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## Seattle Chamber Players: The Joy of Discovery By ALEX SHAPIRO

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By ALEX SHAPIRO

Special to the Sounder

The afternoon of Sunday, Oct. 5, will put something into the air on Orcas Island that it doesn't often get: a slew of newly composed notes for chamber music.

In a concert that features seven pieces by seven composers, the marvelous Seattle Chamber Players will surround the old with the new. A Haydn Trio, once the contemporary music of its day in the late 1700's, will provide context for the six other pieces on the program, penned by composers you'd be as likely to run into at the grocery store as you would in the hallowed halls of a concert venue.

No music is composed in a vacuum. Every living musician is influenced by those who came before and left indelibly meaningful sonic marks on their soul and in the world around them. The music of living composers is part of a continuum of a tradition in which humans have always persisted: organizing sound!

Haydn's musical lineage included everything from Gregorian chant, to Medieval and Renaissance music, to the Late Baroque masters Vivaldi, Handel and Bach. It's been 200 years since Haydn's death in 1809, so you can imagine the vast additional influences availed to music creators living today! The musical history that has brought us to the present, and the tools we now have that connect us with styles from all over the globe, give living composers an enormous palette from which to express themselves, and with which to fill our ears and our souls.

As listeners, we tend to delineate those pieces which are "classics" from those which are new and unknown. We nod our heads at the mention of Classical period composer Joseph Haydn's name because we have grown up enjoying his music. But you may find it interesting to know that during the Classical period, from which we've coined the more general term, "classical music," well... there really weren't many classics! In Haydn's day, it was far more common for concert programs to be comprised of brand new pieces, because audiences were disinterested in hearing music that had been performed many times before. Only since the onset of the 20th Century have we become concertgoers who more readily steep ourselves in the music of 80 or 180 years ago.

One of the most alluring things about attending a concert with many new pieces on the program, is the joy of discovery. There is excitement in thinking that you may stumble upon an alignment of notes that you've never heard before, allowing a new universe of sound to open in your heart.

Even Mozart, in all his brilliance, didn't have a hit every time. None of us go to concerts thinking that we'll love every piece on the program, whether it's older music, or music of our era. Not even composers! Because loving every piece is not the point. The point is to immerse one's ears in fascinating sounds, and to be open to the thrill of discovering a piece that you DO love, that you would never have experienced had you not ventured into the concert hall.

What a treat it is to hear the music that swirls around the minds and hearts of six respected living composers: Alexandra Gardner, Bern Herbolzheimer, Anna Clyne, Nico Muhly, John Luther Adams and Mason Bates. Each of them has something important to communicate with us, and yet it's likely that you may have never heard their names before. Here, too, you are part of a tradition: that of exploring the music of your time.



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