

DEFINITELY NOT RETIRING: MIT INSTITUTE PROFESSOR JOHN HARBISON AT 75



MIT Vocal Jazz Ensemble, and
MIT's faculty jazz quintet, Strength in Numbers
special guest Rose Mary Harbison, violin
MIT Chamber Chorus and members of the MIT Wind Ensemble

December 8, 2013
Sunday | 7pm
Kresge Auditorium, MIT

Please turn off all cell phones, pagers and other electronic devices.
Flash photography, audio and/or video recordings are prohibited.
Enter and exit the concert hall only between pieces.

Thank you.

PROGRAM

Cortège (2008)
for six percussionists
in memoriam Donald Sur

John Harbison (b. 1938)

- I. Risoluto
- II. Allegro
- III. Lento

MIT Wind Ensemble Percussion Section: Richard Arnold, Joseph Babcock, Victoria Chang, Mark Chilenski, Jesus Gonzalez, Andrew Tang

Surprise #1, #2 & #3

**Remarks from Phillip S. Khoury,
Ford International Professor of History and Associate Provost**

Surprise #4

O Jesus Christ, mein Lebens Licht, BWV 118

J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

*MIT Chamber Chorus, William Cutter, conductor,
and members of the MIT Wind Ensemble*

John Harbison, conductor

INTERMISSION

Pure Blues

John Harbison

Miles by Train

John Harbison

All for You*

John Harbison

Sweet Pretty Baby*

John Harbison

(based on a virelai by Gil Macho)

Strength in Numbers

**guest appearance: Rose Mary Harbison, violin*

Strength in Numbers

Mark Harvey, trumpet

Dylan Sherry, tenor sax, soprano sax

John Harbison, piano

Keala Kaumeheiwa, bass

Fred Harris, drums

The MIT Vocal Jazz Ensemble Lyrics Project

Music by John Harbison

Lyrics by members of VJE

<i>Taking a Chance</i>	<i>Ben Lee</i>	Edan Krolewicz
<i>The Right Thing</i>	<i>Hannah Wood</i>	Hannah Wood
<i>Nature's Best</i>	<i>Royal Morris</i>	Royal Morris
<i>Oh How I Wish You Knew</i>	<i>Jackie Xu</i>	Emily Wean
<i>I Don't Know How You Love Me</i>	<i>Ben Bloomberg</i>	Ben Bloomberg
<i>A Puzzlement</i>	<i>Tiandra Ray & Matt Starr</i>	Tiandra Ray
<i>Dust</i>	<i>Emily Wean</i>	Emily Wean
<i>It's Saturday</i>	<i>Edan Krolewicz</i>	Edan Krolewicz
Finale: <i>Aunt Hagar's Blues</i>	<i>VJE & S.I.N.</i>	

MIT Vocal Jazz Ensemble

Ben Bloomberg G (logistics, rehearsal assistant)

Edan Krolewicz '14 (rehearsal assistant)

Ben Lee G

Royal Morris '15

Tiandra Ray '15 (whip)

Joanna So '15 (rehearsal pianist)

Matt Starr '15

Emily Wean '14 (rehearsal assistant)

Hannah Wood '15

Jackie Xu '17

The MIT Vocal Jazz Lyrics Project

We have done a lot of classic songs, and a lot of improvising. Singers writing their own songs would be a further step: As a way-station I proposed trying some lyric-writing. I supplied tunes from my wide reserve of rejects – some of you may have heard a group of my unrejected pop songs in May 2011 with MIT Festival Jazz Ensemble and VJE. Tonight you hear the results of the Lyrics Project, with all the members of the group singing.

The songs dress up and sound better. The writers picked up clues from the tunes and their chords. They have been on a quality word-diet as singers – the likes of Ira Gershwin, John Mercer, Oscar Hammerstein, and Dorothy Fields. Well-nourished, they don't fear direct emotion, tell their stories quickly, and phrase with imagination. I offered only one useful tip: start anywhere.

We close by joining S.I.N. in an ancient piece (early 20th century) with a potent lyric.

VJE's winter concert, songs by Rube Bloom and Burton Lane, and the premiere of a new song by Peter Godart is on December 11 at 9pm in Killian Hall.

—John Harbison

TONIGHT'S PERFORMERS

Composer **John Harbison** is among America's most prominent artistic figures. He has received numerous awards and distinctions, including the prestigious MacArthur Foundation's "genius" award, the Pulitzer Prize, and the Heinz Award in the Arts and Humanities. Harbison has composed music for most of this country's premiere musical institutions, including the Metropolitan Opera (for whom he wrote *The Great Gatsby*), the Chicago Lyric Opera, the New York Philharmonic, the Chicago Symphony, the Boston Symphony, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and the Santa Fe and Aspen festivals. His works include five string quartets, six symphonies, a ballet, three operas, and numerous chamber and choral works.

Harbison's music is distinguished by its exceptional resourcefulness and expressive range. He is considered to be "original, varied, and absorbing — relatively easy for audiences to grasp and yet formal and complex enough to hold our interest through repeated hearings — his style boasts both lucidity and logic" (Fanfare). Harbison is also a gifted commentator on the art and craft of composition and was recognized in his student years as an outstanding poet (he wrote his own libretto for *Gatsby*).

Several of his works have recently premiered: *Koussevitsky Said* and *Symphony No. 6*, both by the Boston Symphony; *Closer to My Own Life*, on texts by Alice Munro, by the Met Orchestra and mezzo-soprano Christine Rice led by Fabio Luisi; *Finale, Presto*, a "comment" on Haydn's unfinished Op. 103 invited by the Brentano Quartet; *String Quartet No. 5* by the Pro Arte Quartet; *Sonata No. 1* for Violin and Piano for Cho-Liang Lin; *Double Concerto* for Violin and Cello with the Boston Symphony Orchestra; *Mary Lou* (for the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony); *The Seven Ages* (A Koussevitsky commission for the New York New Music Ensemble and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players); *A Clear Midnight* (Pro Arte Singers); *Winter's Tale* (Boston Modern Orchestra Project [BMOP], complete revised version); *Symphony No. 5*, commissioned by the Boston Symphony Orchestra; *The Great Gatsby Suite* (for the Aspen Festival Orchestra); *Cortège*, for six percussionists (New England Conservatory); *Milosz Songs* (commissioned by the New York Philharmonic for long-time Harbison champion Dawn Upshaw); the *Concerto for Bass Viol* (commissioned by the International Society for Double Bassists for a consortium of 15 major orchestras); and *But Mary Stood: Sacred Symphony for Soprano, Chorus and Strings* (Cantata Singers of Boston).

Harbison's present composition projects include a work for voice, oboe, and string quartet (co-commissioned); a work for mezzo-soprano and string quartet (Network for New Music); and a string trio for Camerata Pacifica.

Harbison's opera *Full Moon in March* (BMOP Sound) was released on CD in April 2009 and *The First Four String Quartets* (Centaur) followed in September, ahead of several new recordings issued last season *Christmas Vespers* (Brassjar Music), *Montale Occasions* (Albany), and the ballet *Ulysses* (BMOP Sound). Other recent releases include *Cortège* (Naxos), *Rubies* (after Thelonius Monk's "Ruby, My Dear")

(Naxos: Schwarz/Seattle); Suite for Cello Solo (Albany: Carolin Stinson, cello); and the Woodwind Quintet (Summit: Lieurance Woodwind Quintet). Altogether, more than 90 of his compositions have been recorded on labels such as Albany, Centaur, Nonesuch, Northeastern, Harmonia Mundi, New World, Decca, Koch, Archetype, CRI, Naxos, Bridge, Cedille, and Musica Omnia. The Musica Omnia double album of works for string quartet was named one of the top ten classical CDs of the year by The New York Times

Harbison has been composer-in-residence with the Pittsburgh Symphony, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Tanglewood, Marlboro, and Santa Fe Chamber music festivals, Songfest, and the American Academy in Rome. As a conductor, Harbison has led a number of leading orchestras and chamber groups. From 1990 to 1992 he was Creative Chair with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, conducting music from Monteverdi to the present, and in 1991, at the Ojai Festival, he led the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. Harbison has also conducted many other ensembles, among them the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony, and the Handel and Haydn Society. Mr. Harbison first led Bach cantata performances in 1958 as conductor of Harvard's Bach Society Orchestra. He has continued to do so every year since then, in two tenures as music director of Boston's Cantata Singers, and then for many years as principal guest conductor of Emmanuel Music in Boston, leading performances there not only of Bach cantatas, but also 17th-century motets, and contemporary music.

Harbison was born in Orange, New Jersey on December 20, 1938 into a musical family. He was improvising on the piano by five years of age and started a jazz band at age 12. He did his undergraduate work at Harvard University and earned an MFA from Princeton University. Following completion of a junior fellowship at Harvard, Harbison joined the faculty at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where, in 1984, he was named Class of 1949 Professor of Music; in 1994, Killian Award Lecturer in recognition of "extraordinary professional accomplishments;" and in 1995 he was named Institute Professor, the highest academic distinction MIT offers to resident faculty. He has also taught at CalArts and Boston University, and in 1991 he was the Mary Biddle Duke Lecturer in Music at Duke University. Furthering the work of younger composers is one of Harbison's prime interests, and until recently he served as president of the Aaron Copland Fund for Music.

In 1998, Harbison was named winner of the Heinz Award for the Arts and Humanities, a prize established in honor of the late Senator John Heinz by his wife Teresa to recognize five leaders annually for significant and sustained contributions in the Arts and Humanities, the Environment, the Human Condition, Public Policy and Technology, and the Economy and Employment. He is the recipient of numerous other awards, among them the Distinguished Composer award from the American Composers Orchestra (2002), the Harvard Arts Medal (2000), the American Music Center's Letter of Distinction (2000), the Kennedy Center Friedheim First Prize (for his Piano Concerto), a MacArthur Fellowship (1989), and the Pulitzer Prize (1987). He also holds four honorary doctorates.

Much of Harbison's violin music has been composed for his wife Rose Mary, with whom he serves as artistic director of the annual Token Creek Chamber Music Festival, founded in 1989 and held on the family farm in Wisconsin, where much of Harbison's music has been composed.

In recent years, Harbison has revived his career as a jazz pianist. Early on, as the founder-leader of the Harbison Heptet and as sideman in many other groups — playing with Tom Artin, Buck Clayton, Vic Dickenson, Jo Jones, and Edmund Hall (1952–1963) — he took a jazz sabbatical for four decades, returning in 2003 to found the Token Creek Jazz Ensemble. The quartet and guests perform exclusively for the annual Token Creek Festival in Wisconsin. As a keyboard player he explores affinities between jazz change playing and figured bass realization.

The MIT Vocal Jazz Ensemble was formed in the spring of 2011, the first and only vocal jazz performance group at the institute. Coached since its inception by Institute Professor John Harbison, the ensemble focuses each semester on one or two composers, exploring both well-known songs and “hidden gems.” In the mix each semester are also a few modern compositions and arrangements both by Harbison and by student members of the ensemble. The ten singers, each of whom passes a rigorous audition process by peers, have quickly risen to notoriety not only on campus but also throughout Boston. Recent performance opportunities included a professional recording, with the MIT Festival Jazz Ensemble, of the MIT school song and “A Rhumba for Rafael Reif”, as well as an appearance this past May with the Boston Pops at Boston's Symphony Hall.

S.I.N. (Strength in Numbers) is the MIT Faculty Jazz Ensemble. It includes the players on tonight's stage plus, on occasion, Kenan Sahin Professor of Music Evan Ziporyn, and distinguished guests from the Festival Jazz Ensemble. The group performs rarely, if at all, but their appearances are not to be missed. Featured recently at the inauguration of MIT President L. Rafael Reif, they joined the MIT Vocal Jazz Ensemble with the Boston Pops, subsequently recording their signature number, Rhumba for Rafael Reif for imminent global release.

About the MIT Chamber Chorus

John Oliver joined the faculty at MIT and worked with Klaus Liepmann (founder of the MIT music department) conducting the Glee Club and Choral Society in 1964. At the time of Liepmann's retirement in 1972, Mr. Oliver had recently (1970) organized the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, the official chorus of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

When the baton was passed to John Oliver, the members of the Choral Society were a mix of students, faculty, staff, and friends of MIT with a typical membership of one hundred singers whose mission remained to learn and perform major works of the choral/orchestral repertoire.

During Oliver's tenure, more and more students were interested in being a part of this excellent choral ensemble. It became apparent that either more rigorous audition

criteria were needed to control the size and quality of the group; or that it would be possible to populate this symphonic-sized chorus entirely with students. Oliver eventually made the difficult decision to limit membership to MIT students.

Seeing the need for an even higher level of music-making to challenge the evermore talented and ambitious incoming students, Maestro Oliver also formed the MIT Chamber Choir in 1996 whose mission it was to perform significant works of the acappella repertoire along with smaller choral works requiring instrumental accompaniment and particularly Bach cantatas. This smaller, more select ensemble also served the purpose of creating solo opportunities for the more advanced student singers who seem to be more plentiful with each passing year.

About the MIT Wind Ensemble

Founded by Dr. Frederick Harris, Jr. in the fall of 1999, the MIT Wind Ensemble (21M.426) is comprised of MIT undergraduate and graduate students from a wide range of disciplines. The central mission of the MIT Wind Ensemble is the enhancement of the musical education and artistic sensitivity of its members through study and performance of wind ensemble literature. Since 2001, the MIT Wind Ensemble has commissioned 35 original works for wind ensemble and has worked with Gunther Schuller, John Harbison, Michael Colgrass, and many other prominent composers. The MITWE has collaborated with the MIT Concert Choir, MIT Chamber Chorus, MIT Dance Theater Ensemble as well as professional vocalists, and jazz musicians from all over the world. MIT Affiliated Artist and tuba player of the Empire Brass, Kenneth Amis, is the Assistant Conductor of MITWE. The MIT Wind Ensemble has released recordings internationally on Albany Records and Innova Records, the label of the American Composers Forum, and has been featured on NPR and PBS. Gramophone Magazine called MITWE's *Waking Winds* CD "an exhilarating range of approaches to the modern wind ensemble."

*To receive the Music and Theater Arts events calendar,
email mta-request@mit.edu.*

MIT Chamber Chorus 2013-2014

Soprano

Lizi George G
Caitlin Kerr '15
Divya Pillai '15
Tiffany Wong '16

Alto

Dominique Hoskin (counter-tenor) '15
Annie Marinan G
Elizabeth Qian '14
Emily Wean '14
Caitlin Wheatley '15

Tenor

Bhaskar Balaji '16
Benjamin Horkley '14
Jan-Christian Hütter G
Victor Morales '14

Bass

Eric Chan
Jakob Dahl '15
Nicholas Garcia '17
Christian Bernt Haakonsen G
David Rolnick G
Troy Welton '15

Members of the MIT Wind Ensemble performing Bach

Clarinet

Ofir Nachum '14 MA
Stephanie Marzen '15 VA

Soprano Saxophone

Richard Uhler G CA

Alto Saxophone

Tina Kambil '16 MA

Tenor Saxophone

Victoria Gunning '14 ID

Baritone Saxophone

Peter Wear '14 W1*

PROGRAM NOTES

Erroneously designated as a cantata in the 19th century, *O Jesus Christ, mein Lebens Licht*, BWV 118 is not a cantata but rather a motet. It was originally composed in 1736 for an outdoor funeral with chorus and brass instruments. Later on, Bach crafted an “indoor” arrangement for two trumpets, strings, and chorus. This achingly beautiful motet is one of the last original choral works written by Bach. The chorale melody used, “*Ach Gott, wie manches Herzeleid*,” must have been one of Bach’s favorites, as it appears in four cantatas: BWV 3, 44, 58 & 153. The sopranos sing the chorale tune, while the lower voices sing counterpoint. The music and text, as is typical of Bach, portray death as a desired outcome, allowing the soul to enter in eternal bliss. The ascending string motive and the sumptuous texture created by the trumpets floating above the voices and strings shape a mesmerizing effect.

© Ryan Turner

As soon as I began considering this percussion piece (*Cortège*) my dear and irreplaceable friend Donald Sur took his place in it. This it not the moment to try to describe Donald Sur as composer (with a unique ear for the incantatory power of percussion instruments) or as comrade (ideally the piece has some of that, even some anger, after ten years, at losing him).

This piece took a long time in conception, very little at the writing desk, where each of the three movements was essentially written straight out. The first was a drafted during a reception for one of MIT’s most distinguished professors, Millie Dresselhaus, on party-favor postcards, in green crayon. The second, which refers most directly to Donald Sur’s oblique sensibility, was mostly written on the Eastern Regional train.

I had expected to be writing the piece in Italy, a trip that was unexpectedly cancelled. The place I had rented in Umbria was between two churches, who were to ring their bells at least hourly from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. The agency issued a provident warning to their composer client, but I actually like the idea. It became part of the rhymes, refrains, and rituals of this cortege, closing out the third movement.

—John Harbison

Special Thanks to: *John and Rose Mary Harbison;*

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MIT Wind Ensemble; MIT Chamber Chorus;

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