

Concert Program FUSE ENSEMBLE AND FRIENDS Spacebomb 3/11

Dave Dominique, Tommy Birchett Live Electronics

Fuse Ensemble Presents *Breathe!!*

GASP (2021) electronic with live voices; video by Edgar Endress [4:30]

Concert for the Trees for flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello, bass, piano, soprano and baritone, (2021) video by Steve Biver [6:00]

Let Us Breathe solo violoncello, (2020) by Jeffrey Mumford [1:30]

Air for Clarinet (2004) (Excerpt from) *Four Airs* by Kevin Puts, piano and clarinet [4:40]

NIMBUS II: The Clouds Above My Childhood Street Were Mountains (2019) by Gina Biver for clarinet, flute, violin, violoncello, bass, spoken word, fixed audio [2:00]

NIMBUS VII: Fish Dinner with Oysters Stripped of Their Pearls (2019) by Gina Biver for piano, bass, vibes, fixed audio [2:00]

Fuse Ensemble Performers

Yana Nikol, flute

Angela Murakami, clarinet

Greg Hiser, violin

Pam Clem, cello

Ethan Foote, bass

Ina Mirtcheva Blevins, piano

Gina Biver, alto voice

Special Guests:

Ashley Larson, soprano voice

Jon Carr, baritone voice

Frankie Lugiano, alto voice

To read more about Fuse Ensemble, please visit <https://fuse-ensemble.com/about>

Please scroll down for PROGRAM NOTES and artist bios for tonight:

Spacebomb House Concert - Program Notes

- 1) **Gasp**, (2021), for Choir and Fixed Media by Gina Biver; Video by Edgar Endress
Created in collaboration with *The Taxonomy of Breathing* project by IceBox Collective, **Gasp** is an electroacoustic work for chamber choir, multi-channel audio and video. Stethoscope recordings from 2020/2021 as breaths of first responders, community members; people who lost homes in the wildfires; breaths snatched from a debate between Martin Luther King and Malcolm X add to the heart-wrenching pleas of the forsaken bystanders at George Floyd's murder. His own cries for help ring out along with the racket of ventilators, oxygen masks and newborns - all there, representing. An ancient hymn that sings of the river that will wash away our sins before we die or before we can live is the backdrop to this cacophony of breaths and cries. The collected breaths manifest not only our fragility in this moment in history, but our ability to recover, heal and go forth, and this mass of interconnectedness -- the effects of which continue today -- is codified and captured in the wideness of our collective action of breathing.

- 2) **Concert for the Trees**, (2022) for large chamber ensemble, soprano and baritone [5:33] Video by Steve Biver
First performed in the woods of Virginia's Appalachian mountains by Fuse Ensemble, Gina Biver's *Concert for the Trees* was composed and filmed for DC-based IceBox Collective as part of the *Taxonomy of Breathing*, a project that looks to investigate our current societal moment through the lens of breath. *Concert for the Trees* brings forth the notion of our communion with nature and the gift of breath that is evident and fundamental to our very existence, but often ignored. In the piece, the musicians are essentially breathing along with the forest -- mirroring the 5-½ times per minute the average human will breathe. The composition employs "chords of nature," a theory that roots harmony in the natural, physical elements of music. Deep, low tones then evolve into effervescent and sparkling moments as the oxygen dissipates through the leaves and into the air. Here, Appalachian fiddle chords bounce along -- a nod to the mountain range the musicians are on and the music created there more than a century ago. Congruence is the natural state of being, and as with breathing, the cycle then returns.

- 3) **let us breathe** violoncello, (2020) by Jeffrey Mumford was commissioned by the Cincinnati Symphony as part of its "Fanfares" series responding to police brutality against people of color. It was premiered by its Associate Principal cellist Daniel Culman. [1:30]

- 4) **Four Airs**, (Excerpt) Kevin Puts
Commissioned by Music from Angel Fire, *Four Airs* was composed in the summer of 2004 and premiered in September of that year. Each movement features only one instrument with piano accompaniment, the most substantial being the second *Air*, for cello and piano. The opening bears a strong Baroque influence, though the simple "short-long" motive in the piano recurs incessantly throughout the movement and may have its roots in the second movement of Ravel's *Gaspard de la Nuit, Le Gibet*. Rising parallel harmonies provide a background for the darting, jazz-induced figurations of the flute in movement one, and the unmistakable Baroque nature of the last section leads into the cello movement. The third *Air*, for clarinet, contrasts the linear melodic nature of the cello movement by virtue of its angular leaps and rhythms. Eventually settling into rich piano harmonies, it leads naturally into the final movement for violin and piano. Previously titled *Aria*, the movement takes its soaring, rhapsodic tune from another work of mine, *Arches* for solo violin.

- 5, 6) **NIMBUS Movements II and VII** by Gina Biver (2019) Videos by Ethan Jackson
Nimbus is an artistic collaboration between the American Poet Colette Inez (1931- 2018) and Composer Gina Biver that began in 2017. *Nimbus* is a set of seven movements for chamber ensemble -- each based

on poems that focus on the early life of Ms. Inez, the lovechild of a Catholic Priest and the French Scholar assigned to assist him. Audio recordings of Colette reading five of the seven poems she chose for *Nimbus* were recorded at Colette and Saul's residence in New York City. Additional audio recordings of church bells, children, city sounds, and the interiors of churches were captured live in the town of Nerac, France and its environs in August 2018 where Gina was able to compose the music to *Nimbus* in the Dulong family estate -- the river house in Nerac, France that Colette mentions in her memoir *The Secret of M. Dulong* (University of Wisconsin Press). *Nimbus* album by Fuse Ensemble is available on Neuma Records.

Composers and Artists

David Dominique & Tommy Birchett

[David Dominique](#) and [Tommy Birchett](#) are making noise in Richmond.

Gina Biver

Gina Biver is a composer of electroacoustic music for chamber ensemble, choir, multimedia, dance, sound installations and film. Her work is inspired by the written word and by visual art, both static and moving; she collaborates with other musicians, filmmakers, choreographers, poets, computer artists, sculptors, painters and media artists. Her work has been presented in the US, Europe, Australia, Canada and Mexico.

She has been awarded grants from the American Music Center, American Composers Forum and Strauss Individual Artist Grants. She has been several times a Artist Fellow at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts and at Moulin a Nef in Auvillar, France. Her music can be found on Ravello Records, Neuma Records and Vox Novus labels, and on most listening platforms.

Her early career as an electric guitarist brought her press from guitar magazines *Guitar World*, *Kerrang!*, *Guitar for the Practicing Musician* and *Rock Scene*. She has performed on electric guitar, found instruments and electronics as a member of the National Gallery of Art New Music Ensemble in Washington, DC, and in her work with Fuse Ensemble. After many years in the Washington, D.C. area, she now lives in Richmond, Virginia with her husband Steve Biver, a musician, visual artist, and author, and their big gray cat named Tiny. <https://ginabiver.com>

Jeffrey Mumford

Born in Washington, D.C. in 1955, composer Jeffrey Mumford has received numerous fellowships, grants, awards and commissions, including the "Academy Award in Music" from the American Academy of Arts & Letters, a Fellowship from the Guggenheim Foundation, and an ASCAP Aaron Copland Scholarship. He was also the winner of the inaugural National Black Arts Festival/Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Composition Competition.

Mumford's most notable commissions include those from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, the Koussevitzky Foundation, the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association and the Library of Congress (co-commission), the BBC Philharmonic, the San Antonio, Chicago & National Symphonies, Washington Performing Arts, the Network for New Music, 'cellist Mariel Roberts, the Fulcrum Point New Music Project (through New Music USA), Duo Harpverk (Iceland), the Sphinx Consortium, the Cincinnati Symphony, the VERGE Ensemble /National Gallery of Art/Contemporary Music Forum, the Argento Chamber Ensemble, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Nancy Ruyle Dodge Charitable Trust, the Meet the Composer/Arts Endowment Commissioning Music/USA, Cincinnati radio station WGUC, the Walter W. Naumburg Foundation, the Fromm Music Foundation, and the McKim Fund in the Library of Congress. He is

currently Distinguished Professor at Lorain County Community College in Northern Ohio. Mr. Mumford is published by Theodore Presser Co. and Quicklight Music and represented by Black Tea Music. Website: www.jeffreymumford.com

Kevin Puts

Pulitzer Prize and Grammy®-winning composer Kevin Puts has established himself as one of America's leading composers, gaining international acclaim for his "plush, propulsive" music (*The New York Times*), and described by *Opera News* as "a master polystylist." He has been commissioned and performed by leading organizations around the world, including the Metropolitan Opera, Philadelphia Orchestra, Carnegie Hall, Opera Philadelphia, Minnesota Opera, and many more, and has collaborated with world-class artists such as Renée Fleming, Yo-Yo Ma, Yannick Nezet-Seguin, and Marin Alsop, among others. <https://www.kevinputs.com/>

Fuse Ensemble Musicians

Ethan Foote, Bass

Ethan Foote is a composer and performer working in jazz, the Western classical tradition, folk, rock, and genres in between. He writes and performs in many contexts, including theater and interdisciplinary art. He received a Master of Fine Arts in music composition from Vermont College of Fine Arts in 2020 and is currently pursuing a PhD in composition at Duke University. His work is oblique, expressionistic, and plays with the mirroring of form and the structures of human consciousness.

Yana Nikol, flute

Expanding upon her extensive classical training, Bulgarian flutist, arranger and composer Yana Nikol passionately embraces jazz as well as the diverse folk music styles of different cultures. As a flutist Yana is an active freelance musician in the Washington D.C. area sharing her musical prowess as a participant in various projects and ensembles that incorporate a vast array of musical genres. Recent performance venues include AMP by Strathmore, Blues Alley Jazz Club, Atlas Performing Arts Center, Havre de Grace Opera House and the Creative Cauldron. In 2018 Yana created Project Locea - a global fusion ensemble, dedicated to creating and performing original compositions and contemporary arrangements inspired by the folk music of different countries. Combining sound and instrumentation of world folk traditions with classical, jazz and contemporary music conventions, the project's focus is to bring a better understanding and deeper connection between cultures in current days, as well as to shine more light on freedom of artistic expression.

Greg Hiser, Violin

Greg Hiser studied with James Caesar, Nancy Luttrell, and Andrej Grabiec at Wichita State University. Through the 90's he played bluegrass, rockabilly, and swing with bands New Mountain, Virginia and the Blue Dots, and Murphy's Lawyer, and also taught privately. In 1998 after the break up of his successful rock/jazz quartet Boud Deun, (recordings available on Cuneiform Records) he was happy to get back to his classical roots, performing regularly with the Carina Trio, The Washington Savoyards, Trinity Chamber Orchestra, in addition to various freelance studio and solo projects. He currently serves as assistant concertmaster of The McLean Orchestra and maintains a large private violin studio.

Angela Murakami, Clarinet

Angela Murakami - is a native of the Washington, DC area. She earned her Bachelor of Music in Clarinet Performance from the University of Maryland where she studied with Dr. Norman Heim

and her Master of Music degree from Northwestern University in Evanston IL, where her teachers included Clark Brody and the late Robert Marcellus. In addition to being a member of Fuse Ensemble, Ms. Murakami is principal clarinetist of the Trinity Chamber Orchestra of Washington and the Washington Savoyards. She also plays in a woodwind quintet called Ensemble à La Carte and regularly performs on the Rock Creek Chamber Players concert series. Ms. Murakami has also recorded on the Halcyon Productions label with Charles Stier, the Halcyon Ensemble, and Ravello Records.

Ina Mirtcheva Blevins, Piano

Ina Radeva Mirtcheva Blevins studied piano with K. Karadimchev while attending the prestigious L. Pipkov Music School in Sofia, Bulgaria . In 1998 she moved with her family to the United States as part of the honors program at Levine School of Music in Washington DC. Ms. Mirtcheva Blevins earned her Bachelors and Masters of Music in Piano Performance from George Mason University studying piano with Dr. Anna Balakerskaia. She earned a second Masters in Instrumental Collaborative Piano at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, where she had a full graduate scholarship and assistantship and studied piano and chamber music with James Tocco and Sandra Rivers. Ms. Mirtcheva Blevins has performed in numerous recitals as a soloist and with chamber music ensembles at the Kennedy Center, Polish Embassy, Smithsonian Institute, Knuth Hall, Werner Recital Hall, The Lyceum, and internationally in Italy, Holland, Poland, Bulgaria and Canada. She has won numerous international awards and performed in festivals throughout Europe and the US.

Pam Clem, Cello

Pam Clem has studied with Robert Hofmekler and Robert Ashby at James Madison University. A Northern Virginia native, she has played with McLean and Loudon Community Orchestras and is currently a member of the NIH Philharmonia. In addition to her work with Fuse Ensemble, she regularly performs in classical as well as jazz trios in venues such as Wolfrap, The Lyceum and Blues Alley.

Special Guests/Spacebomb

Ashley Larson, Soprano Voice

Ashley Larson is a Richmond-born Soprano. She graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Virginia Commonwealth University where she sang with the Commonwealth Singers. Currently, she is a member of the Richmond Symphony Chorus and previously sang with the Winston-Salem Symphony Chorus. With the Richmond symphony, she gets to indulge in her love of German choral classics, but she also enjoys participating in Richmond's vibrant new music scene.

Jon Carr, Baritone Voice

Jon Carr is a Bass-Baritone who graduated from VCU with a Bachelor of Arts in Music in the spring of 2020. For the 4 years in attendance there, he performed on campus in various capacities: with VCU's audition choirs the Commonwealth Singers and the Vocal Chamber Ensemble, as well as in roles with the VCU Opera Department. Jon studied under the tutelage of Cynthia Donnell, as well as the coachings of Melanie Day. He has been lucky enough to sing for Met Soprano Brandie Sutton and international Countertenor Michael Harper in masterclasses and private coaching. Since graduating he has been living in downtown Richmond and sings regularly with the Chancel Choir of First Presbyterian Church as the Bass Section Leader, while continuing to do work around the city.

Frankie Lugiano, Alto Voice

Frankie Lugiano is a vocalist and flutist from Raleigh, NC. A music educator for 30 years, she is a member of the Cardinal Singers of Raleigh, with whom she has performed in the US, Spain, Italy and Ireland. She recently recorded an album of Jazz standards at Spacebomb Studio, with another album in the works.

Video Artists

Edgar Endress (GASP)

Endress is a professor of new media and graduate program director at George Mason University's School of Art. He creates content- and context-specific work, ranging from large installations to audio and video presentations, that bridges the gap between art and social engagement. Featuring mixed media, video works and a performative piece, A Celestial Emporium focuses on social issues across the Americas, and more specifically, the Caribbean, Central and South America.

Endress is a founding member of Floating Lab Collective, a group of DC-based artists who orchestrate large projects to create a platform for rethinking the creative process, and is a 2017-2018 College of Visual and Performing Arts Cultural Connections Artist-in-Residence. He received his M.F.A. in video art from Syracuse University, and has been awarded numerous grants and fellowships, including from the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and the Creative Capital Fund. <http://eendress.com/>

Steve Biver (Concert for the Trees)

Steve Biver is a photographer, video artist, songwriter and author. For the last twenty years I've worked for such clients as Johnson and Johnson, IBM, Dupont and Newsweek. While I always enjoy connecting with my subjects when I'm making their portraits, I'm equally fired up while creating a still life, photo illustration or video. He is co-author of "Light--Science and Magic" – now in six editions and multiple languages – and co-author of Faces--Photography and The Art of Portraiture, with both books published by Focal Press. To see more of his work, please visit <https://biverstudio.com/>

Ethan Jackson (Nimbus II and VII)

Ethan Jackson is a visual artist and designer working with light, optics, and image. His projects include immersive optical installations in architecture, still and moving imagery about place and perception, interactive and generative digital works, photography, and video. His practice has grown from photography to installation, sculpture and beyond, with an underlying interest in optics and perception. Works range from low-technology camera obscura-based light environments without electronic or digital means, to generative and responsive digital video and graphic projects, as well as ongoing series of photographs.