

# Green Stairwell Concert Series

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## NEW EXPERIMENTAL PERFORMANCE SERIES OPENS WITH STAIRWELL CONCERT FEATURING U.S. PREMIERE

*Westmoreland UCC in Bethesda to host new series featuring new and rare music, artistic collaborations, immersive audience format, and experimental concert structure*

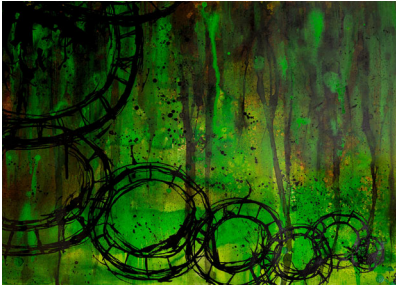
BETHESDA, MD, 8 January 2019 - The Green Stairwell Concert Series features collaborations between contemporary art and music disciplines to provide unique and powerful concert experiences for limited attendance audiences. Conceived by artist director Alec Davis, the first season will take place from January to June of 2019 and will feature programs for voice, electronics, and percussion.

Aani Bourassa will present a program for soprano and electronics exploring the fluidity of thought and memory, and the uncovering of truth through that imperfect remembrance. Three performances are scheduled - January 11th, 12th, and 13th at 7:00pm at Westmoreland Congregational United Church of Christ, in Bethesda, MD - for a limited audience of 20 people spread among the landings of a large stairwell within the building, and will feature collaborations with visual art, lighting design, and sound design, as well as the US Premiere of the title work, "Revelavit" by Linda Buckley. A pre-concert talk with the creative team will take place each evening at 6:30pm.

The program will feature three medium-length works for soprano and electronics, interspersed with recordings of electronic music by British composer Leyland James Kirby, who goes by "The Caretaker." These recordings are taken from the Kirby's collection of concept albums "**Everywhere at the end of time**" which "explores dementia, its advance and its totality... featuring the sounds from the journey [he] will make after being artistically diagnosed as having early onset dementia" ([Bandcamp](#)). This inclusion is possible via the temporary sound system which will be setup in the stairwell for the three acoustic works:

**The Halls within the Mirror**, by Howie Kenty, is "a solo mini-opera of internal struggle, childhood memories, and a tragic incident." ([Text](#)) **From the Grammar of Dreams**, by Kaija Saariaho, sets Sylvia Plath texts "dealing with life and death, escaping into madness, self-destruction and the fight against it." ([Website](#)) And **Revelavit**, by Linda Buckley, "is inspired by medieval organum from the twelfth century, particularly the work of the French composer Leonin, and his Viderunt Omnes. The title 'revelavit' comes from the plainchant of the original Leonin text, to uncover or reveal" ([Website](#)) and is a beautiful 10 minute wash of sound, which could feel blissful, healing, or enlightening, depending on how the audience member has felt by that point.

Overall, the program will take a narrative route, opening with feelings of nostalgia and fogginess presented by Kirby's tracks and the exploration of the past initiated by the Kenty. Upon grappling with these past traumas, the Saariaho will present the period of coming to terms with this newfound and difficult sense of clarity. The Buckley will provide a balance to the heaviness of the first half of the program, and will allow the audience to swim in whatever emotions have been evoked.



An original piece of visual art by **Julia Demopolous** (WithingInks), inspired by the themes of the music, will replace a more traditional program with basic information on the reverse, and will be given to all attending audience members as collectible pieces. Sound design and archival recording will be the task of engineer **Kevin Bourassa**, who, along with lighting design by **Robert Marietta** and audience format design by **Alec Davis**, will transform the generally ugly stairwell into an immersive venue. **Hiroshi Amano** (Open Range Video) will record and **Ed Benkowski** (Folie a Two Studio) will edit the

concert video. All collaborations are made possible through direct sponsorship of each element of the performance so that patrons can see and experience the result of their generosity, and ensure that creative collaborators are fairly compensated.

For more information on the first season and the scope of the concert series, please visit [www.GreenStairwell.com](http://www.GreenStairwell.com)

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END PRESS RELEASE  
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## Press

In order to maintain an intimate and immersive environment for our audiences, and because some performances take place in unusual venues which require an exact headcount, press allowance is limited to one (1) per performance.

- Please reserve your seat at [www.greenstairwell.com/press](http://www.greenstairwell.com/press) by selecting the exact concert, date, and time that you plan to attend.
- Your experience will be the same as any other member, and you will receive a collectible art-program with "PRESS" label.
- If you are interested in reviewing a performance that is no longer has space available, please email [TheGreenStairwell@gmail.com](mailto:TheGreenStairwell@gmail.com) to be put on a waiting list or be notified of additional openings, which are possible in some cases.
- If your plans change and you cannot attend a performance you signed up for, please email [TheGreenStairwell@gmail.com](mailto:TheGreenStairwell@gmail.com) so that others can be notified.

Experimentation is inherent to the series, so as we make improvements we will also rely on your critical feedback to help us improve. Thank you for reviewing new music and supporting local creatives.

# Overview of GSCS



**Green Stairwell Concert Series (GSCS) curates collaborations between contemporary art & music disciplines to provide unique and powerful concert experiences for limited attendance audiences. The first season will take place from January to June of 2019, at Westmoreland Congregational UCC in Bethesda, MD, and will feature programs for voice, electronics, and percussion.**

GSCS encourages the creative cooperation of a wide variety of musicians, visual artists, dancers, photographers / filmmakers, designers, and technicians to include their own expertise towards making a concert program effective. We strive to find artists who are passionate about their craft and about **collaboration**, and in so doing seek to promote them to a wider audience and to each others' existing audiences.

GSCS curates programs with **audience** experience as the priority by exploring unusual performance venues, by attempting to evoke and manipulate elusive emotional responses, and by limited audience numbers to between 20 and 50 per show. Programs are replaced by newly commissioned art prints, with basic programming information on the reverse, which serve as collectible and tangible art that each audience member can take with them. Community members can see the result of their financial support directly through individual sponsorship of a musician, artist, or technician.

GSCS is a proponent of both new and rarely performed works, but is driven by a desire to contextualize those that are abstract or relatively inaccessible in order to make them appreciable by a larger audience. Composers and creators should be diverse in background, and **programming** should attain male-female parity; therefore these factors are considered when determining a season, and are incentivized through the participation of an outside advocacy organization in the curation process.

GSCS seeks to make powerful art more **accessible**, both as a part of the series itself and by supporting other organizations which advocate for education, accessibility, and inclusion. Through creative collaboration, we aim to extend the sensory reach of music and art by itself, and through proper contextualization, we aim to help new audiences fall in love with new and abstract works. A partner organization receives 50% of all ticket sales to further their goals, helps to find audience members who might not otherwise experience this kind of art, and offers input into the curation of the following season.

# Key Elements

- **Partner Organization:** we will partner with a charitable organization (to be announced February 2019) that is dedicated to music education, arts accessibility, or inclusivity in the arts. This group will be involved in the following ways:
  - Receive and distribute 10% of all tickets to GSCS concerts to those who would not otherwise get to experience art in this way, ideally through their own outreach programs.
  - Assist in curating the following season's programming by emphasizing priorities that are relevant to their work and helping to choose from program submissions.
  - Receive approximately 50% of ticket sales for the season (up to \$10,000) to further their own goals.
- **Fundraising Model:** we will fund the vast majority of the series through charitable donations from individual patrons, and in the future we will also seek grant-funding.
  - Production of the concerts themselves will be funded through "artist sponsorships" wherein one specific artist or musician will be funded by an individual donation. These donations, which range between \$200 and \$2000, will come with special benefits including early access to ticket sales and special edition art-programs.
  - Administrative costs will be covered by individual donations that are not concert specific, as well as the other 50% of ticket sales not dedicated to the partner organization.
  - All finances are centralized through Westmoreland Congregational UCC. Since the series is incubated as a program of WCUCC, all donations (not including ticket sales) are considered tax deductible donations.
- **Art Programs / Commissions:** we will commission a new art piece for every performance, which will replace the traditional concert program as a limited edition, collectible art-print.
  - This will be funded as one of the "artist sponsorships" at the \$500 level, and all art commissions will be organized by the Art Curator (2018-2019 season: [Jeffrey Gangwisch](#)). This program allows us to promote local artists through the commission, through promotion, and through opportunity to display additional works at performances.
  - All audience members will receive a print which is signed, numbered, and mounted (and therefore collectible) which will have basic programming information on the reverse.
  - The digital version of this art will remain in a collection on the website, and will be used in concert marketing.
- **Concert Format / Limited Audience:** we will only sell between 20 and 50 tickets in order to curate the concert experience with more control and preparedness:

- Small audiences allow for greater control of acoustic and seating arrangement, which can become elements of the concert itself. To allow for more audience members, we will have three performances of each concert; most typically, Friday, Saturday, Sunday.
- Our creative programming seeks to provide an experience that could only be achieved in a live setting; an intimate audience allows everyone to have a “front-row” seat, and removes the pressures typically felt when marketing for a large audience.
- Small audiences also allow for creative concert formats such as audience participation, audience relocation, and intimate or unusual concert venues (such as [Green Stairwells](#)).
- **Ticket Sponsorships:** we will create a counter-balance to the exclusivity created by a small audiences by reserving 10% of all tickets for those who might not otherwise have such an experience
  - These tickets will be distributed by our partner organization. 10% of each show will be combined into one evening so as not to spread them too thin - Season 1: 6 / 12 / 6 / 15 Tickets sponsored at \$35 / \$45 / \$55 / \$65 respectively.
  - They will be funded by individual donations, allowing for a meaningful way of contributing that is more affordable than the artist sponsorships.
- **Ensembles / Programming:** we will seek to engage audiences with creative programming of new and rarely performed music from (primarily local) musicians and ensembles who are passionate about creative concepts.
  - Ensembles will submit concert proposals, which will be curated by the artistic staff and by the partner organization to create the season (Season 1 is already planned). The input of the partner organization will vary, but we will always seek to include diverse voices.
  - While the programming will inevitably move into the abstract, considering our format, all elements of the performance will be geared toward making the abstract more accessible to a larger audience, including providing pre-concert talks.
- **Collaborations and Technology:** we will include several artistic, visual, or technical collaborators in every concert, who will seek to enhance the concert experience and create a more immersive experience.
  - Collaborators include lighting and audio designers, interior designers, dancers, actors, readers, photographers, filmmakers, and anyone else who can lend their creative bent to help make an experience more powerful.
  - Over the long term, we intend to invest in technology that will surprise and engage audience members, such as interactive instruments and projection technologies.

# Season I (2019)



## REVELAVIT - Aani Bourassa, soprano

A program of works for soprano and electronics exploring the fluidity of thought and memory; and the uncovering of truth through that imperfect remembrance.

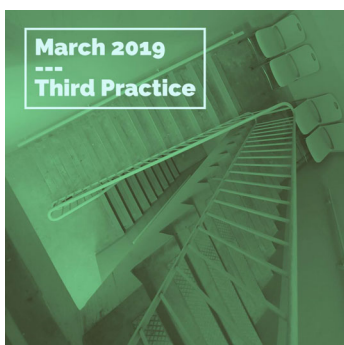
- Friday, January 11th, 2019 | 7:00pm
- Saturday, January 12th, 2019 | 7:00pm
- Sunday, January 13th, 2019 | 7:00pm



## ANALOGY FAIR - QuaQuaQua, percussion trio

Virtuosic percussion meets theatrical absurdity. *Situations* by François Sarhan. (40 tickets / show - Westmoreland Mabry Room) **\$45 (on sale 1/30/19)**

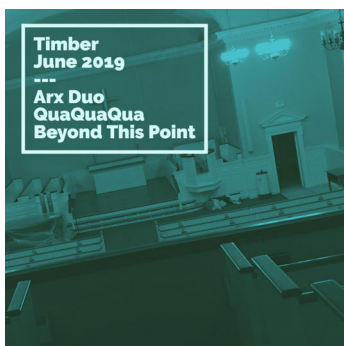
- Friday, February 8th, 2019 | 7:00pm
- Saturday, February 9th, 2019 | 7:00pm
- Sunday, February 10th, 2019 | 3:00pm



## A VOICE RISES - Third Practice, vocal ensemble

Third Practice is a vocal quartet which specializes in both early and modern music. (20 tickets / show - Green Stairwell) **\$55 (on sale 3/13/19)**

- Friday, March 22nd, 2019 | 7:00pm
- Saturday, March 23rd, 2019 | 7:00pm
- Sunday, March 24th, 2019 | 3:00pm



## TIMBER - QuaQuaQua / Arx Duo / Beyond This Point, percussion sextet

Michael Gordon's *Timber*, interactive lights, dynamic audience placement, and temporary art gallery, giving voice to the decades-long struggle for a roof over every head. (50 tickets / show - Westmoreland Sanctuary) **\$65 (on sale 5/22/19)**

- Friday, May 31st, 2019 | 8:00pm
- Saturday, June 1st, 2019 | 8:00pm
- Sunday, June 2nd, 2019 | 8:00pm