



**Thursdays at Noon**  
**Gen-dai-ongaku 現代音楽 - Contemporary Music Ensemble**  
**Wallace Halladay, director**

Thursday, January 24, 2019 at 12:10 pm  
Walter Hall, 80 Queen's Park

**PROGRAM**

*Signals from Heaven* (1987)  
i. "Day Signal"

Toru Takemitsu  
(1930-1996)

Gillian MacKay, *conductor*

Brian McAuley, *piccolo trumpet*  
Katherine Moffatt, Charles Watson, Benjamin Yoon, Alexis Dill, *trumpet*  
Paige Summach, Simon Au-Yeung, *horn*  
Thomas Garrick, Jack Gagner, Solivan Lau, Bien Carandang, *trombone*  
Benjamin Whitby, *tuba*

*Mai* (1973)

Ryo Noda  
(b. 1948)

BingChen He, *solo alto saxophone*

*Kakitsubata: Dance-Poem* for singer-reciter and six musicians (2019)  
Text from Ezra Pound's translation of the eponymous Noh Drama

Paulo Brito  
(b. 1987)

Samuel Tam, *conductor*

Emma Greve, *soprano*  
Noah Verheyen, *flute*  
Celia Tang, *clarinet*  
Virginie Laliberté, *violin*  
Kevin He, *cello*  
Naoko Tsujita, *percussion*  
Paulo Brito, *piano*

*Mysterious Morning II* (1996)

Fuminori Tanada  
(b. 1961)

Jennifer Tran, *soprano saxophone*  
Augustin Nguyen, *alto saxophone*  
Gregory Bruce, *tenor saxophone*  
James Conquer, *baritone saxophone*

## BIOGRAPHY

Brazilian-American composer and pianist **Paulo Brito** draws from influences ranging from Western opera to East Asian music drama that invest his work with a distinct sense of theater. His music has won awards internationally, most notably in Tokyo, where his orchestral work *Staring Wei Jie to Death* won First Prize of the Toru Takemitsu Composition Award in May 2018. Selecting his piece for the competition final out of 143 scores, composer Unshuk Chin commented: “This work possesses an almost Webernian compactness . . . and it contains no unnecessary information. At the same time, however, the music is highly expressive and each movement brings something new.”

Brito’s recent works include *Deadweight of Love*, written for traditional Japanese Noh theatre performer Ryoko Aoki based on the play *Koi no Omoni*, premiered in Tokyo in September 2018. Also in September 2018, Brito was invited

to play *Two “White Snake” Pantomimes* for piano at the Shanghai Conservatory New Music Week. He premiered . . . *nothing but a string of songs*, a music-theater work for piano and electronics based on the cult novel *Dancer from the Dance*, at the University of Toronto Walter Hall in November 2018. In January 2019, a new work based on poet Ezra Pound’s translation of the Noh drama *Kakitsubata*, written for the gamUT ensemble, premières at the 2019 University of Toronto New Music Festival.

Currently pursuing a DMA in composition at the University of Toronto, Brito previously studied comparative literature at the University of Chicago (MA 2016) and classics and German literature at Columbia University (BA 2013). His present and former composition teachers include Alla Zagaykevich, Anthony Cheung, Christos Hatzis, Dennis Patrick and Norbert Palej.

## TEXTS AND PROGRAM NOTE

### **Mai - The Battle of the Sea**

At dusk of an Autumn evening,  
As the moon reflects its silver light on the surface of the waves,  
General Kiyotsun Taira plays his flute.

Standing at the bow of his ship,  
He seizes his dagger and slices a braid(knot) from his head,  
Places it by his feet,  
And disappears into the sea.

At the threshold of his house,  
The ghost of the Samurai appears.  
Confronting him his wife asks:  
“Why did you leave?”  
“To save my army”, he answered...“Because I knew in advance that the battle was lost, and thus, I saved the lives of my men and their families”.  
“And me”, she said, “Did you think of me”?

based on a poem from *Git de Heike*, a book chronicling the history of the Tairan warrior clan (c.1200AD)

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**Kakitsubata: Dance-Poem** sets an English translation of the Noh drama of the same name by Ezra Pound (1885-1972). Published in 1916—when Pound was yet to become the titan of literary Modernism we know today, Pound’s collection of translations introduced Noh to a contemporary Western audience already run through with a fascination for Japan. Pound’s Noh translations exerted an especially profound influence on his older colleague W.B. Yeats, who just a few years later would bring out his own Noh-inspired *Four Plays for Dancers*. Though Pound’s work as a translator of Noh has since been displaced by far more accurate versions, the constantly stunning poetry of his English renditions has afforded them the status of classics in their own right.

Among Pound’s Noh texts, *Kakitsubata* presents a strikingly contrastive hybrid, surprisingly faithful where he found

highly inventive ways to render the original in English, yet glaringly omitting the central conceit of the Noh play: the acrostic poem by the medieval poet Ariwara no Narihira, one of several personae simultaneously adopted by the play’s protagonist as she reveals herself to be the spirit of the iris (“kakitsubata” is Japanese for “iris”). *Kakitsubata: Dance-Poem* takes up the contradictory hybrid of Pound’s text, but reverses it by being “unfaithful” to Pound and reinserting Narihira’s poem to sound in Japanese simultaneously with the English verse. In the process, it takes hybridity a step further by invoking Yeats’ device of having the musicians participate in the action of his Noh plays.

Dance—from a visual perspective, seemingly among the aspects of Noh that least requires translation, yet with a rhythmic basis in the original language that makes it among the least translatable—nonetheless constitutes a central element of Pound’s text as much as of the traditional Noh. Struck by the centrality of dance to Noh while working on his translations, Pound composed an unpublished set of “dance-poems” to be recited together with the Modern dancer Michio Ito’s performance in 1915. Picking up where this little-known experiment left off, *Kakitsubata: Dance-Poem* “restores” the nature of a dance-poem to Pound’s *Kakitsubata* by means of a purely aural corollary to the juxtaposition of spoken word and physical movement, namely that of speech rhythm and musical motion. Thus, the rhythms to which the iris spirit dances her way to Buddhist Enlightenment emanate directly—much as they would in the original Noh—from the Poundian verse she sings.

The poem by Narihira that forms the basis for the Noh *Kakitsubata* reads as follows:

<i>Kara-goromo</i>	Colorful Chinese
<i>Ki-tsustu narenishi</i>	Kimono she wore, worn soft
<i>Tsuma shi areba</i>	To the touch—my love!
<i>[B]Harubaru kinuru</i>	How far away from her I’ve
<i>Tabi o shizo omo</i>	Traveled on this long journey!

(Transliteration & translation by Chifumi Shimazaki)