also interacts in unpredictable ways with different societies, in the very worst circumstances causing a technocracy (see *The Telling*).

*Antiphony* is a meditation on pre-ansible communication, as messages from almost a century ago (conveyed by classical music recordings from the 1930’s, 40’s, and 50’s) finally are received in a not-so-distant future. Keith responds by playing extrapolations on these old tunes on a decaying piano. These old recordings, first heard in *Antiphony*, are carried throughout the other three movements; snippets placed in a variety of contexts – borne on the wind from a distant house maybe, or heard broadcast over the radio. The theme of embedding the same information in a multitude of spatial and temporal contexts carries throughout the rest of the piece.

- Note by Caroline Louise Miller

*Los murmullos* is based on a highly influential yet little known (at least in the US) novel from the 1950s: *Pedro Páramo*, by the Mexican author Juan Rulfo. It is the surreal tale of a man's return to the town in which his parents lived, long after that town has fallen into decay. Comala is now more heavily populated by the dead than the living, and exists in a blurred twilight realm in which such distinctions are meaningless. The descriptions of the environment are exceptionally vivid, often invoking the four elements to transition between the past and the present, and between the living and the dead. Sound is particularly important to the narrative. The original title of the novel was in fact *Los murmullos*, a reflection of the murmuring and whispering of the dead heard at various points throughout. Contrary to the gentle implications of the word, it is the intensity of these murmurs that overwhelms and suffocates the protagonist just over half way through the narrative.

My composition, for piano and electronics, shifts between four recurring material types, each inspired by one of the above-mentioned elements as described in the book. The electronics were generated using physical modeling software (Modalys). Keith, for whom the piece was written, had asked for something with a bit of noise – hopefully this does the trick.

- Note by Per Bloland

## About the Artist

Described as a “virtuosic tour de force” whose playing is “energetic, precise, (and) sensitive,” Keith Kirchoff is a pianist, composer, conductor, concert curator, and teacher. A strong advocate for living composers, Kirchoff is committed to fostering new audiences for contemporary music and giving a voice to emerging composers.

Kirchoff is the co-founder and President of SPLICE Music: one of the United States’ largest programs dedicated to the performance, creation, and development of music for performers and electronics. As a part of SPLICE, he serves as Director of Performance Studies for SPLICE Institute (a weeklong summer program held at Western Michigan University), Director of SPLICE Festival (an annual conference held in collaboration with different universities), and the pianist of SPLICE Ensemble.

As a pianist, Kirchoff has played throughout the United States as well as major cities throughout Italy, New Zealand, Australia, England, Canada, Belgium, Mexico, China, and The Netherlands. He has been a featured soloist in many music festivals including the Festival de Musique Actuelle de Victoriaville, Festival Internacional de Música Contemporánea, the Society for Electro-Acoustic Music in the United States (SEAMUS), the Oregon Festival of American Music, and the International Computer Music Conference (ICMC). In addition to the SPLICE Ensemble, he is the pianist in the Boston-based Hinge Quartet, and as a soloist and ensemble musician, has commissioned several dozen composers and premiered hundreds of new works, including the Boston premiere of Charles Ives’ Emerson Concerto.

Described as “hyperactive,” Kirchoff’s compositions have been presented throughout the United States, Canada, England, Turkey, Holland, Mexico, New Zealand, Australia, and Germany. He has received commissions from numerous ensembles and soloists including Transient Canvas, Hinge Quartet, Ensemble mise-en, pianists Shiao-uen Ding and Kai Schumacher, baritone Nathan Kreuger, and Telling Stories Music.

The winner of the 2006 Steinway Society Piano Competition and the 2005 John Cage Award, Kirchoff was named the 2011 “Distinguished Scholar” by the Seabee Memorial Scholarship Association. He has also received composing grants from MetLife Meet the Composer and the Foundation for Contemporary Arts.



Kirchoff has served as Vice President of SEAMUS (Society for Electroacoustic Music in the United States) and is the founder and Artistic Director of Original Gravity: a Boston-based concert series that features the music of local composers and pairs that music with locally brewed beer.

Kirchoff's primary teachers include Dean Kramer, Stephen Drury, and Paul Wirth. He received his Bachelor of Music degree at the University of Oregon in 2003 graduating summa cum laude and then received his Master of Music degree at New England Conservatory in 2005. He has also studied composition with Michael Gandolfi and Jeffrey Stolet, and conducting with Richard Hoenich. In addition to his recordings on his independent label Thinking outLOUD Records, Kirchoff has released recordings on the New World, Kairos, Ravello, Parma, Albany, SEAMUS, New Focus, Tantara, and Zerx labels.

Kirchoff lives in Rhode Island and serves as the Chair of the Keyboard Department at Concord Conservatory of Music, is the Music Director at First Parish in Brookline, and teaches composition at Connecticut College. He is also an avid homebrewer and has published several articles on the topic.

You can follow Kirchoff on Instagram @8e8keys and learn more at his website: [keithkirchoff.com](http://keithkirchoff.com).

## Biographies

Born in Zwickau, Germany in 1810, **ROBERT SCHUMANN** started his musical education on the piano. The son of a bookseller, he began to experiment with composition at an early age, and also cultivated a passion for poetry and literature. Although richly talented, he was never considered a prodigy, especially by the standards of the time. At sixteen, after the tragic deaths of his sister and father, he entered the University of Leipzig to study the law; but this didn't last long, and soon he had left the school to pursue music with all his energies.

At the age of twenty, Schumann was studying the piano with Friedrich Wieck in Leipzig; he also boarded with the Wieck family. Although a hand injury prevented him from pursuing a career as a performing artist, he found a niche writing music criticism – and composing, an activity which was starting to focus his considerable talents. In the early 1830s, he published several piano pieces to critical acclaim. In 1834, he founded the *New Journal for Music* and served as its editor for the next nine years; the publication attacked what Schumann felt were the shallow and inconsequential musical practices of the day. On the positive side, he recognized the brilliance of Chopin and Brahms.

Meanwhile, Schumann continued to compose. In 1835 he fell in love with his former piano teacher's daughter, Clara Wieck – who was only sixteen at the time. Her father, although he liked Schumann, wanted more financial security for his daughter, and opposed the union hotly. But the couple persevered, and they were married in 1840. That year was Schumann's happiest as a composer. He wrote over 130 songs, including the gorgeous *Widmung*, and threw himself into his first symphonic projects. The next year, his first two symphonies were performed; after that, he delved into chamber music writing.

But the happiness and creative fire was not to last. In the early 1840s, Schumann began to suffer from mental illness; even while accepting a position at Mendelssohn's conservatory in Leipzig, his brain was beginning to deteriorate. He attempted suicide, and was committed to an asylum in Bonn. There he died, aged 46, in 1856. [biography taken from singers.com]

**ROBERT NATHANIEL DETT** was born in Drummondville, Ontario, Canada, on October 11, 1882. Part of a musical family, Dett was encouraged to study piano along with his two older brothers. After he and his family moved to Niagara Falls, New York, he continued his musical studies at the Oliver Willis Halstead Conservatory. He played at several of the local churches and at a local hotel, where he worked as a bellboy.

A hotel patron who heard the young pianist perform sponsored Dett's attendance at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. When Dett graduated in 1908, he became the first person of African descent to receive a bachelor of music degree in composition from the conservatory.

Following his time at Oberlin, Dett continued his musical studies, attending the American Conservatory of Music at Columbia University, Northwestern University, the University of Pennsylvania, Harvard University – where he received the Bowdoin Literary Prize in 1920 for his theses, *Negro Music*, and with Nadia Boulanger at the Fontainebleau in Paris. He completed his master's studies in music composition from the Eastman School of Music in 1932 and was awarded honorary doctoral degrees by Howard University in 1924 and Oberlin in 1926.

After teaching at Lane College, Jackson, Tennessee, and Lincoln Institute in Jefferson City, Missouri, Dett began a nearly twenty-year association with the Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia. He took his Hampton Institute Choir on a 40-city tour of Europe in 1930 and to sites in the United States, including a performance at Constitution Hall eight years prior to the hall's controversial "white artists only" policy that led to Marian Anderson's performance at the Lincoln Memorial.

Dett composed approximately 100 works for piano, orchestra, chorus, and solo voice. Among his many compositional and literary awards were the Francis Boott Prize for his work, "Don't Be Weary Traveler," and the Harmon Foundation Award for Creative Achievement in Music. He received a commission to compose music for the Rochester Centennial Celebration in 1934 as well as two symphonic commissions from the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS).

Dett was a charter member of the National Association of Negro Musicians and served as its president from 1924 until 1926. His final teaching position was as Director of Music at Bennett College, Greensboro, North Carolina, from 1937 to 1942. R. Nathaniel Dett died of congestive heart failure on 2 October, 1943, in Battle Creek, Michigan, during an assignment as a musical advisor for the United Services Organization (USO). Among the legacies of Dett's contributions to the

understanding and performance of Afrocentric music was the formation of the Nathaniel Dett Chorale in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, in 1998. [biography adapted from Randy Jones]

**FRANZ LISZT** (October 22, 1811 - July 31, 1886) was a Hungarian composer, virtuoso pianist, conductor, teacher, and fervent patron of the arts. With a diverse body of work spanning more than six decades, he is considered to be one of the most prolific and influential composers of his era and remains one of the most popular composers in modern concert piano repertoire.

Liszt first gained renown during the early nineteenth century for this virtuoso skill as a pianist. A child prodigy (together with Mozart he is the youngest composer ever to be commissioned to write an opera), he began touring throughout Europe by age eight. Regarded as one of the greatest pianists of all time, he was the first musician to perform a solo piano recital (he was also the first pianist to position the piano parallel to the audience). His programs not only featured his own wildly virtuosic piano works, but he regularly programmed the music of Beethoven and his contemporaries (at a time when it was customary to only perform your own compositions). In what has now been dubbed "Lisztomania," he rose to a degree of stardom and popularity among the public not experienced by the virtuosos who preceded him.

In his early thirties, Liszt retired from concertizing and focussed his artistic energy on composing, teaching, and conducting. He was one of the most prominent representatives of the "New German School," and he left behind an extensive and diverse body of work that influenced his forward-looking contemporaries and anticipated 20th-century ideas and trends. Among Liszt's musical contributions were the symphonic poem, developing thematic transformation as part of his experiments in musical form, and radical innovations in harmony. Liszt is regarded as a forefather of musical impressionism and is credited with writing the first treatise on twelve tone music. In a radical departure from his earlier compositional styles, many of Liszt's later works also feature experiments in atonality, foreshadowing the serialist movement of the 20th century. [biography loosely adapted from Wikipedia]

**CAROLINE LOUISE MILLER**'s music explores affect, biomusic, labor, tactility, and digital materiality. She works freely across the realms of electroacoustic music, popular-genre crossover, sound art, chamber music, and experimental musical theater, and because of that appears at a diverse array of festivals and venues. Her most recent work is *Ansible*, a 32-minute meditation on communication, globalization, and open-science technology based around the science-fiction work of Ursula K. Le Guin. *Ansible* was commissioned by SPLICE Ensemble with a classical commissioning grant from Chamber Music America. In 2018 she won the ISB/David Walter Composition Competition for *Hydra Nightingale*, created with free jazz bassist Kyle Motl. Other projects include an electronics/trumpet duo with Alexandria Smith. In May 2019, the duo performed at The Stone (NYC), a historic venue curated by John Zorn. An ongoing project is a series of instrumental hip-hop/acousmatic crossover works. The first of these, *Subsong*, takes us on a journey through a gloomy sonic netherworld. *Subsong* was voted onto SEAMUS vol. 28 by audience choice. In 2020, C.L.M. will work with Ensemble Adapter (Berlin) on a new biomusic piece, studying the sound cultures of wild dogs, insects, birds, cetaceans, and rainforests.

Alongside individual projects, Caroline is passionate about organizing, curating, and producing concerts. From 2012–2017, she organized and curated annual freeform concerts at the Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography. *Immersion@Birch Aquarium* drew over a thousand visitors from the San Diego county community since its inaugural event, and incorporated musics as diverse as experimental chamber, gamelan, American folk, soul, free jazz, drone, and noise; as well as installation, film, and poetry. In 2019 she curated a multimedia science-fiction show called *Tales from the Wasteland* that brought together works which meditate on alternate realities; pasts, presents, and futures. Since 2014, she has also co-organized and co-curated, with Fernanda Navarro (and many others over the years!) a series of concerts and installations centering the perspectives and experiences of women.

Caroline's music appears across the U.S. and around the world. She holds a Ph.D. in music composition from UC San Diego, where she worked with Katharina Rosenberger, Amy Cimini, Miller Puckette, Anthony Burr, and Ricardo Dominguez.

**PER BLOLAND** is a composer of acoustic and electroacoustic music whose works have been praised by the New York Times as “lush, caustic,” and “irresistible.” His compositions range from short intimate solo pieces to works for large orchestra, incorporate video, dance, and custom electronics, and often draw on a variety of other art forms. He is interested particularly in the intersections between literature and music, especially regarding issues of modernity in both disciplines.

Bloland has received awards and recognition from organizations including IRCAM, ICMA, SEAMUS/ASCAP, the Ohio Arts Council, Digital Art Awards of Tokyo, the Martirano Competition, ISCM, the Eastman Computer Music Center, SCI/ASCAP, the Dal Niente Composer Competition, Taukay Edizioni Musicali, and the Accademia Musicale Pescarese. His first opera, *Pedr Solis*, was commissioned and premiered by Guerilla Opera in 2015, and received rave reviews from the Boston Globe and the Boston Classical Review. In 2013 his work was selected for performance at the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) World New Music Days in Slovakia. He has received commissions from Unheard-of//Ensemble, loadbang, Keith Kirchoff, Wild Rumpus, the Ecce Ensemble, Ensemble Pi, the Callithumpian Consort, Stanford’s CCRMA, SEAMUS/ASCAP, the Kenners, Michael Straus and Patti Cudd. His music can be heard on the TauKay (Italy), Capstone, Spektral, and SEAMUS labels, on the 2015 ICMC DVD, and through the MIT Press. His portrait CD, *Chamber Industrial*, was performed by Ecce Ensemble and is available on Tzadik.

Performers of Bloland’s music include Guerilla Opera, the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra, Talea Ensemble, the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), the Quasars Ensemble (Slovakia), Bent Frequency, Insomnio, the Callithumpian Consort, Linea Ensemble, Ecce Ensemble, newEar, sfSound, Ensemble Moto Perpetuo, the Worn Chamber Ensemble, the Stanford Symphony Orchestra, Taka Kigawa, Elliot Gattegno, Keith Kirchoff, Bill Solomon, Patti Cudd, Margaret Lancaster, Sebastian Berweck, John Sampen, and Marianne Gythfeldt. His music has been performed at Bourges, Darmstadt, ICMC, SEAMUS, the ISCM World New Music Days, SIGGRAPH, Gaudeamus, the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, the SCI National Conference, Stanford Lively Arts, the Third Practice Electroacoustic Music Festival, the Ingenuity Festival Cleveland, and the Bowling Green New Music Festival, among others. His collaborative video piece *Graveshift* has been widely viewed and acclaimed as part of the Visual Music Marathon.

Boland is currently an Associate Professor of Composition and Technology and coordinator of the Composition Area at Miami University, Ohio. He is also a board member of SPLICE Music, a founding composition faculty member at the SPLICE Institute, and recently established the Composition program at the Montecito International Music Festival. He completed a five-month Musical Research Residency at IRCAM in Paris during the spring semester of 2013, and is currently in the midst of a second multi-segment residency there.

## **Boyer College of Music and Dance**

The Boyer College of Music and Dance offers over 500 events open to the public each year. Students have the unique opportunity to interact with leading performers, composers, conductors, educators, choreographers and guest artists while experiencing a challenging and diverse academic curriculum. The Boyer faculty are recognized globally as leaders in their respective fields. Boyer alumni are ambassadors of artistic leadership and perform with major orchestras, opera and dance companies, teach at schools and colleges and work as professional music therapists, choreographers and composers. Boyer's recording label, BCM&D records, has produced more than thirty recordings, five of which have received Grammy nominations.

[boyer.temple.edu](http://boyer.temple.edu)

## **The Center for the Performing and Cinematic Arts**

The Center for the Performing and Cinematic Arts consists of the Boyer College of Music and Dance, School of Theater, Film and Media Arts, the George and Joy Abbott Center for Musical Theater and the Temple Performing Arts Center. The School of Theater, Film and Media Arts engages gifted students with nationally and internationally recognized faculty scholars and professionals. A hallmark of the School of Theater, Film and Media Arts is the Los Angeles Study Away program, housed at historic Raleigh Studios. The George and Joy Abbott Center for Musical Theater engages visiting performers, guest artists, set designers, playwrights and other Broadway professionals. The Temple Performing Arts Center (TPAC), a historic landmark on campus, is home to a state-of-the-art 1,200 seat auditorium and 200 seat chapel. More than 500 concerts, classes, lectures and performances take place at TPAC each year.

[arts.temple.edu](http://arts.temple.edu)

## **Temple University**

Temple University's history begins in 1884, when a young working man asked Russell Conwell if he could tutor him at night. It wasn't long before he was teaching several dozen students—working people who could only attend class at night but had a strong desire to make something of themselves. Conwell recruited volunteer faculty to participate in the burgeoning night school, and in 1888 he received a charter of incorporation for "The Temple College." His founding vision for the school was to provide superior educational opportunities for academically talented and highly motivated students, regardless of their backgrounds or means. The fledgling college continued to grow, adding programs and students throughout the following decades. Today, Temple's more than 35,000 students continue to follow the university's official motto—*Perseverantia Vincit*, or "Perseverance Conquers"—with their supreme dedication to excellence in academics, research, athletics, the arts and more.

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