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Ensemble Biography

The Toomai String Quintet is an ensemble devoted to performing music from the classical and contemporary repertoire while exploring and arranging music from around the world. Winner of the 92nd St. Y's 2007 Music Unlocked! Competition, Toomai String Quintet is dedicated to creating engaging interactive concerts for audiences of all ages.



Hailed for their "light-handed authority" on their "magnificently executed" recording of composer Jessica Pavone's Songs of Synastry and Solitude (Tzadik Records), Toomai has performed in many capacities throughout the United States, with appearances at Lincoln Center, the 92nd St. Y, Philadelphia Arts Alliance, and for the Miami Civic Music Association, among others. The guintet was a pilot ensemble for Carnegie Hall's "Musical Connections" program, and they continue to perform regularly in schools, hospitals, and alternative care facilities throughout New York City. In addition, the Toomai String Quintet has brought its array of educational programs to students in California, Florida, and across the Northeast, and has presented interactive concerts in collaboration with organizations such as California Institute of the Arts. The Juilliard School. and Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute.

Formed in 2007 at The Juilliard School, the quintet is named after Rudyard Kipling's short story "Toomai of the Elephants" in which a young boy journeys into the jungle to witness the dance of the wild elephants. The Toomai String Quintet aspires to cultivate a similar sense of curiosity and

exploration by creating concert programs that share the joy of the new and undiscovered through repertoire unique to the quintet and its instrumentation.

The quintet is comprised of violinists Emilie-Anne Gendron and Pala García, violist Erin Wight, cellist John Popham, and bassist Andrew Roitstein.



Individual Biographies



Violinist *Emilie-Anne Gendron*, lauded by the *New York Times* as a "brilliant soloist" and by France's *ClassiqueInfo* for her "excellent technical mastery" and "undeniable sensitivity", enjoys an active freelance career in New York. A deeply committed chamber musician, Ms. Gendron is a core member and frequent leader of the Sejong Soloists; a member of the Momenta Quartet, specializing in contemporary music and two-time recipients of the Koussevitzky Music Foundation commission grant; and on the roster of the Marlboro Music Festival and the touring Musicians From Marlboro. Ms. Gendron was trained at Juilliard where her principal teachers were Won-

Bin Yim, Dorothy DeLay, David Chan, and Hyo Kang. She holds a B.A. in Classics, *magna cum laude* and with Phi Beta Kappa honors, from Columbia as a graduate of the Columbia-Juilliard joint-degree program, and a Master of Music degree and an Artist Diploma from Juilliard.

Violinist *Pala García* is a devoted chamber musician and has appeared at Nymphenburger Sommermusik, Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Prussia Cove Open Chamber Music, and the festivals of Saito-Kinen, Aspen, and Sarasota. As an academy fellow with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, she performed in this ensemble and its conductor-less chamber orchestra on numerous tours and subscription series. Her interest in new music has led to performances at festivals such as Klangspuren Schwaz, where she worked with composer Heinz Holliger; Musica Viva; the Lucerne Festival; IMPULS; and the FOCUS! Festival. Ms. García made her solo orchestral debut at age 11, and has since performed as a soloist with the Pacific Chamber Orchestra, San José Chamber Orchestra and the Palo Alto



Philharmonic, among others. Born in San Francisco, Ms. García graduated from the Juilliard School, where she completed her undergraduate and graduate degrees with Naoko Tanaka and Joel Smirnoff.



Violist *Erin Wight*, a midwestern transplant to New York City, is an active chamber musician and avid performer of new music. She performs frequently as a member of the Red Light New Music Ensemble, the Toomai Quintet, and Either/Or, all ensembles with a dedication to exploring contemporary repertoire. Ms. Wight has also played with Signal, Talea, Wordless Music Orchestra, New Juilliard Ensemble, Axiom, the Juilliard Electric Ensemble, and worked closely with members of the Ensemble Modern and Ensemble Intercontemporain. Ms. Wight is deeply committed to community engagement

and is on the teaching artist faculty of the New York Philharmonic's School Partnership Program, and the Teaching Artist Collaborative of the Weill Institute at Carnegie Hall. Ms. Wight completed her Master of Music degree at The Juilliard School where she studied with Paul Neubauer.



Individual Biographies Continued

Cellist *John Popham* was born and raised in Louisville, Kentucky. The New York Times has described his playing as "warm but variegated" and "finely polished". John holds a BM and an MM from the Manhattan School of Music where he was a student of David Geber and David Soyer. He has performed as a soloist with the Louisville Orchestra and the Starling Chamber Orchestra on numerous occasions. As a chamber musician, John has performed throughout North America, South America, and Europe in such venues as Carnegie Hall, Zankel Hall, The Great Hall of Cooper Union, The Kennedy Center, The Hanns Eisler Hochschule fur Musik, and at Yale, Princeton, Harvard, and Columbia Universities. John is currently a member of the Toomai String Quintet, the Red Light Ensemble, and the Eupraxia



Music and Arts Collective. He teaches in the Pre-College Division of Rutgers University.



A native of Valencia, California, bassist **Andrew Roitstein** has been featured in chamber music concerts in New York's Zankel Hall and Washington DC's Kennedy Center and has performed with the New York and Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestras. Mr. Roitstein has recorded for artists such as Joanna Newsom (Drag City) and Jessica Pavone (Tzadik Records), and has premiered "Anna Maria Suite" for double bass and piano, written by his father David Roitstein. In 2007, he won second prize in Juilliard's Double Bass Concerto Competition, and was one of ten semi-finalists in the 2011 International Society of Bassists Competition. In addition to performing, Mr. Roitstein serves as faculty of the New York Philharmonic's School Partnership Program and Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute. As an arranger, his works have been performed by the Toomai String Quintet and members of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Mr. Roitstein received his Master's and Bachelor's degrees at the Juilliard School, where he was a student of Eugene Levinson.



Mission Statement



Toomai String Quintet is an ensemble with a three-fold mission:

- 1. To create and perform interactive concerts that actively engage listeners and enhance their understanding of classical, contemporary, and world music.
- 2. To expand the repertoire of the bass quintet by commissioning and arranging new works as well as performing lesser known pieces for the instrumentation.
- 3. To design and perform intensive residencies that develop young people's artistic and creative faculties through experiences with performance, composition, and listening.



Acclaim



Reflection on Toomai's 2008 performances of Traveling with the Toomai Quintet

"The educational program that [Toomai] created is rich and filled with interaction that is truly illuminating to the audience. Each [member] genuinely knows how to speak intelligently to audiences, which sends a balanced and united message to concert-goers. [Toomai's] musical prowess is impressive, and [their] ability to incorporate movement and memorization in [their] program is stellar. As we could see in each concert, these school children reveled in the opportunity to participate in music-making with such top-notch musicians."

- 92nd Street Y

Reviews for Toomai's recording of Jessica Pavone's Songs of Synastry and Solitude "Performed by the brilliant young members of the Toomai String Quintet, this is lovely and expressive instrumental music from this eloquent voice out of the downtown scene."

- Tzadik Records

"The eleven-song cycle — magnificently executed by members of Toomai String Quintet — is a pleasantly charming surprise..."

- Massimo Ricci, "The Squid's Ear," thesquidsear.com

"[Pavone's] pieces are performed with sensitivity and rigor by members of the Toomai String Quintet, projecting a sober view softened occasionally by a considered wistfulness."

- Nilan Perera, Exclaim!



Concert Highlights

Current Season:

- November 29, 2012 SUNY Maritime, Bronx, NY
- December 7, 2012 Bak Middle School for the Arts. West Palm Beach, FL
- Jan 26, 2013 Featured Soloists for Bach's Goldberg Variations, String Orchestra of Brooklyn, NY
- April 6, 2013 Carnegie Hall's Neighborhood Concert Series, Queens Library, Queens, NY

Past Seasons:

- April 29, 2012 Museum of Latin American Arts, Long Beach, CA
- April 27, 2012 the wulf, Los Angeles, CA
- March 18, 2012 University of Miami's Gusman Hall, Miami Civic Music Association, Miami, FL
- January 29, 2012 South Orange Performing Arts Center, South Orange, NJ
- January 18, 2012 WMP, Strad for Lunch Series, New York, NY
- September 29, 2011 Roulette, Brooklyn, NY
- February 24, 2011 Issue Project Room, Brooklyn, NY
- November 7 2010 Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ
- November 5, 2010 Philadelphia Art Alliance, Philadelphia, PA
- October 16, 2010 Lincoln Center's Josie Robertson Plaza, New York, NY
- June 9, 2010 Harlem Stage, New York, NY
- May 16, 2010 Grace Church Von Vorst, Jersey City, NJ
- March 17, 2010 Issue Project Room, Brooklyn, NY
- February 11, 2010 The Stone, New York, NY
- November 10, 2009 Roulette, New York, NY
- June 7, 2009 University of Miami's Gusman Hall, Miami Civic Music Association, Miami, FL
- May 8, 2009 Grace Church Van Vorst, Jersey City, NJ
- April 3 and 4, 2009 The Kitchen, New York, NY
- March 22, 2009 Culturarte, the Dominican Cultural Center of New York, New York, NY
- November 22, 2008 Grace Church Van Vorst, Jersey City, NJ
- May 16, 2008 Juilliard's Morse Hall, New York, NY
- April 14 and 15, 2008 92nd St. Y Kaufmann Concert Hall, New York, NY
- Dec. 3, 2007 New York Society for Ethical Culture, New York, NY



Community Engagement

Musical Connections, a program of the Weill Institute at Carnegie Hall Sept 2009 to 2012

Ongoing partnership with Carnegie Hall in which Toomai provides long term residencies, short workshops, and one-time performances for people in healthcare settings, senior centers, and correctional facilities. Examples of work include a year-long residency at Jacobi Medical Center, concerts at Sing Sing Maximum Security Correctional Facility, and a workshop at Horizons Juvenile Justice Center.

CAP Workshop, Los Angeles, CA April 2012

Held in partnership with California Institute of the Arts' CAP program, Toomai performed an interactive concert and led a masterclass in solo repertoire for high school strings students.

Elementary School Tour, New Canaan, CT Jan 2012

Performed two separate interactive concert programs at each of the three elementary schools in New Canaan's district, reaching all students in grades 1-4.

Bak Middle School for the Performing Arts, West Palm Beach, FL Nov 2011 and Dec 2012

Two-day-residency presented in conjunction with The Juilliard School. Toomai designed and performed interactive concerts and technique workshops as well as conducted masterclasses in solo, chamber, and orchestral repertoire for students in grades 6-8.



Repertoire

BACH, J. S. Orchestral Suite No. 2 in B 20'

BARBER, Samuel Adagio for Strings 11'
BARTOK, Bela Romanian Dances" 6'
BOTTESINI, Giovanni Grand Quintetto in C 25'

BOCCHERINI, Luigi Musica notturna delle strade di Madrid Op 30, No. 6 12'

String Quintets (various)

BRAHMS, Johannes Waltzes for Piano, four-hands, Op. 39 (arr Ferd Thieriot) 17'

BRITTEN, Benjamin Simple Symphony 15' CAGE, John Five (1988) 5'

CARRICK, Richard Adagios for String Quintet + (2010) 17'

CAZAN, Scott Outliers (2010) 10'

CHÁVEZ, Carlos String Quartet No.2 (1932) 24'

CHOPIN, Frederic Nocturne, Op 27, no 2 (arr. Reinhard Schmelz) 6'

Grande valse brillante, Op 18, 6'

CORELLI, Arcangelo Concerto grosso in G minor, Op. 6, No. 8

COWELL, Henry Hymn and Fuguing Tune No. 8
DVORAK, Antonin Quintet in G, Op. 77 35'

EGILSSON, Arni Is it? (2007) 7'
ELLINGTON, Duke Rockin' in Rhythm** 5'

GESUALDO, Carlo Itene o Miei Sospiri from the 5th Book for Madrigals" 3'

HANDEL, G.F. Sonata a 5 9'

HEARNE, Ted Commission to be premiered in 2012/2013 season+ 20'

HINDEMITH, Paul Acht Stucke, Op. 44, No. 3 8' HOSOKAWA, Toshio Landscape IV (1993) 18'

HUANG Ruo The 3 Tenses (String Quintet Version) (2005) 15'

IVES, Charles Hymn: Largo Cantabile 4'
LAVISTA, Mario Reflejos de la noche (1985) 10'

La Comparsa, Andalucia, Gitanerias, Danza Lucumi En Tres por Cuatro, A la Antigua, Zambra Gitana" 21'

LEHRDAHL, Fred Waltzes (1989) 21'

LISZT, Franz Angelus! Priere aux anges guardiens 8'

LOPEZ, Israel "Cachao" (Cuba) A Gozar Con Mi Combo" 5'
Cunde Echa Un Pie" 4'

MILHAUD, Darius String Quintet No. 2., Op 316 (1952) 16' MOONDOG Round the World of Song (1950-1970)

MONTEVERDI, Claudio Selections from Quinto Libro de MadrigalI** 10'

MOZART, W.A.

Adagio and Fugue, K 546 7'
Divertimento in D major, K 136 12'
NECHUSTAN, Alon
O'CONNER, Mark

Adagio and Fugue, K 546 7'
Divertimento in D major, K 136 12'
Three Pentagrammas (2011)+ 10'
Appalachia Waltz (1996) 5'

ONSLOW, Georges Quintet No. 27 in D Major, Op. 68 30'
PAVONE, Jessica Songs of Synastry and Solitude 45'

PARAPASKERO, Sapo Rustem** 2'



Repertoire continued

PONCE, Manuel Tres Canciones Mexicanas** 12'

Suite Cubana** 13'

PURCELL, Henry Fantasia Upon One Note 5'

RAIKHEL, Vincent The Garden of Forked Paths + (2012) 6'

ROITSTEIN, David Commission to be premiered in 2012/2013 season +

ROSSINI, Gioacino Sonata a Quattro, no. 6 15'

SATIE, Erik Gnossiennes No.'s 1-5 (arranged by Vincent Raikhel) + 18'

SHOSTAKOVICH, Dmitri Chamber Symphony, Op. 110a 24'

STRAUSS, Johann Die Fledermaus Medley **4'

Wiener Blut **4'

SUK, Josef Meditation on an Old Czech Chorale 7' TELEMANN, G.P. Sinfonia Spirituosa in D Major, TWV 44:1 24'

TENNEY, James Quintext (1972) 30'

VALDES, Chucho Mambo Influenciado (arranged by Isaac Narell) + 4'

WARLOCK, Peter Capriole Suite 10'
WILLAERT, Adrian Vecchie Letrose*** 4'

WOLLSCHLEGER, Scott

YUN, Isang

ZAPPA, Frank

String Quintet No. 1+ (2010) 15'

Tapis for String Quintet (1987) 8'

Ill Revised (1985 arr. 1992) 2'

None of the above (1986, arr. 1992) 2'

ZYMAN, Samuel Quintet for Strings (2011) 20'
TRADITIONAL Nija Nija Majha Bala *** 3'
TRADITIONAL Lamma Roohi Bit-Dummak *** 3'

Collaborations for String Quintet and Voice

BOCCHERINI, Luigi Stabat Mater Op. 61, G 532 40'

CALLAVA, Calixto Retozón** 3'

CASTRO, Antonio No Encuentro Palabras** 4'

DUARTE, Ernesto Como Fué" 4'
MORALES, Obdulio Dame Bururu" 4'
TAYLOR, C. Pepito Mi Corazon" 3'
ALBERTI, Louis Compadre Pedro Juan" 4'

+ Dedicated to the Toomai String Quintet

**Arranged for the Toomai String Quintet by Andrew Roitstein

***Arranged for Toomai String Quintet by Benjamin Grow



Interactive Concert Synopses

Traveling with Toomai Interactive Performance

Target Audience: Grades K-2

Performance History: In 2007, Toomai String Quintet won the 92nd Street Y's Music Unlocked! Competition for emerging ensembles interested in outreach. Toomai worked intensively with members of Music Unlocked! to create the interactive program, Traveling with the Toomai Quintet. Toomai gave four performances for groups of 400 children at Kaufmann Concert Hall at the 92nd Street Y and continues to perform the program in schools across the country.

Summary: The Toomai String Quintet takes the audience on a series of adventures by exploring the ways the listener can experience a "journey" through music. The audience will create musical motors that propel melodies forward, form a dancing carnival parade, and use their imaginations to travel on an exciting emotional journey.

Repertoire:

Antonin Dvorak, Quintet in G Major, Op. 77, Finale

Ernesto Lecuona, La Comparsa (arranged by Andrew Roitstein)

Giovanni Bottesini, Grand Quintetto in C, Adagio

Sapo Perapaskero, Rustem (arranged by Andrew Roitstein)

Music and Memories Interactive Performance

Target Audience: Grades 3-5, or Beginning to Intermediate instrumental music students, especially strings

Performance History:: Toomai performed this program in January 2012 for schools in New Canaan, CT and in April 2012 for elementary schools in Los Angeles, CA.

Summary: Focusing on repertoire spanning over 250 years, *Musical Memories* examines the variety of ways memory can inspire musical compositions. From Luigi Boccherini's recounting of Madrid street sounds to James Tenney's bombastic homage to his former teacher, each of these works provides the students an opportunity to reflect on how their own memories affect and inspire their educational and artistic work.

Repertoire:

Manuel Ponce, Plenilunio, (arranged by Andrew Roitstein)

Luigi Boccherini, Musica notturna delle strade di Madrid

James Tenney - Quintexts for String Quartet and Double Bass, "Parabolas and Hyperbolas for Edgar Varese"

Richard Carrick, Adagios for String Quintet, "Adagio and Transcendent Coda"

Antonin Dvorak - Quintet in G Major, Op. 77, Scherzo



Interactive Concert Synopses continued

Danzon and Descarga Interactive Performance

Target Audience: Grades 4-8, or Beginning to intermediate instrumental music students

Performance History: During the Spring of 2010, Toomai String Quintet held a residency (in conjunction with Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute) with students in the strings program of New York Public School 161.

Summary: Toomai shares Cuban song form, danzon and descarga through classic Cuban repertoire especially arranged for the ensemble. Students will perform along with the quintet as they master the clave and learn to sing several coros. While learning about the variety of roles each instrument can play during these chamber works, students may also take a stab at creating their own vocal inspiraciones solos in between Toomai's own instrumental improvisations.

Repertoire**:

Ernesto Lecuona, La Comparsa

Ernesto Lecuona, Danza Lucumi

Israel "Cachao" Lopez, A Gozar con Mi Combo

Israel "Cachao" Lopez, Cunde Echa Un Pie

Playing Together Interactive Performance

Target Audience: Grades 4-8, especially instrumental music students

Summary: Through a range of classic and contemporary repertoire, as well as arrangements created expressly for the quintet, Toomai will explore key components of quality chamber playing. Designed especially for young chamber musicians, the concert will open students' ears (and minds) to ideas that can give their musicianship an extra boost as they develop their own chamber ensemble performance skills.

Repertoire:

Sapo Perapaskero, Rustem (arranged by Andrew Roitstein)

Erik Satie, Gnossienne No. 1 (arranged by Vincent Raikhel)

James Tenney - Quintexts for String Quartet and Double Bass, "Clouds for Iannis Xenakis"

Manuel Ponce, Plenilunio, (arranged by Andrew Roitstein)

Antonin Dvorak - Quintet in G Major, Op. 77, Allegro con fuoco

^{**} all works on this program were arranged by Andrew Roitstein



Residency Models

Vamos a Gozar Residency

Target Participants: String Programs, Grades 4-8

Summary: During the Spring of 2010, Toomai String Quintet held a residency (in conjunction with Carnegie Hall's Weill Music Institute) with students in the strings program of New York Public School 161. Toomai made five visits to the school, where we conducted a composition/ performance project focused on Cuban music

The students learned about Cuban song forms, Afro-Cuban rhythms, improvised, and composed their own melodies. The residency culminated in a final performance where the students performed their newly created music side-by-side with Toomai

American Trailblazers Interactive Residency

Target Audience: Grades 6-12

Summary: The "American Trailblazers" program follows a chronological trail of maverick American composers, culminating in a one-movement preview of our recent commission from New York based composer Ted Hearne. All composers chosen for "American Trailblazers" were selected for their identities as outsiders or innovators, their history-making innovations, or groundbreaking way of thought.

In addition to the performance itself, Toomai will conduct 2 or 3 pre-concert workshops at each partner school. During each visit, Toomai will give their young listeners an entry point into the repertoire, familiarizing them with our instruments and the composers whose works we will be performing.

Repertoire:

Charles Ives - Hymn from A Set of Three Short Pieces

Henry Cowell - Hymn and Fuguing Tune No. 8

John Cage - Music for 5

Frank Zappa - None of the Above

James Tenney - Quintext

Ted Hearne - New Work



Residency Models Continued

Composition with Graphics Residency

Target Audience: Grades 9-12, or Grades 6-8*

*Toomai has worked with students and audiences of all ages and is able to adjust and modify these programs to suit the needs of the participants/ venue.

Composition with Graphics: Intensive composition residency of 5-10 workshops leading toward a performance of student generated compositions and puppetry

Summary: Members of Toomai, composer Vincent Raikhel, and puppeteer Andrew Benincasa will work with a group of students to create musical compositions and an original shadow puppet performance. For the first several sessions of the workshop, students would learn about the sound palette of the string quintet, as well as an array of compositional techniques and variations of graphic notation. Once the students have completed their compositions, the graphic scores will be reinterpreted into shadow puppet imagery to be projected during the final performance. Andrew Benincasa will lead this puppetry portion with the students, which mirrors Toomai's and Benincasa's collaborative process between visual artist and musicians. Through this workshop, Toomai, Raikhel, and Benincasa will draw parallels between multidisciplinary forms of art and will guide the students to generate their own unique and engaging works.

These workshops would culminate in a concert where Toomai performs the completed student compositions. This project would encourage young people to discover new modes of self-expression, as well as serve as a window for audiences to develop a deeper relationship with non-traditional or contemporary forms of composition.

Repertoire:

TBD, based on students' age and prior musical background

Adjusted Composition with Graphics Residency program for younger students:

Three 2-hour sessions, two 1-hour sessions, and a final concert of student works

Target Audience: Students ages 8-11



Contact



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