



Presenter Bios



Aaron Trant—Deemed as both an “engaging” composer as well as a “sure, adept, and nuanced” percussionist by The Boston Music Intelligencer, Aaron Trant is an active musician in the Boston area and beyond. Cited for his “melodic, if unpitched, voice” (Spendzine), Aaron’s eclectic knowledge of classical, jazz, rock, contemporary and improvised music has made him an asset to many ensembles throughout the United States. Aaron has received great acclaim for his original score and solo percussion performance of the Chris Marker film, *La Jetée* and is the cofounder, performer and composer for the After Quartet, one of the few groups dedicated to the art of live musical accompaniment of silent film. Aaron also acts as the assistant director, percussionist and composer for both the Boston based new music groups Firebird Ensemble and Primary Duo. Recent commissions and performances of his work include collaborations with visual artist Yu-Wen Wu, soprano Lisa Saffer, Firebird Ensemble, Endy Emby, Mark Gould, Prana, Primary Duo, After Quartet, the Boston Modern Orchestra project’s Club Cafe Series and the University of Massachusetts at Lowell Percussion Ensemble. His percussion trio, Spiral, can be found on Bachovich Music Publications. Aaron has twice received funding from the New England Foundation for the Arts/Meet the Composer, one of which to compose a new score for the Manfred Noa 1922 German silent film ‘Nathan der Weise.’ The premiere, focusing on religious tolerance, took place at the Coolidge Corner Theater on September 11, 2011 as a ten year memorial to 9/11. Aaron’s playing can be heard on the Tzadik, Mode, New World, Red Chook, and BMOP/Sound labels.

John Howell Morrison—A native of rural North Carolina, John Morrison has been called “a contemporary Southern version of Charles Ives”. Though he began his study of music with piano, he gained his most influential experiences playing the trumpet. A summer at the Governor’s School of North Carolina, when John played in an orchestra for the first time, and played entirely music of the twentieth century, changed his life and established a mindset regarding musical encounters.

Only after college (Davidson College) did John begin to study composition, and he went on to earn a DMA in composition at the University

of Michigan. Principle teachers included John Anthony Lennon, William Bolcom, William Albright, and Leslie Bassett. Now residing in Medford, Massachusetts, John teaches composition and theory at the Longy School of Music of Bard College in Cambridge.

Morrison has composed for a wide range of ensembles, solo instruments and chorus. He has been commissioned by number of leading ensembles, received numerous grants, and his music has been performed widely. A longtime practitioner of Zen meditation, John has become more and more interested in the role of contemplation in music, recently developing a pathbreaking analytical method into a workshop that offers an immediate pathway into comprehension of new music. Encountering music without preconceptions, as John did in high school long ago, is the objective and tactic behind the workshop, which he calls Just Listening.

websites: <http://www.johnmorrison.org>
http://jhmedu.org/just_listening
http://jhmedu.org/CM_blog



Czarina Schocker was raised in Cd. Juarez, Chih., México and in El Paso, Texas. She holds a Bachelor's in Vocal Performance, Bachelor's in Music Education, and Master's in Opera Performance. She has had the opportunity to perform several roles with local opera companies in Texas and is looking forward to the new performance opportunities Boston has to offer. For the last few years, Mrs. Schocker has been performing and teaching privately, as well as having the pleasure of being a high school choral teacher and musical theatre music director for the school district of El Paso. Her passion and curiosity for music learning and vocal pedagogy constantly challenges her to improve her teaching and performance techniques in every musical style, in both soloist and ensemble works. She feels very welcomed in the city of Boston and has had a great time at CMCB working as an outreach teacher artist for the public schools and as a vocal and piano instructor for the Early Childhood program.



Christopher Perry is a graduate of Berklee College of Music with a degree in music therapy. Whether working with adults with developmental disabilities, children with special needs, Early Intervention, or children with autism, Christopher has a passion for connecting with others through music. He has experience practicing music therapy with groups and individuals, in classrooms, homes and community spaces.

READING SESSION ENSEMBLE: **Semiosis**

Boston-based Semiosis Quartet, formed in 2014, is quickly gaining a reputation as a dynamic ensemble dedicated to presenting the string quartet repertoire of the 20th and 21st centuries.

The ensemble's 2017-18 season is headlined by a concert featuring composers from Central America, South America, and Mexico, part of an ongoing effort to present work by voices traditionally underrepresented in the new music community. They will also perform repertoire by Shih-Hui Chen, Anthony Green, Sofia Gubaidulina, Eric Nathan, Toru Takemitsu, Caroline Shaw, and local composers Steven Snowden and Jason Huffman. Semiosis continually seeks to expand the quartet repertoire, and has commissioned and premiered several works. In 2016 they presented the world premiere of Curtis Hughes' String Quartet No. 2, and the 2017-18 season includes a commission by Aaron Jay Myers.

Semiosis Quartet was appointed Ensemble-in-Residence at the 2016 Cortona Sessions for New Music in Cortona, Italy. Previously they worked with the JACK Quartet, the Muir Quartet, and composer Joan Tower as part of the Emerging Quartets and Composers program at the Deer Valley Music Festival. Other highlights of past seasons include appearances as part of the Equilibrium Concert Series, the Church of the Advent Library Concert Series, and August Noise JP. Deeply committed to music education, Semiosis has worked closely with student composers, musicians, and faculty at The Boston Conservatory at Berklee, Tufts University, MIT, and Bowling Green State University.

The quartet's name refers to a process where a subject uses a message or symbol to communicate. The audience interprets the message to derive meaning. Study of this process crosses the boundaries of linguistics, anthropology, and biological sciences. Likewise, Semiosis Quartet demonstrates how the contemporary string quartet repertoire is a vehicle for a diverse collection of narratives from around the world.



Mahir Can Küçük is a composer, arranger, vocalist, instrumentalist and music producer from Denizli, Turkey. He graduated Summa Cum Laude from Contemporary Writing and Production major from Berklee College of Music. He was recognised for his writing and performance skills of Turkish and Western Music at Berklee and received the Best Website Award (Portfolio Presentation) and Mediterranean Music Institute Achievement Award in March 2017. His multi-cultural project "Pamukkale Yolları", and the arranging (also conducting), performing work he had at the Berklee Commencement Concert 2017 was covered by mainstream Turkish media respectively. Please visit mahircankucuk.com for more information.

Turkish musician Mahir Can Küçük presents a workshop about odd meter grooves. In this workshop, the approach of an Eastern Mediterranean-based musician will be presented. The presentation will start with the simple understanding of homogenous grooves and connect to the heterogenous grooves and explain why these grooves are trickier to internalise, and later bring the simplicity of homogenous grooves to the heterogenous grooves.



Utsav Lal, piano:

Creative pianist and composer, Utsav Lal has been dubbed the 'Raga Pianist' for his innovative handling of Indian Classical music. This 24-year classical and jazz pianist has successfully taken the pure sounds of Indian ragas on the piano to global venues including Carnegie Hall-New York, The Kennedy Centre-Washington DC, Southbank Centre-London and holds the distinction of being the first musician to introduce the piano

at the 137th Harivallabh Sammelan, India's oldest classical music festival. Five solo music albums and laurels that include recognition as Young Steinway Artist, TiE-Aspire Young Indian Achiever, Yamaha Jazz Scholar UK, & Ireland's MAMA Award for promoting multiculturalism, Lal's style has been described by Novara Jazz festival Director Corrado Beldi as having "illuminating grace". A disciple of Dhrupad legend Ustad.F.W.Dagar, Lal's music has been acclaimed for its sincerity, simplicity and depth. Lal has conducted several workshops titled "Breaking Boundaries" and is well known for his collaborative work with Irish & Scottish musicians, in particular for his "Ragas to Reels" project with performances in India, Ireland and UK and also for his extensive project work with Inventor Geoff Smith on the world's first ever Fluid Piano, on which he recorded a unique album released in July 2016. He received his Bachelor of Music degree from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and is currently pursuing a Masters in Performance through the Contemporary Improvisation department at the New England Conservatory.

**Derek Beckvold, tabla:**

Derek has an interest in all shapes and sizes of music. He received his BM in Saxophone Performance from the New England Conservatory. He began studying tabla with Jerry Leake in 2005, and has since gone on to study with Shailendra Mishra (New Delhi, India), Fraidoon Nabizada (Kabul, Afghanistan), and Samir Chatterjee (New York, NY). He has studied Indian raga from Dr. Peter Row, Warren Senders and Ujwal Nagar. He received a Fulbright Scholarship to study tabla and research pedagogical methods to incorporate tabla language into curricula. He has lived, worked, performed and taught music around the world in Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, Sudan, Palestine, Turkmenistan, India and Sri Lanka. He has performed in major concert venues around the world with internationally recognized ensembles. He currently works as Education and Community Engagement Manager at the Boston Philharmonic and is Co-founder of the organization Teach To Learn. Derek also used to teach at the Community Music Center of Boston!